



Government needs to be there for its residents protecting the rights of workers and seriously considering new ways to help people meet their financial needs, like guaranteed basic income projects. The Senate of Canada is studying it, and Alternatives North has already reported on it. It is time that this House takes a serious look at it too.

In my first week of knocking doors, I met two mothers in distress. One was desperately worried about losing her federal housing benefit since reinstated due to lobbying by the PSAC. The other was reviewing carbon tax increases yet to come and saw that she would need to downsize her home to be able to continue to properly provide for her family. These are stories that I want to honour in my time standing before you and are examples of the real financial fears that NWT residents have. I know my colleagues have heard similar stories. GBI is a tool that can lessen our residents' pain of just scraping by barely and would help eliminate the fear that people are feeling. Helping communities provide more of what people need is another way to help NWT residents flourish. Buy local isn't just a slogan; it's a northern way of life.

During the pandemic, we saw how fragile supply chains can be. When we spend locally, we support our neighbours with our dollars as well as our kinship and help to grow local businesses and jobs. We need new and innovative solutions for keeping local dollars local based on input and expertise of NWT businesses, chambers of commerce and mines, non government organizations, and communities. And we have to make sure that we have the right policies and programs in place to support a better mix of small and medium size businesses in all NWT communities.

My second priority is a thriving arts and cultural scene. It's not enough to survive. We also need to thrive. Arts help shape the community's identity and creative outlets enhance well being while also supporting the local economy. Collaborating with artists and artisans on what they identify is needed, like a sustainable core funding and pathfinder services for grants, will help sustain and expand a thriving artistic community. It's also important to note that arts and cultural culture is intimately connected to the reinvention of communities.

It is, in fact, a social service. When the artist run community centre operated in an old church slated for demolition in 2011, they became an unofficial downtown day shelter. People of all walks of life were welcomed and felt safe because they were sharing and taking care of an inclusive community space. The ARCC also attracted people to the downtown core, creating economic spinoffs like folks going to restaurants before or after events.

Arts and cultural arts and culture have practical socioeconomic returns that are being forgotten, and I will not let them be forgotten for the next four years.

My third priority is that people need to come first in the delivery of government services. Government should spend less time defending ineffective policies and processes and spend more time listening to residents so it can offer programs and services that match the needs that residents say that they have.

