



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 29, 2007

### **Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group Pleased with Announcement about Drivers Licences in New York**

“Allowing people to cross the shared border with an enhanced licence rather than a passport is the right approach”

Today, the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group said it is pleased with the announcement about enhanced drivers licences in New York State. With the recent agreement, New York State will offer three types of secure licences: an enhanced drivers licence to cross the New York-Canada border; a federally approved licence to fly on planes; and a New York State licence for purposes of driving and identification.

“We congratulate Governor Eliot Spitzer and the State of New York on the adoption of the enhanced drivers licence concept,” said Mr. Rob Merrifield, M.P., Co-Chair of the Inter-Parliamentary Group. “For many months, members of the Group have supported this concept and have advocated its adoption by states and provinces in addition to Washington State and British Columbia, which initiated the proposal earlier this year. We believe that this approach is sensible: a secure version of a document that most adults carry in their pocket, yet also a document that will facilitate the timely movement of people across the shared border for the benefit of both countries.”

Senator Jerry Grafstein, Co-Chair of the Inter-Parliamentary Group continued:

“Certainly, we hope that this positive move will be emulated by other states, but particularly by those along the shared border. Like other members of the Group, I also believe that implementation of the land and sea aspects of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative should be delayed until others have also had the opportunity to adopt the enhanced drivers licence concept, and to ensure that the technology and all other elements are in place and functioning well.”

Mr. Merrifield commented: “During the summer, members of the Group met with Governors and state legislators, and consistently delivered this message: security is also a priority for Canada, but we believe there must be a number of secure documents that can be used to cross the shared border. For some, passports make the most sense. But for others, such as those who live in border communities and who may cross the land border – alone or with their family – on a daily basis, an enhanced drivers licence makes sense.”

“Members of the Group will continue to monitor the issues that affect the safety and prosperity of both of our countries. Greater prosperity for Canada and the United States means a higher standard of living and quality of life for North American residents. The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative and the enhanced drivers licence approach is one issue that we will be watching, but there are others as well. Ensuring the timely movement of low- and no-risk goods and services across our shared border is a priority for legislators in both of our countries,” concluded Senator Grafstein.

The Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group’s aim is to find points of convergence in our respective national policies, initiate dialogue on points of divergence, encourage the exchange of information, and promote better understanding between Canadian and American legislators on shared issues of concern.

-30-

**For further information:**

Hon. Jerry Grafstein, Senator, Co-Chair, Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group  
613-992-2642

Mr. Rob Merrifield, M.P., Co-Chair, Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group  
613-992-1653