

Canada – United States  
Inter-Parliamentary Group  
Canadian Section



Groupe interparlementaire  
Canada – États-Unis  
Section canadienne

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# **Report of the Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group**

**U.S. Congressional Meetings**

**By videoconference**

**From March 15 to 18, 2021**

# Report

## **DELEGATION MEMBERS AND STAFF**

From 15–18 March 2021, the Honourable Senator Michael L. MacDonald and the Honourable Wayne Easter, P.C., M.P., Co-Chairs of the Canadian Section of the Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group (IPG) hosted 23 virtual meetings with 25 members of U.S. Congress. The Honourable Senators Diane Griffin and Yuen Pau Woo, as well as the Honourable John McKay, P.C., M.P., Vance Badawey, M.P., Colin Carrie, M.P., James Cumming, M.P., Marc Dalton, M.P., Kerry Diotte, M.P., Brian Masse, M.P. Francesco Sorbara, M.P., and Mario Simard, M.P., also participated in one or more meetings. The meetings were supported by Mr. Brett Capwell, Ms. Marie Dumont, and Mr. Michael Chalupovitsch, Advisors to the Canadian Section, as well as Mr. Grant McLaughlin, the Canadian Section’s Association Secretary.

## **THE EVENT AND DELEGATION OBJECTIVES**

During their meetings with members of the House of Representatives, the delegation focused on a range of issues that are important to the Canada–U.S. relationship. These issues included border operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, Canadian energy exports and climate change efforts, as well as cybersecurity and the defense of critical infrastructure.

These meetings enabled members of the Canadian Section to inform U.S. federal legislators about, and gain their support on, critical issues affecting both countries. More generally, members of the Canadian Section believe that congressional meetings are an invaluable opportunity to initiate productive discussions on issues of common concern.

Since the Canadian Section’s meetings with U.S. federal legislators are designed to be private, the report below summarizes the general nature of the issues that were raised by Canadian and American legislators without attribution.

## **THE OBJECTIVES OF THE CANADA–UNITED STATES INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP**

The Canada–U.S. IPG has four key objectives: 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 Canadian and American legislators on shared issues of concern.

Members of the IPG’s Canadian Section normally pursue their goals through meeting with their Congressional counterparts in Washington, D.C., Ottawa, or occasionally in other locations throughout Canada and the United States. In addition, members liaise with U.S. governors and state legislators at national and regional conferences. Due to the impact of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic across North America, the IPG’s Canadian Section have participated in these meetings and events virtually since March 2020.

## **TOPICS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE U.S. CONGRESS**

## Trade and Infrastructure

- The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the integrated nature of North American supply chains, though some members of the U.S. Congress worry that they need to be better insulated from economic disruptions.
- The Canada–U.S. relationship is perceived to be strong and important, and members of the U.S. House of Representatives are enthusiastic about continuing this relationship.
- Under President Biden’s administration, the United States is looking to work collaboratively with its trade partners on addressing China’s disruptive trade practices.
- A protectionist approach to supply chain infrastructure is outdated thinking in comparison to China’s Belt and Road Initiative. North America must adapt accordingly.
- Further collaboration is needed to build a stronger North American manufacturing sector.
- The haphazard imposition of tariffs on Canadian goods are counterproductive to all parties. In that regard, the trade related rules within the *Canada United-States Mexico Agreement* (CUSMA) provide businesses with the certainty they require to prosper.
- The pandemic has highlighted rural broadband as an infrastructure priority.
- Many members of the U.S. Congress are interested in more regular trade conferences for legislators, such as with respect to trade and supply chains.
- Governments should not obstruct private businesses that have dedicated substantial time and investments into a project by revoking retroactively operating permits over political concerns, as occurred with the Line-5 pipeline.
- Negotiations to modernize the *Columbia River Treaty* require both government’s engagement to reach an optimal outcome.
- President Biden is focused on Canada and has a good relationship with Prime Minister Trudeau.
- While Buy American sentiment remains strong, many realize that Canada is not a disruptive force to the U.S. economy.

## The Canada–United States Border

- Some members noted growing frustration over the prolonged border closure. They also indicated that the list of “essential” reasons to cross the border needs to be expanded.
- Many Canadians own property in the United States and vice versa. A number of issues have arisen from the inability of these owners to visit their properties.
- Canada and the United States must work together on a safe border re-opening strategy, inspired for example by initiatives such as the Northern Border Caucus’s metrics-based approach to border reopening.

### **Energy and the Environment**

- There is a need for greater global collaboration on addressing climate change.
- North America needs to increase its focus on climate related disaster mitigation strategies and coastline resiliency.
- The United States hopes to move toward electrifying public transportation systems, ferries, and the postal service fleet.
- There should be a stronger push for North American energy independence.
- The transition to greener energy sources should be done in a manner that does not abandon those employed by traditional energy sources.
- The Great Lakes are important for many U.S. legislators, particularly as it relates to their protection and regarding high-water level defence for shoreline homeowners.
- With respect to climate change, foreign criticism may be more effective at swaying the American public into action than domestic criticism.

### **Defence and Security**

- The Canadian Armed Forces is recognized for its professionalism and effectiveness, and U.S. legislators believe Canada is an important military ally to the United States.
- Many members of the U.S. Congress expressed their support for greater congressional and presidential action with respect to the detention of Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig by the Chinese government.
- Membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is important to global security.

- The United States must nurture its allies to defend the values of freedom and human dignity, as well as to promote prosperous free trade practices.

## **ISSUES RAISED BY THE CANADIAN SECTION OF THE CANADA–UNITED STATES INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP**

### **Diplomacy and Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group**

- Involvement with IPG is an excellent opportunity to further policy discussions on topics of joint interest. All members of the U.S. Congress are encouraged to participate.
- Prime Minister Trudeau and President Biden have launched a Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership to expand on our countries' historic relationship.

### **Trade and Investment**

- We look to the U.S.-Mexico-Canada free trade zone for maximizing our countries' abilities to build back from the pandemic. It is one of the largest economic regions in the world, encompassing a U.S. \$22 trillion regional market of more than 480 million consumers.
- Local content requirements, such as Buy America requirements, affect long-standing cross-border supply chains negatively, putting U.S. and Canadian jobs at risk, distorting investment, and resulting in higher prices for businesses and consumers.
- Canada remains concerned with the past use of protectionist policies by the United States, such as through Executive Orders.
- Since the beginning of the pandemic, our countries have collaborated closely to maintain the two-way flow of medical supplies and critical inputs across our border. We must continue to work together to strengthen our medical supply chains and address vulnerabilities.
- Canada buys more goods from the United States than any other country, and by a wide margin. For example, the United States sells more goods to Canada than the United Kingdom, Japan, and China combined.
- Canada is the largest sole supplier of goods to the United States, including agricultural and natural resource products such as wheat, pork, wood, and iron; transportation equipment such as motor vehicle parts, airplanes, and rail cars; and energy products such as hydro electricity and uranium.
- Canada's dairy policies are not causing challenges to U.S. dairy farmers.

- Canada is an important supplier of 13 of the 35 minerals that the U.S. has identified as “critical,” including aluminum, uranium, potash, and graphite. The Canada-U.S. Joint Action Plan on Critical Minerals Collaboration will help address security and defence concerns, facilitate greater minerals trade and investment, and increase industry competitiveness in both Canada and the United States.

### **The Canada–United States Border**

- Canada has taken an evidence-informed approach to this pandemic, with health authorities informing the backbone of our efforts.
- Canada welcomes joint efforts to create a plan for safe border re-opening and for rejuvenating our respective tourism sectors.
- Canada and the United States have ensured the border remains open to trade and essential medical equipment, such as gloves, ventilators, testing kits, and masks. Canada is a top 5 supplier for 50 of the 112 imported “critical” COVID-19 related safety products.

### **Energy and the Environment**

- Canada committed to the Paris Agreement, net zero targets and mobilizing on climate action. As the United States’ most important energy partner, Canada is ready to collaborate to meet our shared goals to support North America’s energy transition and greenhouse gas reduction goals.
- The oil and gas sector is part of Canada’s approach to the energy transition by serving as a source of emission reductions in its own right, supporting and funding clean technology development and deployment, and providing government revenues to help advance the transition.
- The Canada–U.S. Partnership Roadmap outlines areas of integration between the two countries: accelerating the production and deployment of electric vehicles, cutting oil and gas methane emissions, developing cross-border clean electricity transmission lines and safeguarding the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, advancing nature-based climate solutions, and protecting more of our nature.
- Canada is the largest and most secure supplier of energy to the United States, including crude oil and refined petroleum products, natural gas, electricity, hydropower, and uranium.
- The United States is the destination for virtually all Canadian oil that isn’t used domestically, with Canada supplying the United States with well over half of its oil imports. One in five barrels of oil consumed in the United States comes from Canada. The United States imports more oil from Canada than from all OPEC members combined.

- Canada supports the continued safe operation of Enbridge's Line 5, which is a critical economic and energy link between Canada and the United States, delivering feedstock to refineries in Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, as well as Eastern Canada.
- The Great Lakes are an asset to both countries with respect to their economies, environment, and social opportunities. Canada–U.S. cooperation in this region is excellent, and all parties should continue to foster this prosperous relationship.

### **Defence and Security**

- Canada–U.S. cooperation in defence and security continues to be comprehensive and effective, such as within NATO, NORAD, Five-Eyes, intelligence services, law enforcement and border security.
- NORAD modernization efforts are underway in order to strengthen continental defence against current and future threats.
- Canada and the United States recognize the threat posed by hostile actors in cyberspace. As part of strong efforts to protect their critical infrastructure, Canada and the United States will implement a Framework for Collaboration in the Energy Sector that will enhance collaboration on initiatives critical to advancing the cybersecurity and resiliency of our cross-border energy infrastructure.
- Canada remains committed to cooperating closely with the United States on issues facing the two countries.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Michael L. MacDonald, Senator	Hon. John McKay, P.C., M.P.
Co-Chair	Co-Chair
Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group	Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group

## **Travel Costs**

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	U.S. Congressional Meetings
<b>DESTINATION</b>	By videoconference
<b>DATES</b>	March 15 to 18, 2021
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
<b>SENATE</b>	Hon. Michael L. MacDonald Hon. Diane Griffin Hon. Yuen Pau Woo
<b>HOUSE OF COMMONS</b>	Hon. Wayne Easter, P.C. Hon. John McKay, P.C. Vance Badawey Colin Carrie James Cumming Marc Dalton Kerry Diotte Brian Masse Francesco Sorbara Mario Simard
<b>STAFF</b>	Grant McLaughlin Brett Capwell Michael Chalupovitsch Marie Dumont
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	\$ 0.00
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	\$ 0.00
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	\$ 0.00
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	\$ 0.00
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	\$ 0.00
<b>MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES</b>	\$ 0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>

