

Downloading Taxation Masquerading as Tax Cuts

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Saturday, June 03, 2006

<http://politicsrespun.org/2006/06/downloading-taxation-masquerading-as-tax-cuts/>

After Prime Minister Harper addressed the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the PMO sent out a press release today that showed how Harper is pushing more regressive tax policies.

In order to shine as the bold tax cutting leader, Harper argued that cutting federal taxes creates room for other levels of government to increase taxes.

This does a few things. It makes Harper's government look like the good guys and provinces and municipalities look like tax hungry socialists. It also undermines the collective capacity for tax collection that can happen at the national level and encourages local governments to fund their own improvement. This means that poor or struggling communities will have to scrape whatever they can without having access to a federal tax pot contributed to by all Canadians.

It's one thing to encourage ownership of projects at the most appropriate level, but this ideal should not be undermined by removing equitable funding through collective taxation at the national level.

Here's yet another example of Harper's neoliberal ideological individualism trumping communitarian social cohesion. As my beloved Margaret Thatcher was apt to trumpet: "there is no society." We're all on our own. Small town Canada can rot in its poverty.

In the words of the PMO email:

In his remarks, the Prime Minister underlined that the Government is restoring fiscal balance by increasing transfers to the provinces and cutting federal taxes, which creates tax room for other governments. And it will focus on areas within its own jurisdiction and seek guidance from municipalities on federal funding for future infrastructure projects.

"The federal role must be defined to deal with projects of national significance," Prime Minister Harper said. "Federal funding must be put on a predictable long-term track and we must ensure accountability to Canadians for infrastructure investments by all levels of government."

Podcast at <http://dgiVista.org/pod/2006.06.02.mp3>

Podcast feed at http://dgivista.org/pod/Vista_Podcasts.xml