

Canada - United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group
Canadian Section



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Section canadienne

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
to the National Governors Association
Winter Meeting: Innovation America**

Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group

**Washington, D.C.
February 24-27, 2007**

From February 24-27, 2007, Mr. Rob Merrifield, M.P., Co-Chair of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group, led a delegation to the Winter Meeting of the National Governors Association. This report summarizes the main points made during the plenary and select concurrent sessions at the meeting, which was focussed on the theme of "Innovation America".

Report

The National Governors Association is a bipartisan organization of United States governors which meets twice annually to promote state leadership, share best practices in the administration of state programs and services and develop common position on federal issues. The NGA also provides governors with services that range from representing states on Capitol Hill and before the US Administration on key American issues. By its participation, the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group is provided an opportunity for input into issues at the state and national level that affects Canada. The meeting also permits the group to gather information on policy development at the state level. This report summarizes the main points made during the plenary and select concurrent sessions at the meeting, which was focussed on the theme of “Innovation America.”

OPENING PLENARY SESSION: INNOVATION AMERICA

Governor Napolitano, Governor of Arizona, Chair of the National Governors Association

- in part, the Innovation America initiative is about imagining and possibilities; imagine, for example, medicine adapted to the specific needs of a patient, clothing that adjusts to temperature, zero-emission vehicles and education tailored to the needs of each student; the question is: how do we get there? the answer is: innovation
- the United States has always led in innovation, and Governors must accept the call to action and must exercise leadership, with a state-by-state analysis and ideas for federal legislation; Governors are the hub of a wheel that brings many together, and they must convey the urgency of innovation and the need for innovation generation
- the private sector must play a role in innovation
- there are three areas to consider:
 - science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education in public schools, where the focus should be both what to teach and how to teach it;
 - post-secondary education, where creativity is occurring but not as part of an overall strategy; and
 - transforming creativity and innovation into the workplace of the future, with implications for job creation and needed workforce skills.

John Chambers, Cisco Systems, Inc.

- a key question is: how does technology play a role in getting you where you are going?
- technology is not the same thing as innovation; technology is an enabler, and health, education, safety and security, infrastructure development, environmental measures, etc. are enabled by technology
- supportive governments are needed, with an appropriate focus on education and infrastructure, including broadband access
- we must consider our vision, our differentiated strategy and our execution plans, and must think about:
 - what is possible;
 - the vision for education, health, public safety, infrastructure, etc.;
 - how technology can best facilitate the attainment of the vision; and
 - a differentiated strategy for attaining the vision
- market transitions provide opportunities for market innovation
- science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education is the basis for how to learn and how to collaborate effectively
- health care is perhaps the greatest challenge, and technology is a great enabler in this field, provided that solutions are architecturally integrated; health care innovation is enabled by technology
- effective information and communication technology drives productivity
- state governments should drive broadband access and should partner with business to ensure that this access occurs; with broadband access, the world is truly flat.

Robert Rubin, Citigroup, Inc.

- Governors can play a critical role in meeting the nation's challenges
- there is universal agreement that while the United States is at a time that has great potential, it is also at a time with serious risks; the only undervalued asset in the world today is risk
- the single greatest mistake would be failing to have the political system make the needed tough decisions on such issues as education, fiscal policy, trade liberalization, etc.; the United States is at a critical juncture and the political system must rise to meet the challenges

- to move forward, politicians must work across party lines to build a consensus and they must be willing to make tough choices
- in the short term, growth depends on borrowing, which masks unsound underlying fundamentals, such as poor education
- today, the global economy is at a time of transformational change of critical proportions; consider, for example, tremendous technological change, reduced trade and investment barriers, the emergence of China and India as economic players, etc.
- economic policies at the federal and state levels should have three goals:
 - robust economic growth;
 - broadly based participation in economic growth; and
 - increased economic security
- the United States must meet challenges in four areas:
 - multiple financial imbalances;
 - shortfalls in education, infrastructure, basic research, energy policy, health care, inner-city programs, social safety nets, etc.;
 - cost-benefit imbalances in regulatory and litigation regimes; and
 - international economic policy, including trade liberalization, relatively open immigration and working with other countries for flexible exchange rates
- the United States has a long history of great resilience in meeting challenges, and the nation's future will depend on how the challenges are met
- while some initiatives require federal involvement, the states can demonstrate substantial leadership
- Innovation America is an exceedingly thoughtful approach.

BREAKOUT SESSION: STEM (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS) EDUCATION

Dr. William Schmidt, Michigan State University

- the problems in education are real
- eighth-grade students are sadly lacking in mathematics and science skills, and by the end of the eighth grade, U.S. students are two years behind international norms; this deficient is not overcome in high school

- international benchmarking has highlighted the need for rigorous, coherent, well-focussed standards as the starting point
- in high school, students should be faced with requirements, not choices
- states must work together in order to avoid huge inequalities
- teachers should be required to increase their academic skills.

Dr. Yvonne Spicer, National Center for Technological Literacy, Museum of Science, Boston

- in the last 10-15 years, there has been a tremendous focus on mathematics and science; however, there is a need to also focus on technology and engineering as connectors of science and mathematics
- technology can only do so much; technology must be applied in order to create innovation
- good curricula based on rigorous, solid standards that are measurable provide a road map, and teachers must be assisted in their efforts to teach to those standards; in this regard, more and sustained professional development for teachers is needed
- schools must focus on the achievement level of all students, and not just the top 10% of students; the focus should be less on those students who are successful and more on those who are not
- the way in which teaching occurs in schools should be reviewed
- science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education must start in pre-kindergarten, and standards must address STEM education in a cohesive manner.

BREAKOUT SESSION: REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH

Randall Kempner, The Council on Competitiveness

- as policies for regional economic growth are developed, it must be remembered that the United States must compete on the basis of innovation, rather than – for example – on the basis of wages
- four factors are important:
 - talent (the most important of the factors);
 - integration (economic development and workforce development are “two sides of the same coin”);

- regionalism (regions are the right place to think about economic and workforce development); and
- entrepreneurship (a culture that supports risk taking is needed, since entrepreneurship is one of the U.S. economy's greatest strengths)
- it is people who innovate, and smart people who can work together are needed; the United States must cultivate, attract and retain “star” talent
- every region needs an entrepreneurship strategy.

Phillip Singerman, Toucan Capital

- angel funding is not the same as venture capital
- funds must be channelled into “growth areas”
- research can be of several types, including: basic, applied and translational
- research must be connected to industry
- federal policies are important
- best practices and lessons learned should be shared.

PLENARY SESSION: LEADING THE WAY ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATH

Dr. James Simons, Renaissance Technologies Corporation and Math for America

- modern economies and the world's economic engine are increasingly based on mathematics and science, and teachers are increasingly deficient in these two subject areas; there is a need to attract and retain well-trained, knowledgeable teachers
- there is a multitude of very good jobs for those who “know” mathematics and science, and those jobs are relatively more lucrative
- the tradition of flat salaries across teaching subjects means that the huge demand for mathematics and science teachers is not reflected in upward pressure on salaries for teachers in these two subject areas; if this situation persists, non-salary measures must be found to induce those who are good in mathematics and science to teach these subjects to the next generation
- the subject matter of those who teach – and of those who want to teach – mathematics and science should be tested periodically
- at this time, the United States is underprepared in terms of being able to compete in any area

- since American schools are not doing their job well, there is a need to import needed talent.

Dr. William Schmidt, Michigan State University

- what is being done to the next generation of children is a moral issue
- the nations that perform the best are the nations that expect more from their students; they also are those that have higher standards
- the quality of the curricula and the quality of teachers are key
- there are a variety of actions that should be pursued:
 - develop internationally benchmarked standards that are challenging, rigorous and coherent;
 - ensure that curricula are organized in a logical manner;
 - encourage teachers to teach to national standards that are challenging, rigorous and coherent;
 - ensure that opportunities to learn science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) are equal across and within states, which may mean that local school boards should not be permitted to control curricula;
 - there should be more requirements and fewer choices for children, who are not in a position to make decisions that will affect the rest of their lives; and
 - address teacher preparation in a more rigorous manner.

Dean Kamen, FIRST and DEKA Research and Development Corporation

- the fate of the nation depends on the education of the youth
- key considerations include:
 - standards;
 - testing;
 - curricula;
 - teacher quality; and
 - teacher compensation.

Mary Ann Rankin, University of Texas at Austin

- the nation must inspire science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education to solve problems related to competitiveness
- to teach mathematics and science well, teachers should really know the discipline
- successful models for teaching mathematics and science well should be replicated
- strong mentoring for new teachers is needed.

PLENARY SESSION: THE LANGUAGE OF INNOVATION – “WORDS THAT WORK”

Frank Luntz, Luntz, Maslansky Strategic Research

- Americans have a sense of anxiety about the future
- innovation is about the future, as well as about dreams and imagination
- innovation will help the next generation have a relatively better quality of life than that of the current generation
- technology is not innovation, but it makes innovation possible
- Americans want innovation in education, health care, public safety, etc.
- with innovation, everyone can win
- the ability to innovate is connected to the ability to grow
- the economy is about “today,” while education is about “tomorrow”
- Americans see broadband access as being essential, since it enables people to get connected to the world and to the future
- Americans believe that it is innovation – not trade – that will “fix” the economic challenges faced by the United States
- Americans see innovation as a state – not a federal – responsibility
- the things that got us “here” will not get us “there” (the future).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE: GLOBALIZATION AND ITS IMPACT ON STATE COMPETITIVENESS

Ambassador Susan Schwab, United States Trade Representative

- trade is important to each state, and states see “trade” one transaction at a time

- the U.S. trade deficit has more to do with macro factors than it does with federal trade policy
- the United States saves less than many other countries
- context is important; while more jobs are being created than are being lost, there is not a perfect fit between job gainers and job losers
- one benefit of trade agreements is that they level the playing field as countries agree to open their markets to U.S. goods
- Governors have an instrumental role to play in promoting U.S. trade overseas
- the trade agreements signed by the United States are actively enforced
- trade should be a bipartisan issue.

William Reinsch, National Foreign Trade Council

- the relationships that exist between Governors and the Executive and between Governors and Congress are important
- Governors may be successful if they work through Members of Congress and Congressional committees to advance the agenda of their state; if an issue is on the Governor's agenda, it should be on the agenda of the state's Congressional delegation
- rarely do Governors talk about trade policy; instead, they talk about problems related to trade
- by and large, the "big business" community has lobbied for bilateral and multilateral treaties that benefit them; as well, at times, they have argued against increased state rights

CLOSING PLENARY SESSION: COMPETITIVENESS – A VIEW FROM CONGRESS

Representative Bart Gordon, United States House of Representatives

- states are the percolators of good ideas, and successes at the state level should embarrass federal legislators into taking action
- the current generation may be the first to inherit a lower standard of living and a lower quality of life than its parents
- the United States is in a real race for competitiveness in the 21st century, and it is on a losing track
- to be competitive, students must be able to enter the workforce in a much more competitive way

- in the future, the United States will be unable to compete on the basis of lower labour costs
- only students in Cyprus and South Africa have lower mathematics skills than do U.S. students, and the situation gets worse the longer U.S. students remain in school
- 92% of science teachers have not majored in science, and nor do they have the certification needed to teach science
- it is important to ensure that those who teach science, technology, engineering and mathematics are suitably trained in these subjects
- consideration should be given to the following recommendations:
 - scholarships should be given to those who study mathematics, science and education and who agree to teach for five years;
 - states should be provided with financial incentives for curricula development;
 - teachers who attend summer school in order to increase their education should receive stipends; and
 - financial incentives should be given for “the best and the brightest” to study pure mathematics and science
- in addition to doing better in terms of science, technology, engineering and mathematics education, the United States must do better in the area of renewable energy
- the federal government should serve as a model in terms of energy conservation, such as through the use of energy-efficient light bulbs and fuel-efficient vehicles for government use
- most energy-conservation efforts pay for themselves within three to five years.

Senator Lamar Alexander, United State Senate

- unfunded federal mandates harm the competitiveness efforts of states
- states are spending five times as much on health care as they are on education, despite the importance of the latter
- the single biggest obstacle to U.S. competitiveness is the failure to pay teachers more for teaching well

- since the salary scale for teachers plateaus, it is not surprising that teachers leave the profession after five years.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Jerahmiel Grafstein, Senator
Co-Chair, Canada-United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group

Rob Merrifield, M.P.,
Co-Chair, Canada-United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group
ACTIVITY	National Governors Association Winter Meeting: Innovation America
DESTINATION	Washington, D.C.
DATES	February 24-27, 2007
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Ø
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Rob Merrifield, M.P., Co-Chair
STAFF	Daniel Charbonneau, Executive Secretary June Dewetering, Analyst
TRANSPORTATION	\$4,182.89
ACCOMMODATION	\$3,166.20
HOSPITALITY	\$ Ø
PER DIEMS	\$636.21
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ Ø
MISCELLANEOUS/REGISTRATION FEES	\$2,843.28
TOTAL	\$10,828.58