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 National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)

Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group

Louisville, Kentucky, United States of America
July 25 - 28, 2010

Report

DELEGATION MEMEBERS AND STAFF

From July 25-28, 2010, Mr. Brian Masse, M.P., Vice-Chair of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group (IPG), led a delegation to the annual legislative summit of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) in Louisville, Kentucky. Other members of the delegation were the Honourable Jim Munson, Senator, Mr. Dean Del Mastro, M.P. and Mr. Mervin Tweed, M.P. The delegation was accompanied by Mr. Chad Mariage, the Canadian Section's Executive Secretary, and Ms. June Dewetering, Senior Advisor to the Canadian Section.

THE EVENT

Founded in 1975, the National Conference of State Legislatures is a bipartisan organization serving the legislators and legislative staff of the 50 US states as well as its commonwealths and territories. The NCSL provides research, technical assistance and a venue for the exchange of ideas on state issues. It also advocates state interests before the US Congress and federal agencies. The NCSL is governed by a 61-member Executive Committee, and has 12 standing committees comprised of legislators and legislative staff. These committees are:

- Agriculture and Energy
- Budgets and Revenue
- Communications, Financial Services and Interstate Commerce
- Education
- Environment
- Health
- Human Services and Welfare
- Labor and Economic Development
- Law and Criminal Justice
- Legislative Effectiveness
- Redistricting and Elections
- Transportation.

As well, there are a number of task forces:

- Energy Supply
- Federal Education Policy
- Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness
- Immigration and the States
- Military and Veterans Affairs
- School Dropout Prevention
- State and Local Taxation of Telecommunications and Electronic Commerce
- Sustainable Energy.

ACTIVITIES DURING THE EVENT

In general terms, the meetings at the 2010 Legislative Summit occurred in the following topic areas:

- agriculture and rural development
- banking and financial services
- budget and tax
- civic education
- economic development and trade
- education
- elections and redistricting
- energy and electric utilities
- environmental protection
- health
- human services and welfare
- immigration
- insurance
- juvenile justice
- labour and employment
- law and criminal justice
- legislatures
- media and public affairs
- natural resources
- pensions
- protecting democracy
- telecommunications and information technology
- transportation.

In addition to committee and task force meetings, the following plenary sessions were held:

- Does Congress Really Care About the States?
- An Education Success Story
- America’s Take.

DELEGATION OBJECTIVES FOR THE EVENT

The interaction with state legislators enables members of the Canadian Section of the IPG to achieve better the aim of finding points of convergence in respective policies, initiating dialogue on points of divergence, encouraging exchanges of information and promoting better understanding on shared issues of concern. Moreover, the meetings with state legislators provide members of the Canadian Section with an important means to give input to, and gather information about, state-level issues that affect Canada.

In addition to their attendance at the committee, task force and plenary meetings, which provided them with an opportunity to interact with state legislators, members of the delegation also spoke with Georgia State Senator Don Balfour, the outgoing NCSL

President, and with Massachusetts State Senator Richard Moore, who will serve as NCSL President for the coming year. They emphasized the nature and scope of the bilateral relationship and mentioned that the Canadian Section of the IPG would welcome opportunities for greater participation at future NCSL meetings. As well, delegates met informally with the North Dakota and Michigan delegations.
This report summarizes the discussions that occurred at the plenary and selected committee sessions.

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ECONOMIC GROWTH

Corina Eckl, *National Conference of State Legislatures*

- most states start their fiscal cycle on 1 July
- US states began to encounter fiscal problems three years ago, and fiscal problems are expected to continue for at least two more years
- while states have experienced some improvement in their revenues, major budget gaps continue to exist
- the recent recession, which some believe has ended, was the longest faced in the United States since the Great Depression
- states have found that their rainy day funds were inadequate; the bond rating agencies would like the states to have 5% of their budget in reserve
- for states, personal income and sales taxes are important
- states have taken a variety of actions to close their budget gaps, including:
    - program reductions
    - service reductions
    - tax and fee increases
    - the use of rainy day funds
    - the use of federal stimulus funds
    - an increased focus on streamlining and efficiency
    - economic development programs
- for states, key concerns in the future include:
    - replacing federal stimulus funds
    - determining the timeline for the return of state revenues to their pre-recession levels
    - addressing structural budget gaps
    - meeting unfunded pension liabilities

Terri Austin, *Member of the Indiana House of Representatives*

- during the recession, Indiana tried to avoid reducing benefits; it reduced funding for education and implemented hiring freezes
- Indiana believes that investments in transportation are revenue generators; the state has used private-public partnerships to fund transportation, which results in a transfer of risk from the public to the private sector, may involve creative financing, and can increase the level of transparency and accountability
- in some cases, Indiana uses an “asset monetization” model

- the public is more accepting of, or less resentful of, private-public partnerships if it is felt that consultation has occurred
- each private-public partnership should be assessed on its own merits, since this approach is not suitable in all cases

Gary LeBeau, *Member of the Connecticut Senate*

- Connecticut does not have a strategy for job growth or economic development; it does, however, have the goal of retaining high-paying jobs in high-value-added industries, such as defence and pharmaceuticals
- on a per capita basis, Connecticut is the wealthiest US state; that said, it also has relatively high costs for housing, energy, health care, property taxes, etc.
- Connecticut is a leader in the high-technology and advanced manufacturing as well as financial services sectors
- Connecticut benefits from its location next to New York
- transportation is important for economic development

BANKING REGULATION AND STATE SOVEREIGNTY IN FINANCIAL SERVICES

Jane Cline, *National Association of Insurance Commissioners*

- state insurance regulators worked closely with the US Congress as the *Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act* was being developed
- state regulation of insurance worked very well during the recent global financial and economic crisis; as well, during the crisis, insurance policyholders were protected
- insurance companies are prohibited from engaging in the types of behaviours that led to problems in other parts of the financial services sector
- since the state system is working well, there is no need for a federal regulator for insurance

Charles Vice, *Kentucky Department of Financial Institutions*

- the states play a significant role in supervising financial services, including banking, securities and services
- the dual banking system in the United States has helped banks to establish themselves and to grow
- in addition to state regulators, financial services are regulated by four entities at the federal level; although some improvements are needed, the system has worked well
- during the recent global financial and economic crisis, many small banks in the United States continued to lend
- advantages of the state regulatory system include:
    - state regulators are closer to the institutions that they supervise, which may lead to faster decision making
    - state commissioners are focussed on the state banking system
    - greater knowledge about local banks

  - rapid response to problems
  - innovative solutions that are tailored to state needs
- the *Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act* preserved the United States' dual banking system but recalibrated the balance of power between state and federal regulators, implemented provisions for consumer protection and made efforts to address systemic risk; the system contains checks and balances, and has resulted in a diverse and competitive industry

Matthew Street, *American Bankers Association*

- the length of the *Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act* indicates the degree of change that is on the horizon; many changes will have unintended consequences
- some banks will choose not to spend the time and money to comply with new regulations, and will instead sell the business, wind down operations, etc.
- the US Constitution gives the US Congress jurisdiction over interstate commerce
- during the first half of the 19th century, more than one half of the banks in the United States were state banks
- currently, about two thirds of US banks are state-chartered banks
- state bank regulators work effectively with the banks that they regulate and, as well, with federal regulators as required
- state bank regulators have very good local knowledge of the banks in their state
- the *Glass-Steagall Act* of 1933 separated investment banking and deposit banking
- credit reporting has become central to consumer finance

Diane Standaert, *Centre for Responsible Lending*

- the *Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act* contained provisions regarding consumer protection, abusive lending practices and foreclosure prevention tools
- in the United States, home foreclosures are outpacing mortgage loan modifications
- foreclosures have spillover effects and costs; for example, neighbouring property values are affected by foreclosures
- in the United States, 8% of African-American households and 8% of Latino households have lost their homes to foreclosure; 4% of white households have lost their homes in this way
- a growing number of US borrowers are caught in a debt cycle
- overdraft fees are draining wealth from consumers
- a variety of factors led the United States to the current situation, including "dangerous" financial products and practices as well as demands by Wall Street for high-cost loans
- since the early 1990s, payday lenders have been receiving exemptions from state usury laws

CREDIT VERSUS DEBIT

Ron Gagliaradi, *Kentucky Telco Federal Credit Union*

- in the United States, there is a trend away from the use of credit cards and toward the use of debit cards
- it will take some time for all of the impacts of the recent federal financial reform legislation to be felt
- retail merchants have seen interchange fees fall about 1.5-1.75% per transactions
- in Australia, legislation regarding interchange fees has led to no reduction in the costs for consumers; in the United States, the agency-appointed board to oversee interchange fees is unlikely to lead to real benefits for consumers
- a competitive marketplace works to mitigate cost in favour of the consumer
- the marketplace is a fairly good arbiter of what works and what does not work

Richard Santoro, *MasterCard Worldwide*

- debit and credit are friends, not foes
- in the four-party system, there are benefits for each party
- at present, there are more than 2,500 financial institutions in the four-party system as issuers and acquirers, and more than 1 billion card holders; more than 33 million transactions are processed daily
- payment cards started with the merchant community in the 1920s with the extension of credit to consumers
- in general, authorization of debit or credit transactions occurs at the point of sale, with clearing occurring about 6 hours later and settlement – when the merchant is paid – after that
- PIN debit transactions happen in real time, but debit transactions that require a signature have a time line that is similar to that for credit transactions
- with credit – and perhaps debit – cards, consumers benefit in terms of:
    - greater convenience
    - enhanced safety and security
    - better record keeping
    - access to loyalty rewards
- with credit – and perhaps debt – cards, merchants benefit from:
    - increased revenues
    - guaranteed payment
    - enhanced safety and security
    - reduced cost
- because of the Durbin amendment to the *Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act*, debit interchange fees must equal the cost of processing; the result is likely to be reduced service or an increase in other costs

Jean Ann Fox, *Consumer Federation of America*

- it is expected that consumers will be better protected as a result of the *Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act*
- the protections needed by consumers differ depending on whether the transaction is occurring with credit or with debit, and federal protections differ in these two situations; for example, there may be different time and liability limits, levels of protection, and dispute and error resolution rights
- debit card use occurs most often with young people, is rising and often occurs for the purchase of items that have a relatively low cost, such as groceries
- a "levelling of the playing field" with respect to credit and debit should occur
- more than 30 states have legislation regarding gift cards; for example, there may be limits on the extent to which fees can erode the value of the gift

DOES CONGRESS REALLY CARE ABOUT THE STATES?

Nancy Pelosi, *Speaker of the US House of Representatives*

- state and federal governments must work together in order to reach common goals, and ongoing dialogue is required
- state success is essential for America's success
- although progress is being made, much remains to be done
- the US Congressional Budget Office has confirmed that extension of unemployment benefits is the most efficient way in which to promote economic growth
- since health care reform is "the law of the land," stakeholders need to work together to ensure its implementation; prior to reform, health care costs were unsustainable and reduced the United States' competitiveness
- career and technical education is important for the United States' prosperity; people should be given skills, and businesses should be given skilled workers
- former President Clinton's last 4 budgets were balanced; the policies implemented by President Bush led to the crisis being experienced in the United States
- decisions must be made and actions must be taken to ensure that future generations do not bear the burden; the focus must be the next generation, and not the next election
- states are experts in fiscal sustainability

Mitch McConnell, *Republican Leader of the US Senate*

- there is a big difference between "getting along" and agreeing on issues; Democrats and Republicans get along with each other, but they have trouble agreeing on issues
- the Republican view is that bills in the US Congress will not do the things that they say they will do
- the Republicans are fighting "Washington-driven" solutions and are fighting for the states in Washington

- Washington does not have a good record of dealing with “big problems” and Republicans do not trust Washington to “get things right”
- there is a need to let states do the things that they do best; states have often led the way with innovative solutions, and they should be permitted to do so in the future
- the states are the laboratories of democracy
- federalism is about creating clear lines of responsibility and accountability
- for the first time, the federal government is the most important source of revenue for the states, which is resulting in reduced flexibility for them; the states become tied to the federal government, and federal problems lead to state problems
- no one should be forced to purchase health insurance against his/her will
- for the sake of future generations, it is important to balance the budget and reduce debt

IS CHANGE ON THE MENU?

Kevin Concannon, *US Department of Agriculture*

- the federal nutrition assistance programs are the first line of defence, and the US Department of Agriculture works on child nutrition issues through the states
- President Obama and the First Lady have committed to work toward ending hunger and improving nutrition, and the First Lady has a campaign to end childhood obesity in a generation; federal and state actions are needed in order to meet those goals
- in 2008, 167 million American children lived in households experiencing hunger
- childhood hunger and obesity are “two sides of the same coin”
- the United States has the capacity to provide adequate food to all Americans; what is needed is the will to do so
- the child nutrition reauthorization objectives include:
  - improved nutrition standards
  - increased access to meal programs
  - increased education regarding healthy eating
  - the availability of healthier food
  - increased physical activity
  - training for those who prepare school meals
  - the availability of better food-related equipment in schools
  - enhanced food safety
- healthier foods often cost relatively more
- the health of children today has public safety considerations tomorrow, in that only fit people qualify for military service
- the “Let’s Move” campaign has four primary tenets:
  - help parents make healthy choices
  - serve healthier foods in schools
  - improve accessibility to healthy and affordable food
  - increase physical activity
- rigorous food safety standards should exist

Yvonne Butler, *Healthy Kids, Smart Kids Program*

- at least 30% of American children aged between 6 and 18 years are at risk of a heart attack or stroke
- the incidence of childhood and adult obesity is rising
- diet affects learning
- most children do not understand the source of food; they believe that food comes from grocery stores, rather than from farms
- schools have a "captive audience," and should be the place where the fight against childhood obesity is won

Ellen Vollinger, *Food Research and Action Center*

- it is important that people have access to adequate and nutritious food
- although it may seem to be a paradox, obesity and hunger are "two sides of the same coin"
- food deserts exist
- food hardship exists throughout the United States

DEFICIT REDUCTION COMMISSION

Andrew Stern, *National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform*

- Team USA has no plan to compete in the global economy
- there is a need to improve the fiscal situation in the medium term and to achieve fiscal sustainability over the long term
- the goal of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform was to balance the federal budget, excluding interest payments on the federal debt, by 2015
- wage growth and job growth alone will not solve the United States' problems
- the implications of inaction regarding the United States' fiscal situation include:
    - increasing debt
    - infrastructure that is unattended
    - government borrowing that "crowds out" business
    - reductions in services
    - spending freezes
    - intergenerational transfer of debt
- the current fiscal situation in the United States provides opportunities, including:
    - fiscal responsibility
    - tax simplification
    - the development of new forms of revenue

Joshua Gordon, *The Concord Coalition*

- it is possible to put the United States' fiscal situation on a more sustainable course, but bipartisan support is needed; as well, public engagement and understanding are vital

- the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform is a “great place” to begin a sustained bilateral dialogue
- two thirds of federal spending is allocated to mandatory programs, with the three largest being social security, Medicare and Medicaid; demographic change will mean that there are fewer workers to pay the taxes that finance these types of programs, which gives rise to three options:
    - increase taxes
    - reduce benefits
    - implement some combination of higher taxes and lower benefits
- the United States’ net debt is 64% of the nation’s gross domestic product; decisions must be made now to ensure that this ratio falls
- tax reform is a fruitful path for the United States to follow
- two key questions are:
    - what kind of country do we want to leave our children?
    - how important is it that our children are able to decide their own budget priorities?

Doug Hall, *Economic Policy Institute*

- two key questions are:
    - what kind of country do we want?
    - how are we going to pay for the country that we want?
- getting people back to work must be a focus of attention
- the rising US debt is the result of such factors as tax reductions since 2002 and rising defence spending
- during the global financial and economic crisis, the United States lost 8 million jobs; when the 3 million jobs that should have been created during that time are considered, the job loss totals 11 million
- unemployment affects the amount collected in payroll and sales taxes
- 40% of state budgets are derived from federal revenues
- the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform had three working groups:
    - discretionary spending
    - mandatory spending
    - tax reform
- options for increased revenue include:
    - personal tax changes
    - changes to capital gains and dividend taxation
    - changes to the estate tax
    - implementation of a “millionaire surcharge”

RURAL ROAD SAFETY EFFORTS

Lee Munnich, *University of Minnesota*

- 23% of the US population lives in rural areas

- 57% of US highway fatalities occur on rural roads
- in rural areas, people may drive relatively longer distances and it may take relatively longer to get to medical facilities
- the Safe Road Maps initiative is designed to raise awareness and motivate actions by transportation policy makers and private citizens regarding the magnitude, risk factors and impacts of motor vehicle crashes
- rural safety policies that reflect evidence-based research, and which should be supported regardless of ideology, residence, gender and/or age, include:
  - seat belt laws
  - sobriety checkpoints
  - motorcycle helmet use
  - graduated driver's licences
  - automated speed enforcement
  - breathalyser-based ignition locks
- the public thinks that safety is important and expects lawmakers to focus on it

John Dewar, *US Federal Highway Administration*

- more than 50% of road fatalities occur on rural roads
- the fatality rate per distance in rural areas is more than double the rate in urban areas
- rural roads represent 74% of US road miles; of these, 22% of the road miles are owned by the states
- typical rural safety issues include:
  - speeding
  - limited sight distance
  - curves
  - vegetation
  - maintenance
  - signage
  - distance to destination
- a variety of actions can improve road safety, including:
  - rumble strips
  - illumination
  - safety edges
  - pavement markings
  - roadside obstacle removal
  - guardrails
  - trimmed of vegetation
  - improved sight distance
  - roundabouts
  - wider highway shoulders
  - retro-reflective signage

IMPROVING GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY AND SAVING MONEY

Frieda Yueh, *IBM Americas*

- given the existing reality regarding state budgets, there is an increased focus on investments that will yield returns within the current budget cycle
- there are technological measures that allow states to identify tax evasion as well as Medicaid fraud and abuse

AN EDUCATION SUCCESS STORY

Jeb Bush, *Former Governor of Florida*

- the world is moving at warp speed and the United States is facing new challenges; education is important for addressing these challenges
- in 1998, within the United States, Florida ranked at the bottom on almost every indicator of education quality, and public library books were tracked better than was student progress
- it should be assumed that:
  - all students can learn
  - all students are capable of reaching the same high level of achievement
  - adults have a responsibility to establish an environment in which students can realize their full potential
  - if you can “get the education issue right,” many other challenges become easier to solve
  - schools should be held responsible for student learning and should be rewarded for success, or penalized for failure, in this regard
- in schools, reading should be an early focus since an ability to read is a prerequisite for learning
- the correct educational outcomes should be funded; targeting funds to achievement leads to achievement
- to improve the quality of education, the areas that should be targeted for reform include:
  - academic standards, which should be higher and rigourous
  - accountability mechanisms, which should be robust
  - the environment in terms of school choice, which should be competitive
  - teacher effectiveness, which should be improved
  - technology, which should be used effectively
- all challenges, including those related to race and poverty, can be overcome with effective teachers
- teachers should be compensated on the basis of how much their students learn
- teachers in schools with a high proportion of poor students should earn more
- teachers in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics should earn more
- students learn differently and at different rates; for that reason, among others, technology can assist learning
- online technology should be used to give all students access to the best teacher in each subject
- students should proceed to the next grade only when they have mastered necessary knowledge

- education reform is a process, not an event

THE BEST QUOTE EVER

Joseph Trahan, *Trahan & Associates*

- in terms of media relations, politicians – and others who are interviewed – should remember that it is their interview, since the media have come to them
- there are three Cs that are important:
    - control – no matter what an interviewer says or does, stay in control
    - competency – “stay in your lane,” do not respond to questions unrelated to that “lane,” and focus on things that are known
    - concern – demonstrate concern using verbal and non-verbal communication
- in terms of preparation, which is a key to success, consider:
    - the media – is the reporter, news outlet, etc. known to you?
    - the format – is the interview or other event live or is it edited?
    - questions – can five “good,” five “bad” and five “ugly” questions and, in each case, five “good” replies be developed?
    - command messages and talking points – what are the age, gender, income, etc. characteristics of the listeners, and what are the three command messages – in no more than 27 words in 30-36 seconds – that they should remember?
    - appearance – people remember 85% of what they see and 15% of what they hear
- messages should be short, simple and concise
- the overarching message should have three supporting messages
- the same key messages should be repeated “over and over and over”
- the United States is populated with forgiving people, so mistakes should be admitted
- never give a specific number; instead, use “about” or “approximately”
- never be photographed with a drink, and do not drink carbonated beverages
- make eye contact with the interviewer
- do not “eat” or seize the microphone
- once the command message has been delivered, pause; a pause is acceptable, and does not mean “umm”
- listen, pause, think and then respond; engage the brain before engaging the mouth
- listen to the question, and ask for clarification if it is unclear; if the answer is not known, say so in order to tell the truth
- non-verbal communication is critically important; from that perspective:
    - be mindful of personal space
    - stand with legs 45 degrees apart and do not “lock” legs
    - avoid placing hands on hips or behind the back in a “parade” stance
    - stand up straight and breathe deeply
    - avoid hand movements in front of the face

    - keep palms open
    - keep the head still
- use lemons, limes, cough drops and water to coat the throat
- use bridging techniques:
    - “However, ...”
    - “The key issue is ...”
    - “What is important to remember is ...”
    - “I would like to reiterate ...”

PREPARING MILLENNIALS FOR TODAY’S WORKPLACE

Richard Delano, *Social Marketing Services, LLC*

- according to William Strauss and Neil Howe, there is a repeating pattern of four generations, each having a duration of 80 years; the generational archetypes in the recurring cycle are:
    - prophet
    - nomad
    - hero
    - artist
- according to William Strauss and Neil Howe, there are four generational turnings:
    - high
    - awakening
    - unravelling
    - crisis
- different generations make decisions very differently
- the United States has a replacement rate of 2.1, creating envy in the industrialized world
- those in the millennial generation are often told that they are “special”; as well, they are confident and they have had a relatively sheltered upbringing
- those in the millennial generation often enter the workplace with relatively fewer “soft skills” and they want to leverage their “specialness”: “you are special and we have a special role for you to play”

Jay Steele, *Metro Nashville Public Schools*

- those in the millennial generation want to learn differently
- consideration should be given to combining college preparation with career preparation
- it might be useful to have students in the ninth grade work on a ten-year plan; ask them where they want to be and determine what is needed to get them there
- as a means of better aligning learning and employer needs, consideration should be given to externships in businesses for teachers

DIGITAL INFORMATION AND COPYRIGHT ISSUES

Dwayne Buttler, *University of Louisville*

- copyright protects a range of materials, is enduring in its protection, and influences policy, education and innovation
- copyright law should:
  - reflect fairness and balance in application and perspective
  - encourage and value the cumulative development of enduring knowledge
  - support opportunities to use protected works, new technologies and the development of the "public domain"
- digital technology has led to profound changes
- some analysts believe that copyright laws should not exist at all, while others believe that much more stringent enforcement is needed

FARM BILL FORECAST

Jerry Hagstrom, *National Journal*

- at times, the agricultural sector has difficulty "getting its story out"; that said, perhaps now more so than at any other point in history, people are interested in food, which leads to a focus on agriculture
- most farmers have "weathered" the crisis fairly well
- although direct support for farmers is compliant with World Trade Organization rules, it is hard to defend to those who live in urban areas
- obesity and nutrition are huge issues at this time

INVESTING IN OUR NATION'S INFRASTRUCTURE

Bill Owens, *PCL Construction Enterprises Inc.*

- private-public partnerships use the financing and expertise of the private sector
- private-public partnerships are important for the future; the public sector determines the needs, while the private sector provides the expertise

Martin Wachs, *The Rand Corporation*

- the United States is facing a transportation infrastructure crisis
- private-public partnerships are sometimes critically important in the area of infrastructure
- in some cases, funds are not available for maintenance, let alone for construction, expansion and environmental upgrades
- one way to fund transportation infrastructure is through a requirement for motorists to pay a certain amount per mile travelled; this amount can be a flat fee or it can vary by time of day, class of road, type of vehicle, etc.

Jason Goldman, *US Chamber of Commerce*

- broadband infrastructure is an enabler of education, e-commerce, health, entertainment, e-government, etc.; that said, it will be expensive to have the broadband that is needed for success
- broadband is a driver of economic development, and a direct and indirect creator of jobs

- if government and regulators “get out of the way,” infrastructure will “take off”; if the marketplace is competitive, government should “get out of the way”

Adam Krantz, *National Association of Clean Water Agencies*

- there is a funding gap regarding water infrastructure
- the 1972 *Clean Water Act* led to the construction of advanced waste water treatment plants
- funds are being shifted to debt reduction and to maintenance rather than to capital projects
- successful examples of private-public partnerships in water infrastructure exist

AMERICA’S TAKE

Neil Newhouse, *Public Opinion Strategies*

- the 2010 election is being framed by President Obama and his approval rating; the “energy” is against the President at the moment, which is good for Republicans
- independent voters will make the difference during the 2010 election
- when the President’s approval rating is less than 50%, the governing party generally loses about 40 seats in the election
- a number of voters feel that President Obama has “gone too far,” and they view him as too liberal, too much of a spender and/or too much of a socialist
- the top priorities are the economy, jobs and making sure that families “can make ends meet”; Republicans do well with these types of issues
- in the 2010 election, incumbents should beware, since the election is likely to see the most anti-incumbent electorate since 1994; many voters believe that it is time to give a new person an opportunity to do a better job
- campaigns are about messaging
- Senator Brown’s victory in Massachusetts was a two-minute warning for the Democrats
- 2010 may be an historic election and, in that context, “there is a hurricane coming”; the question now is the hurricane’s depth

Peter Hart, *Peter D. Hart Research Associates*

- at the beginning of the Obama Administration, there was hope and optimism; now, times are difficult
- President Obama’s approval rating is a major challenge for the Democrats
- the 2010 election will be about the economy and jobs; energy, the deficit, the war and immigration are also important, but relatively less so
- immigration is a political “hot button” issue; immigration is important throughout the United States, as it affects all districts and communities
- there is a significant anti-incumbent mood, and the electorate is unhappy

- with both parties being held in negative regard by the electorate, there is a possibility of significant change in the 2010 election

MAKING YOUR POINT SUCCESSFULLY

Anna Post, *Emily Post Institute*

- etiquette is about building successful relationships; it is unrelated to social, income, etc. status and is, instead, related to how two people choose to interact with each other
- the current pace of change exceeds our natural ability to adapt
- many people are not self-aware; that is why, for example, people may use their cell phone in a manner that is rude
- people should:
  - think before acting
  - make choices that build relationships
  - act sincerely
- in an uncivil workplace, employees have reduced motivation and productivity, and increased absenteeism and turnover
- etiquette is the “fuel” that “powers” relationships
- the principles of etiquette include:
  - consideration
  - respect
  - honesty
- the first rule of good communication is to be a good listener
- it is not possible to take back things once they have been sent or saved
- in terms of email communication:
  - let it simmer
  - read it out loud
  - determine whether email is the appropriate communication vehicle
  - have a pertinent subject line
  - ensure correct spelling and grammar
  - be conscious of the use of capital letters, which can be interpreted as yelling
  - be aware that emails can easily be shared with others
  - recognize that emoticons are juvenile
  - defer to formality when in doubt
  - spell it out when in doubt
  - use salutations and signature bars
  - recognize that, in the absence of a tone of voice, body language, facial expressions, etc., people may “default” to the negative
- with telephones and mobile devices, the “quality of voice” matters; consequently, attention should be paid to tone, speed, inflection, accent, pronunciation, etc.
- use of a blackberry during meetings is disrespectful and indicates that insufficient attention is being paid to the speaker(s)
- while manners change with time, the principles of etiquette are timeless

- in terms of etiquette, consider:
  - greeting someone with “hello”
  - knocking before entering
  - asking the question: “is now is a good time?”
  - being on time
  - focussing during meetings
  - introducing yourself at the beginning of a call and indicating the reason for the call
  - taking personal calls in a private area
  - not using email as a way of avoiding more personal contact
- the “24/7 professional”:
  - is always mindful
  - recognizes that actions outside of work can reflect on him/her and his/her employer
  - adheres to principles regardless of what others think
  - uses good judgment and common sense
  - can be both assertive and respectful at the same time

Respectfully submitted,

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

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group
ACTIVITY	National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)
DESTINATION	Louisville, Kentucky, United States of America
DATES	July 25 - 28, 2010
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Jim Munson, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Brian Masse, M.P. Vice-Chair Mr. Dean Del Mastro, M.P. Mr. Mervin Tweed, M.P.
STAFF	Chad Mariage, Executive Secretary Ms. June Dewetering, Senior Advisor
TRANSPORTATION	**$4,990.01**
ACCOMMODATION	**$5,363.70**
HOSPITALITY	**$Ø**
PER DIEMS	**$2,241.42**
OFFICIAL GIFTS	**$Ø**
MISCELLANEOUS/REGISTRATION FEES	**$3,753.57**
TOTAL	**$16,348.70**