

Canada - United States  
Inter-Parliamentary Group  
Canadian Section



Groupe interparlementaire  
Canada - États-Unis  
Section canadienne

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation  
respecting its participation at the  
Republican National Convention  
Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group  
Tampa Bay, Florida, United States of America  
August 27-30, 2012**

# Report

## **DELEGATION MEMBERS AND STAFF**

From August 27-30, 2012, Mr. Gord Brown, M.P., Co-Chair of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group (IPG), led a delegation from the Canadian Section of the IPG to the Republican National Convention (RNC) in Tampa, Florida. The other member of the delegation was the Honourable Bob Runciman, Senator. The delegation, which was part of the Republican Diplomatic Partnership (RDP), was accompanied by Ms. June Dewetering, Senior Advisor to the Canadian Section.

## **THE EVENT**

Three main activities occur at the RNC, which is held every four years: the nomination of the Republican Party's presidential and vice-presidential candidates, the formulation and adoption of the Republican Party's platform, and the adoption of rules and procedures in relation to party activities, including the nomination process for presidential candidates in the next election cycle.

As noted earlier, the delegation from the Canadian Section of the IPG participated at the RNC through the RDP. The RDP is an independent, not-for-profit organization that fosters relationships between U.S. policy leaders and government officials, the private sector and the diplomatic corps. To facilitate mutual understanding and development, it emphasizes the importance of the principles underlying republican government, and promotes the exchange of conservative policy and political theory with the global community. At the RNC in Tampa, Florida, about 90 embassies participated through the RDP.

## **DELEGATION OBJECTIVES FOR THE EVENT**

Canada and the United States share a mutually beneficial relationship. According to recent figures, an estimated 8 million American jobs depend on trade with Canada, and an estimated 2.5 million Canadian jobs depend on trade with the United States. As well, in 2011, bilateral trade was valued at more than \$700 billion, which is more than \$1.9 billion each day or \$1.3 million each minute. Moreover, at present, 35 U.S. states have Canada as their primary foreign export market.

The IPG aims to find points of convergence in respective national policies, to initiate dialogue on points of divergence, to encourage the exchange of information and to promote better understanding among legislators on shared issues of concern. Members of the IPG's Canadian Section meet regularly with their federal counterparts and, in recent years, have attended meetings of governors and state legislators. At these

events, Canadian delegates engage in conversations that help the Canadian Section to achieve its objectives and that explain the nature and scope of the bilateral relationship.

Members of the Canadian Section of the IPG found the 2012 RNC to be a valuable opportunity to observe the U.S. political process and to meet with some of the U.S. federal legislators who were attending the convention. Feeling that members of the Canadian Section were able to achieve their objectives for the event, the Canadian Section intends to attend future RNCs.

## **ACTIVITIES DURING THE EVENT**

As part of the RDP, delegates attended sessions focused on economic, trade and foreign policy, presidential debates and other topics, and listened to the speeches at the convention site each night. In particular, the following sessions took place:

- Opening Remarks
- Political Discussion with Former Chairmen of the Republican National Committee
- The Untold Story of Economic Freedom and Today's International Crises: Panel Discussion
- The Future of U.S. National Security Policy: Panel Discussion
- Biotechnology and Innovation: Panel Discussion
- U.S. Innovation, Technology, Manufacturing and Job Growth: Panel Discussion
- Political Overview and the Commission on Presidential Debates
- 2012 Republican National Convention
- International Economic Trade: Panel Discussion.

This report summarizes the sessions that were part of the RDP's program; it does not summarize the political speeches.

## **OPENING REMARKS**

### **Neil King, *Wall Street Journal***

- U.S. election campaigns are ongoing, and one focus at this time is who is doing what in Tampa in order to position themselves for the 2016 election.
- Including the primaries, between \$3.5 billion and \$5 billion will be spent on the 2012 U.S. election campaigns, which is equivalent to the gross domestic product of more than 40 countries.
- The 2012 election campaign essentially started in November 2010, right after the mid-term elections were held; intensive travel to the states began early in 2011.
- The Iowa straw poll is helpful in determining the presidential candidate who has the "organizational muscle."

- During the 2012 election campaign, there will be about 20 televised debates; some see the debates as national “entertainment.”
- The U.S. economy is at an unusually weak moment; the unemployment rate exceeds 8% and consumer confidence is low; on the basis of the current U.S. economic indicators, one would think that there is no way that the incumbent president could win the election, yet President Barack Obama is tied with or leading presidential nominee Governor Mitt Romney in some states according to some polls.
- Many held President Jimmy Carter responsible for creating the economic malaise that existed during his presidency; the same is not true regarding President Obama, with participants in a focus group suggesting that the President Obama’s plan is “a work in progress” and that President Obama “inherited a grim situation.”
- Four years ago, presidential nominee Senator Barack Obama turned his “exoticness” into a positive “attribute”; presidential nominee Governor Romney is also “exotic,” as he was the Republican Governor of a New England state, is the son of a Mexican-born father, and spent four years in France as a Mormon missionary.
- The Republican platform mirrors the heart of the Republican Party.
- According to former Governor Jeb Bush, the Republican Party needs to broaden its appeal.
- This U.S. presidential election may be the last in which the ticket is comprised of two males from the northern part of the United States.

### **Ed Goeas, *The Tarrance Group***

- Polls can be the “eyes and ears” of what is happening; at this point, the two presidential candidates are close in the polls, and the “race” is essentially frozen in place in the sense that the poll numbers have not changed since late May 2012.
- Those in presidential nominee Governor Romney’s campaign are probably satisfied with “where they are” at this point in the campaign; it is likely that President Obama and those in his campaign are “ringing their hands” about “where they are” at this point in the campaign.
- President Obama is having to run two campaigns concurrently: one in relation to the U.S. economy, and the other in relation to presidential nominee Governor Romney.
- Unless there are six months of solid, consecutive, positive economic indicators, voters do not think that the recovery is under way.

- In terms of voter focus, 70% are focused on economic issues, including jobs, spending and taxes.
- Both President Obama and presidential nominee Governor Romney have solidified their base.
- Pollsters sort through the myths to discern the reality.
- At this point, President Obama's approval rating is 46%; his disapproval rating is 50%.
- In terms of intensity of feelings, the 2012 election is like the 1980 election.
- The Democrats are relatively non-white, single and secular; the Republicans are relatively white, married and faith-based.
- For the first time in the United States, most children were born out of wedlock in 2011.
- The 2012 presidential election will not be based on personality; rather, it will be based on "who can get the job done" regarding the economy.
- The 2012 presidential election will either be close or presidential nominee Governor Romney will lead by five to six percentages points.

### **William Harris, *2012 Republican National Convention***

- A political convention is a way for members of a party to come together and for the party to become stronger.
- The two-party system, which has led to stability in the political process, is under attack, in part because of modern technology and the 24/7 news channels; these channels are driven by market share and thereby by "what sells."
- In terms of the party platform, the process that occurs during its formulation is more important than the resulting product.
- Campaign finance reform legislation always has unintended, and intended, consequences.
- When planning the RNC, the process begins with the site selection committee, which has a contract with the host state committee; the convention is funded by federal grants and by funds raised by the host committee.
- The United States is one of the most, if not the most, powerful country in the world.
- With the 2012 convention, the Republican Party has tried to create a convention "without walls," which has resulted in a digital presence on Facebook, the Internet, Twitter, etc.; this "digital contract" can be used to reinforce the Republican message.
- The presidential nominee can drive his/her vision to the people during the convention.

- The political convention is the disciplined structure in an undisciplined organization; moreover, it is a focal point in time and geography that can be used to inform voters.

## **POLITICAL DISCUSSION WITH FORMER CHAIRMEN OF THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE**

At the panel discussion, Tucker Carlson, who is the editor of *The Daily Caller* and a contributor to *Fox*, posed questions to three former chairmen of the Republican National Committee:

- Honorable Haley Barbour, former Governor of Mississippi and Chairman from 1993 to 1997
- Honorable Jim Gilmore, former Governor of Virginia and Chairman from 2001-2002
- Honorable Jim Nicholson, former U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Chairman from 1997 to 2001.

***Tucker Carlson:*** *What does presidential nominee Governor Romney need to say during the RNC?*

**Honorable Jim Gilmore:** Presidential nominee Governor Romney needs to speak to the concerns of the American people, such as unemployment and underemployment, a declining quality of life and other “human” concerns.

***Tucker Carlson:*** *To what extent should the focus at the RNC be presenting the party’s “program” rather than criticizing the incumbent president?*

**Honorable Haley Barbour:** Many Americans believe that the country is headed in the wrong direction.

***Tucker Carlson:*** *What attributes make presidential nominee Governor Romney a “decent person”?*

**Honorable Jim Nicholson:** There is a need to remind people of the condition that the United States is in, and then to explain how the Republican Party would fix problems. It is important for presidential nominee Governor Romney to convey that he “feels the pain” of Americans, even if he has not lived their life, since he has also faced hardships in his life.

***Tucker Carlson:*** *What response should be given to the demonization, by President Obama, of presidential nominee Governor Romney and vice-presidential nominee Representative Paul Ryan?*

**Honorable Jim Gilmore:** It is important to ask: what happened to President Obama's momentum, hope and vision? What have been the results of the last four years? What is President Obama's vision for the future.

**Tucker Carlson:** *What is the political "spin" that should be applied by the Republican Party to the notion that the Democrat Party always "gives more" to people?*

**Honorable Haley Barbour:** Medicare expenditures have fallen since Senator Obama became President Obama. The longer the debate about Medicare continues and the more information that Americans get, the less happy they are about Obamacare.

**Tucker Carlson:** *Who will control Medicare expenditures?*

**Honorable Jim Nicholson:** Medicare is being used as a political "football." About 57% of U.S. households get a cheque from the federal government, so they are beholden. Medicare was started in 1965, when the life expectancy was lower.

**Tucker Carlson:** *Did the long Republican primary season help the Republican Party?*

**Honorable Jim Gilmore:** The rise of television, and the drama associated with elections, sells a great deal of advertising.

**Tucker Carlson:** *Is the primary process too democratic and/or too chaotic?*

**Honorable Haley Barbour:** The 2012 primary season was the ugliest process that could be imagined; no one looked good. President Obama is a great uniter of Republicans and conservatives.

**Honorable Jim Nicholson:** It is illogical to have two homogeneous states – Iowa and New Hampshire – play such a large role. Presidential nominee Governor Romney is a much better candidate for having come through the primary process.

**Honorable Jim Gilmore:** Someone who comes through the primary process is stronger as a result.

**Tucker Carlson:** *What should the Republican Party do about Senate candidate Todd Aiken?*

**Honorable Haley Barbour:** The Republican Party has no legal authority to force Senate candidate Todd Aiken to end his campaign. He misspoke and will not win. His campaign was fuelled by the Democratic Party.

**Honorable Jim Nicholson:** Presidential nominee Governor Romney showed courage in dealing with the remarks made by Senate candidate Todd Aiken. He quickly said that the candidate was wrong and should end his campaign.

**Tucker Carlson:** *What does the Republican Party need to do in order to win the election?*

**Honorable Jim Gilmore:** There are no easy answers. It is important to understand where people are coming from and ensure that it is obvious that you care. Moreover, the Republican Party should indicate what it stands for and what it means for America, for them and for their family.

**Honorable Haley Barbour:** The U.S. economy is in a terrible condition.

**Honorable Jim Nicholson:** An alignment of values is not enough. Immigration is a tough issue for America and for the Republican Party; Hispanic office holders and role models are needed. An election is not a sprint; rather, it is a long race.

## **THE UNTOLD STORY OF ECONOMIC FREEDOM AND TODAY'S INTERNATIONAL CRISES: PANEL DISCUSSION**

Kim Holmes, *The Heritage Foundation*

- A lack of economic freedom, which can lead to instability, is a phenomenon in a number of countries and regions in the world, including Egypt; in that country, the result was the Arab Spring, where there is a need to lift the “repressive hand of government” on the economy.
- Repressive regimes deny political and economic freedoms, as denial of one inevitably leads to denial of the other, and such repression inevitably leads to poverty.
- Free economies are more likely to respect the environment, and people are both happier and healthier.
- The United States has been falling on the Index of Economic Freedom; it is now ranked 10<sup>th</sup> and used to be ranked 5<sup>th</sup>.
- The United States’ ranking on the Index of Economic Freedom is a reflection of conscious decisions made by American decision makers; as the ranking has been falling, debt has been growing and economic growth has been slowing.

**Salim Furth, *The Heritage Foundation***



- The Arab Spring started because someone would not pay a bribe, and spread because others could relate to his situation.
- Corruption bred the Arab Spring, and there is a quantitative link between corruption and violence.
- In the Arab world, there is a need to:
  - curb corruption
  - liberalize labour markets
  - reduce bureaucracy
  - expand political representation.

**Terry Miller, *The Heritage Foundation***

- The Index of Economic Freedom has existed for 18 years; it measures 10 economic freedoms in four pillars, and the standard of living is higher in freer economies; the pillars and categories are:
  - rule of law
    - property rights
    - freedom from corruption
  - limited government
    - fiscal freedom
    - government spending
  - regulatory efficiency
    - business freedom
    - labour freedom
    - monetary freedom
  - open markets
    - trade freedom
    - investment freedom
    - financial freedom.
- Economic freedom leads to higher growth and greater prosperity, thereby enabling a reduction in poverty, innovation, and improved health, educational and environmental outcomes.
- Greece has problems on every measure of economic freedom and is often last or second-last among euro zone countries.
- In Europe, an economic crisis usually becomes a political crisis and leads to instability; in 2011, there were new governments in Portugal, Italy, Spain and Greece.
- Based on the Index of Economic Freedom, the problems in the European countries could have been predicted.
- In Europe, “big government” is the biggest threat to economic freedom.

- Based on the Index of Economic Freedom, the United States has moved from the category of “free” to “mostly free,” and the country needs to change course now.

## **THE FUTURE OF U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY: PANEL DISCUSSION**

At the panel discussion, the Honorable Jim Kolbe, former Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, posed questions to:

- Honorable Norm Coleman, former U.S. Senator
- Honorable Jim Talent, former U.S. Senator
- Honorable Vin Weber, former Member of the U.S. House of Representatives
- Honorable Richard Williamson, former Ambassador to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and Special Envoy for Sudan.

***Honorable Jim Kolbe:*** *How does presidential nominee Governor Romney differ from President Obama in terms of foreign policy?*

### **Honorable Richard Williamson**

- Presidential nominee Governor Romney recognizes that the United States is based on human rights and democracy, and he feels strongly that the United States and the world are better off with U.S. leadership.
- From a foreign policy perspective, President Obama seeks risk avoidance.
- The bipartisan tradition of peace through strength is embraced by presidential nominee Governor Romney; in terms of this tradition, Presidents Carter and Obama are “outliers.”

### **Honorable Vin Weber**

- The United States believes that it is special and, as such, faces special obligations.
- The United States wants and intends to lead.

### **Honorable Jim Talent**

- The United States maintains robust capabilities.
- The United States should cooperate with countries that have the same goals and values.

### **Honorable Norm Coleman**

- In order to “grow a job,” it helps to have had a job.

- Given the current state of the U.S. economy, it is hard for the United States to speak to the European Union about economic issues.

**Honorable Jim Kolbe:** *What comments should be made about President Obama's view that the world wants a less-dominant United States?*

**Honorable Norm Coleman**

- The world wants the United States to lead.
- When the United States fails to lead, there are terrible consequences.

**Honorable Jim Talent**

- Leadership is key.
- The United States needs, and wants, allies.
- Presidential nominee Governor Romney understands that alliances are stronger and burdens are shared when the United States indicates its presence and commitment to lead.

**Honorable Vin Weber**

- The United States' allies are stronger and more capable of "doing their job" with U.S. leadership.
- The United States alone has the resources that are needed.

**Honorable Richard Williamson**

- The United States should be reasonable, responsible, rational, pragmatic and practical.
- The United States' "foreign policy toolbox" is large.
- Friends may not always agree, but they should always try to work together.
- The United States is stronger when it works with other countries.
- The United States should provide leadership.
- The Republican Party would rebuild the United States' relationships with its allies.

**Honorable Jim Kolbe:** *What specific actions should be taken regarding Syria?*

**Honorable Richard Williamson**

- President Obama and presidential nominee Governor Romney have contrasting approaches.

- The United States has been “missing in action,” and “allowing things to drift” does not mean that they will be solved.

### **Honorable Norm Coleman**

- “Boots on the ground” are important.
- The United States needs to have “a seat at the table.”

### **Honorable Jim Talent**

- The right decisions lead to expanded options as time goes on.
- American credibility needs to be affirmed.

**Honorable Jim Kolbe:** *Recognizing that U.S. sanctions have not worked, what should be done regarding Iran and its “drive” for nuclear weapons?*

### **Honorable Vin Weber**

- While President Obama has said many of the right things, the military option should not be “on the table.”
- While tough sanctions are good, the assumption is that Iran cares more about its people than it does about acquiring nuclear capabilities.

### **Honorable Richard Williamson**

- While tougher sanctions are good, it should be noted that President Obama opposed these sanctions while he was in the U.S. Senate.
- President Obama has an “engagement approach.”
- Presidential nominee Governor Romney believes in engagement, but he does not believe in engagement for engagement’s sake.

### **Honorable Jim Talent**

- Strong leadership, backed by action, is needed.
- The United States should:
  - build a missile defence system
  - impose tougher sanctions
  - build coalitions of “the relevant”
  - act as quickly and consistently as possible, and with like-minded allies.

### **Honorable Norm Coleman**

- There are concerns about nuclear proliferation.
- Nuclear proliferation is a global issue.

**Honorable Jim Kolbe:** *What should be done regarding Afghanistan?*

**Honorable Jim Talent**

- The Republican Party respects the date in 2014 for withdrawal from Afghanistan, but there is work to be done before then.

**Honorable Norm Coleman**

- The date in 2014 for withdrawal from Afghanistan was selected for political reasons; the Republican Party would not make decisions for political reasons.
- In the United States, support for Afghanistan has fallen.

**Honorable Jim Kolbe:** *What role should the United States play in the South China Sea?*

**Honorable Jim Talent**

- The United States has a growing economic relationship with China; that said, the United States should not move away from existing strategic alliances in the Pacific.
- It is not possible to maintain credibility without presence, and it is not possible to maintain presence without relationships.

**Honorable Vin Weber**

- There is evidence that China's economy is slowing.
- It is important that the United States strengthen its traditional relationships with allies in the region.

**Honorable Jim Kolbe:** *Is Russia the United States' primary enemy?*

**Honorable Richard Williamson**

- It is important to be honest about disagreements and frank about long-term aspirations.
- There is concern about the "authoritarian drift" in Russia.
- It is important to understand that people can have legitimate differences.

- Presidential nominee Governor Romney believes that the United States must “recalibrate” its approach regarding Russia.

### **Honorable Vin Weber**

- “Geopolitical foe” and “military foe” are not the same thing.

### **Honorable Norm Coleman**

- There is a difference between being a foe and being an enemy; foes respect active strength.
- There are some human rights concerns in relation to Russia.

### **Honorable Jim Talent**

- President Obama is sensitive to Russia’s concerns, and Russia has responded by being insensitive.
- Presidential nominee Governor Romney believes that relationships are built by being able to speak the truth.

***Honorable Jim Kolbe: What role should be played by humanitarian considerations?***

### **Honorable Richard Williamson**

- Presidential nominee Governor Romney understands and embraces the primary importance of security for the American people as the first responsibility.
- Values should play a role in foreign policy.
- A wide range of foreign policy actions are available, including:
  - sanctions
  - “boots on the ground”
  - foreign assistance
  - diplomacy.

### **Honorable Jim Talent**

- U.S. leadership in the international community is important.
- There is a need to take action against gross atrocities.

***Honorable Jim Kolbe: Should the United States’ embargo against Cuba be lifted?***

### **Honorable Jim Talent**

- The United States' embargo against Cuba should not be lifted.

**Honorable Vin Weber**

- The United States' embargo against Cuba should not be lifted.

**Honorable Richard Williamson**

- The United States' embargo against Cuba should not be lifted.

**Honorable Norm Coleman**

- The United States' embargo against Cuba should not be lifted.
- When former Cuban President Fidel Castro is gone, there will be opportunities; in the ensuing transition, there should be democracy.

***Honorable Jim Kolbe:** What should be the United States' relationship with Latin America?*

**Honorable Norm Coleman**

- Presidential nominee Governor Romney wants a robust relationship with, and expanded economic opportunities in, Latin America.
- Latin America has many resources.

**Honorable Jim Talent**

- Trade and effective assistance can lead to the creation of jobs.

***Honorable Jim Kolbe:** Is it the right time for the United States to reduce funding for foreign assistance?*

**Honorable Vin Weber**

- U.S. foreign assistance expenditures are relatively minor, and now is not the best time to reduce these expenditures; that said, it is difficult not to reduce such expenditures in light of the pressure to reduce domestic spending.
- The private sector has a role to play regarding foreign assistance.

**Honorable Jim Talent**

- Foreign assistance tools can be very effective at a relatively low cost.

- Foreign assistance should be linked to foreign policy, and there should be accountability and results.

## **BIOTECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: PANEL DISCUSSION**

### **Robert Bradway, *Amgen***

- There is a need to nurture, invest in and focus on innovation in both good times and bad times; as well, both the private and public sectors have a role to play.
- There is a need to work together and to learn from each other in order to advance innovation, including in respect of biotechnology, for the benefit of all; it is not a zero-sum game.
- The right medicine should be provided to the right patient at the right time.
- In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, advances in biomedical knowledge have brought us to the cusp of a revolution.
- There is a global race in the area of biology; many countries around the world have biotechnology-focused efforts.
- Pro-growth policies for biotechnology would address the following five elements as a package rather than as a menu from which a subset of actions should be chosen:
  - investments in scientific infrastructure, especially basic scientific research and education
  - strong, enforceable intellectual property rights in order to reward risk takers as well as attract investments for research, development and marketing
  - regulations, with a focus on ensuring that they are sound, predictable, transparent, non-discriminatory and science-based
  - stable access to capital, including risk capital, and an openness to international investment
  - a competitive market for customers and a market that rewards innovation, with a recognition that most competitive markets are led by private companies and not by state-owned enterprises.
- Innovation is a key driver for growth, and policies that specifically support innovation are needed.
- Governments should invest in education as well as research and development, and should support collaboration with the private sector.

### **Honorable David Dreier, *U.S. House of Representatives***

- There is a need to focus on the harmonization of regulations.
- A Republican president with Republicans leading both houses in the U.S. Congress would be good for all countries.



- Democrats look initially to the federal government to solve societal problems, whereas Republicans look to the following, in order: family, church, community, local government, county government, state government and the federal government.
- Republicans want to enhance economic opportunity, which occurs through economic liberalization.
- The existence of global poverty is linked to violent extremism.
- The members of Congress who represent the Tea Party understand the importance of globalization.
- The rule of law and the development of self-determination can only occur with strong democratic institutions.

**Stephen Klasko, *University of South Florida***

- Things are never transformed through changes to the existing reality; to transform something, a new reality that makes the old way obsolete is needed.
- A key question is: what can be done today to begin the process of transformation?

**U.S. INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY, MANUFACTURING AND JOB GROWTH:  
PANEL DISCUSSION**

At the panel discussion, Joshua Bolten, former White House Chief of Staff and a Director of the Office of Management and Budget, made opening remarks and posed questions to the following individuals following their opening remarks:

- Stephen Biegun, Ford Motor Company
- William Lane, Caterpillar Inc.
- Gregory Sebansky, Philips Electronics.

**Joshua Bolten**

- This election, probably more than any other election in recent memory, is about the economy.
- Job growth is a pivotal element in the entire election process.
- Economic growth and job growth are key, and they are linked to the fiscal situation.

**Gregory Sebasky**

- There is a difference between transformation and reform.

- The focus should be innovation and private-sector solutions, rather than government solutions.
- Supply chains drive economies.
- The doctrine of national treatment is important.

### **William Lane**

- There is a need to have a global perspective; companies should be viewed as global entities that happen to have their headquarters in a particular place.
- The Asian market is critical; China is more open to investment than was Japan during the 1980s.
- The world is “awash” in money, but confidence is lacking, and confidence takes leadership.

### **Stephen Biegun**

- When the United States’ turnaround occurs, U.S. manufacturing will have great prosperity because of “sound fundamentals.”

**Joshua Bolten:** *What needs to be done at this point in time?*

### **William Lane**

- The most important issue in this election is jobs, so there is a need to focus on what needs to be done to create jobs.
- Jobs are created when the right policies are implemented.
- Businesses need to:
  - convince decision makers to be bold, including with respect to the Trans-Pacific Partnership
  - ensure that there is a sense of urgency, including with respect to the speed with which trade agreements are negotiated, ratified and implemented
  - ensure that the perfect is not permitted to become the enemy of the good.

### **Gregory Sebasky**

- Problems should be approached in a pragmatic way and with an emphasis on evidence.
- Markets around the world need to be strong.

**Joshua Bolten:** *What should be the policy message of the Republican team?*

### **Gregory Sebasky**

The Republican team should convey a message of:

- the doctrine of national treatment
- harmonization of regulations
- a clear view on tax policy, including simplification for corporations
- greater openness, including with respect to visas.

### **William Lane**

- The primary job of the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, who has the “ear of the President,” is to create jobs and support business.
- The U.S. Secretary of Commerce resigned 71 days ago, with the result that there is currently no advocate – in the federal Cabinet – for business.
- Presidential nominee Governor Romney understands business.

### **Stephen Biegun**

- Growth must be a priority and at the centre of all economic policies.
- All policy changes need to be focused on growth.

**Joshua Bolten:** *What action should be taken regarding exchange rates?*

### **Stephen Biegun**

- The global economy should dictate the level of a currency; governments should not be involved.
- Globally, currency interventions are replacing tariff and non-tariff barriers as barriers to trade.
- When markets are open, governments have less impetus to intervene regarding currency.

## **POLITICAL OVERVIEW AND THE COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES**

### **Honorable Frank Fahrenkopf, Jr., *Commission on Presidential Debates and Former Chairman, Republican National Committee***

- In the United States, the 2012 presidential election campaign will begin in earnest after the Democratic National Convention.
- Americans do not really start to focus on election campaigns until after Labour Day.
- When Americans begin to focus on the election, the presidential and vice-presidential debates will be a focus; 65% of respondents say that the debates are an important factor in how they will vote.

- When considering the presidential nominees in this election cycle, the American people will be faced with totally different approaches regarding the role of government in the lives of the American people; from that perspective, the debates may be more important this year than ever before.
- The first televised presidential debate occurred between Senator John Kennedy and Vice-President Richard Nixon; after that debate, it was 16 years before the next presidential debate occurred.
- Presidential nominee Governor Carter challenged unelected President Gerald Ford to a debate; President Ford had a low approval rating because he had pardoned President Nixon.
- The presidential debate between President Ford and presidential nominee Governor Carter was conducted by the League of Women Voters, which also ran the debates in 1980 and in 1984.
- After the 1984 election, two study commissions reached the same conclusion: an independent commission should be created, the result of which was the Commission on Presidential Debates.
- The Commission on Presidential Debates – which has Republican, Democratic and independent members – ran its first debate in 1988, with the debate between Vice-President George H. Bush and presidential nominee Governor Michael Dukakis.
- Now, presidential and vice-presidential debates are always held on university and college campuses; the institutions are required to put up \$1.5 million in endowment funds.
- In 1992, the Town Hall debate format was used for the first time, with a debate among President George H. Bush and presidential nominees Governor Bill Clinton and Ross Perot.
- President George H. Bush did not want to engage in presidential debates in 1992; he felt that debating is beneath the dignity of the president.
- The last presidential debate in 1992 was the second-most watched show in history, next to the last episode of MASH.
- Formerly, the presidential debates occurred with a moderator and a panel of reporters, who would take turns asking questions; in 1992, the Commission on Presidential Debates used a format that included a single moderator and, beginning in 2000, this format has become the standard.
- The 2012 debates will have a new format:
  - a presidential debate focused on domestic policy
  - a vice-presidential debate focused equally on domestic and foreign policy
  - a presidential debate with a Town Hall format
  - a presidential debate focused on international policy.

- The 2012 presidential election is likely to be decided by independent voters and by fewer than a dozen states, in which 90% of the money will be spent.
- To date, it is thought that the debate between vice-presidential nominees Governor Sarah Palin and Senator Joe Biden was the most watched debate, while the debate between vice-presidential nominees Senator Joe Lieberman and Dick Cheney was the most substantive debate.
- In selecting the moderators for the debates, tapes are reviewed to assess whether the potential moderator's reporting is balanced and serious; care is taken to select individuals who will not use the role of debate moderator to make a name for himself/herself.
- Over the last four years, President Obama has been "missing in action," and he has worked to lower people's expectations rather than to raise them.
- It does not occur to many Americans that someone else will solve their problems; they depend on themselves.
- The 2012 election will be a choice about who Americans are and what they believe.
- For four years, President Obama has been running away from the nation's problems; on the other hand, presidential nominee Governor Romney has spent his entire life figuring out how to solve problems.
- Presidential nominee Governor Romney sees a country that is ready for a comeback, and he is the man to lead that comeback.
- The current economic recovery is the slowest in the nation's history.
- The current situation is a result of the decisions made by President Obama and his Democratic allies in Congress.

## **2012 REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION**

### ***Alec Poitevint, 2012 Republic National Convention***

- Planning a political convention requires putting together a transportation system, changing something like a rink to something like a theatre, ensuring back-up electrical and other systems, determining that there are adequate hotel rooms, picking people to be part of the program, etc.
- During this RNC, the planning team holds a staff meeting at 11 p.m. each day.
- A political party's site committee sends out a request for proposals, and the selection from among the cities that are finalists is a business decision.
- A presidential nominee is not bound by the positions contained in his/her party's platform.

## **INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC TRADE: PANEL DISCUSSION**

At the panel discussion, Paula Dobriansky, Harvard University and former Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs, made opening comments and posed questions to:

- Honorable Carlos Gutierrez, former U.S. Secretary of Commerce
- Honorable Grant Aldonas, former Under Secretary of Commerce.

### **Paula Dobriansky**

- The international economy is linked to the domestic economy.
- Strong economic leadership is important.

***Paula Dobriansky: What are the key international and domestic economic challenges?***

### **Honorable Carlos Gutierrez**

- The short-term economic situation is not good; the economy is “standing still,” there is little momentum, the unemployment rate is 8.3%, and 23 million Americans are either looking for a job, are discouraged workers or are working part-time while wanting full-time employment.
- Presidential Obama and presidential nominee Governor Romney have much different philosophies about how to “grow” an economy; the former supports regulations that impede business while the latter is pro-business.
- President Obama’s Administration has made matters worse rather than better, and has added \$5 trillion to the U.S. debt.
- Globally, the U.S. deficit as a proportion of gross domestic product is among the top five countries.
- From 1982 to 2007, members of the baby boom generation bought homes, acquired assets and engaged in other behaviour that led to economic growth; now, they have started to retire, which has led to labour force shortages and these shortages have made it more difficult to pay for Medicare and pensions.
- There is a “fairly decent” probability that Greece may leave the euro monetary union.
- Russia has joined the World Trade Organization, which is a “major step.”
- Asia is likely to become the world’s largest trading union and to be larger than the European Union.
- The real trend is regionalization, not globalization.
- The United States needs to “do work in its neighbourhood” with its *North American Free Trade Agreement* (NAFTA) partners; NAFTA has been “wildly successful” for all three countries.

- The United States has a free trade agreement with some of the countries in Latin America; there is a need to integrate these countries regionally so that – like Europe – countries in North America and Latin America can become a region.
- Presidential nominee Governor Romney’s first priority is Latin America.
- Eventually, the issues of Medicare and immigration will be “fixed.”

***Paula Dobriansky:*** *What are the benefits to the United States and to signatory countries of free trade agreements?*

**Honorable Grant Aldonis**

- Over the last four years, there has been too little discussion about free trade agreements and about what is occurring in the global economy.
- With President Obama, there is a complete lack of understanding about what globalization has done.
- During the global financial and economic crisis, the “forces of protectionism” started to rise; free trade agreements counteract these forces, and there is a need to liberalize trade and fight against protectionism.
- Regionalism must not be trade-distorting.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Janis G. Johnson, Senator  
Co-Chair  
Canada-United States  
Inter-Parliamentary Group

Gord Brown, M.P.  
Co-Chair  
Canada-United States  
Inter-Parliamentary Group

## Travel Costs

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Republican National Convention
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Tampa Bay, Florida, United States of America
<b>DATES</b>	August 27- 30, 2012
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Hon. Janis G. Johnson, Senator, Co-Chair
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Gordon Brown, M.P., Co-Chair
STAFF	Ms. June Dewetering, Senior Advisor
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>\$4,154.77</b>
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	<b>\$2,967.20</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	<b>\$Ø</b>
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	<b>\$1,054.84</b>
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	<b>\$Ø</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS/REGISTRATION FEES</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$8,176.81</b>