

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 U.S. Congressional Meetings**

Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group

**Washington, D.C., United States of America
23–25 March 2015**

Report

DELEGATION MEMBERS AND STAFF

From 24–25 March 2015, Senator Janis Johnson and Mr. Gord Brown, M.P., Co-Chairs of the Canadian Section of the Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group (IPG), led a delegation comprising nine of their colleagues – including six of the IPG’s Vice-Chairs – in meetings with members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, as well as their staff (see the Appendix). On 23 March 2015, Senator Johnson led the delegation to a meeting with the Canadian American Business Council (CABC) and to a briefing by Canada’s Ambassador to the United States, Gary Doer, and his staff.

The other members of the Canadian delegation were Senators Jacques Demers, Paul Massicotte, Vice-Chair, Wilfred Moore, Q.C., Vice-Chair, David Wells, Vice-Chair, Tarik Brahmi, M.P., the Honourable Ron Cannan, P.C., M.P., Vice-Chair, John Carmichael, M.P., Vice-Chair, the Honourable Geoff Regan, P.C., M.P. and Peter Stoffer, M.P., Vice-Chair. The delegation was accompanied by Mrs. Miriam Burke, the Canadian Section’s Executive Secretary, and Ms. June Dewetering, Senior Advisor to the Canadian Section.

THE EVENT AND DELEGATION OBJECTIVES

During their meetings with U.S. Senators and members of the House of Representatives, Canadian parliamentarians focused on a range of issues that are important to the Canada–U.S. relationship; these issues are identified below. The meetings were similar in intent to previous U.S. Congressional meetings that focused on such topics as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), trade in softwood lumber, “Buy American” provisions in U.S. legislation, energy trade and security, and border issues, including the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative and the border crossing at Detroit, Michigan and Windsor, Ontario.

Congressional meetings enable members of the Canadian Section to speak with U.S. federal legislators – particularly those who do not attend the IPG’s annual meeting and/or those who have recently been elected to Congress – and thereby to inform them 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 share Canadian views about bilateral issues of common concern, and they intend to undertake such meetings in the future as the need arises.

Since the meetings with U.S. federal legislators are designed to be “off the record,” the discussion below summarizes the general nature of the issues that were raised by Canadian and American legislators.

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

History and Mission of the Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group

- The IPG was formed in 1959 and, since that time, has aimed to find points of convergence in Canadian and American 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.
- Two primary means by which the IPG's Canadian Section attains its goals are through an annual meeting at which federal legislators from both Canada and the United States participate, and through yearly one-on-one meetings on Capitol Hill.
- As well, the Canadian Section of the IPG attends national and regional meetings of governors and state legislators.

The Bilateral Trade Relationship and the Shared Border

- Canada and the United States have the largest bilateral trade relationship in the world, and the nations and their inhabitants are important to each other for non-trade-related reasons as well, including family relationships and friendships.
- At this time, Canada is the primary foreign export destination for 70% of U.S. states, and almost 9 million U.S. jobs depend on trade with Canada; a seamless, yet secure, shared border helps to ensure the prosperity of both countries.
- On average, goods and services valued at \$1.4 million every minute of every day – or \$2 billion per day – is exchanged between Canada and the United States; the United States does more trade with Canada than with the European Union countries collectively.
- Canada and the United States have integrated economies, supply chains and markets; in addition to cooperative efforts in relation to trade and other economic issues, Canada and the United States are allies on security issues.
- Along with Mexico, Canada and the United States should compete as a North American region, including against countries in Asia.
- With a focus on removing impediments to trade, Canada and the United States are working together in the context of the Beyond the Border and Regulatory Cooperation Council initiatives; a recent announcement that will be beneficial for both countries is pre-clearance across transportation modes.
- The United States' borders with Canada and with Mexico are different, and these differences mean that different policies, practices, etc. are needed for each border.

- “Buy American” provisions, which have appeared in U.S. legislation on more than 165 occasions over the last three years and were enacted in about one third of those occasions, are a trade barrier and negatively affect the integration of supply chains; Canada may be “collateral damage,” as these provisions may be aimed at China and/or India.
- The United States’ mandatory country-of-origin labelling requirements are harming both Canada and the United States, and are inconsistent with an integrated North American livestock sector; Canada is confident that the World Trade Organization will again find the United States to be acting in a manner that is inconsistent with its trade obligations, and believes that the two countries should work together on a mutually beneficial resolution to this issue, which – from Canada’s perspective – is repeal of the provisions.
- Border-related fees, and increases in those fees, negatively affect competitiveness.

Energy

- Much of the energy trade between Canada and the United States, which is significant in both value and volume, is being moved by rail; with this increased rail traffic, an oil-related incident could occur.
- As Canada is the most stable and reliable supplier of a range of energy sources to the United States, Canadian oil should be preferred to Venezuelan or Middle Eastern oil.
- For energy security and other reasons, it is important that the Keystone XL pipeline application be approved; failure to approve the application would harm the bilateral relationship.
- The Keystone XL pipeline proposal is being affected by “environmental politics” in the United States, and has become a symbol.
- Ongoing efforts are directed to improving the “environmental record” of Canada’s oil sands.
- Canada has a broad range of renewable and non-renewable energy sources, and some sources – such as tidal and wind – are growing in importance over time.

ISSUES RAISED BY U.S. LEGISLATORS

The Bilateral Trade Relationship and the Shared Border

- Canada – which is the United States’ best trading partner, friend and ally – should not have to pay for the U.S. customs plaza at the new Detroit, Michigan–Windsor, Ontario border crossing; that said, the United States is grateful for Canada’s actions in relation to the new crossing.
- The Detroit-Windsor tunnel should be expanded to allow double-decker rail cars; then, the existing rail line could be converted to a high-speed line from Toronto to Chicago through Detroit.
- The border between Canada and the United States is imaginary, and is the longest undefended border in the world; some Americans view Canada as “their first cousin,” and take the partnership between the two countries for granted.
- With the backdrop provided by the *North American Free Trade Agreement* (NAFTA) and the *Central American Free Trade Agreement*, the United States’ participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations is causing significant debate among some, including those who feel that the negotiations are too opaque and that labour and environmental standards may not be enforceable in any meaningful way.
- While NAFTA may “work” for Canada, it does not “work” for the United States.
- Regarding trade promotion authority, the U.S. Congress should not delegate authority to the President.
- For every \$1 that the United States “sends” to Canada, it receives \$0.90 “back.”
- Without having Canada to the north, the United States’ unemployment rate would be higher.
- It is hard to administer the United States’ mandatory country-of-origin labelling requirements, which is a failed policy, and the United States will have to take action after the forthcoming decision by the World Trade Organization.
- A North American trading bloc is needed.

Energy

- Energy is important for competitiveness.
- Some Americans support the Keystone XL pipeline proposal, while others are opposed and think that Canada should ship oil across its own country.
- Both the United States and Canada should increase their focus on the development of renewable energy sources.
- “Green energy” creates employment, and the United States and Canada should invest in green energy.

- The United States and Canada should invest in interconnected electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure.
- Mexico's recent energy reforms will be beneficial for North America.
- A North American energy alliance is needed.

Other

- The United States is grateful for Canada's efforts in Afghanistan.
- There is a need to return to the time of a "strong and sturdy" North Atlantic Treaty Organization.
- Cybersecurity is an important issue, and the United States and Canada must work together in combatting cyber-threats.
- The United States needs to make changes to its health care system; at present, doctors are paid more when they order more tests, and they should instead be paid for keeping people well.
- Currency manipulation by China is an issue that must be addressed.
- A higher relative value for the Canadian dollar would be helpful.
- Some Americans are concerned about people from the European Union entering the United States through Canada.

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

Appendix

MEMBERS OF THE U.S. SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND/OR THEIR STAFF WITH WHOM THE DELEGATION MET

U.S. Senate:

Mike Crapo
Steve Daines
Angus King, Jr.
Gary Peters
Pat Roberts
Mike Rounds
Richard Shelby

U.S. House of Representatives:

Rick Allen	Billy Long
Brad Ashford	Kenny Marchant
Dan Benishek	Tom Marino
Gus Bilirakis	Michael McCaul
Susan Brooks	Jim McDermott
Michael Conaway	Patrick Meehan
Kevin Cramer	Candace Miller
Danny Davis	Markwayne Mullin
Debbie Dingell	John Moolenaar
Tom Emmer	Richard Neal
Gene Green	Dan Newhouse
Morgan Griffith	Stacey Plaskett
Glenn Grothman	Kathleen Rice
Frank Guinta	Steve Russel
Gregg Harper	John Sarbanes
Jody Hice	Louise Slaughter
Brian Higgins	Adrian Smith
Bill Huizenga	Glenn Thompson

Derek Kilmer

Steve King

Bob Latta

Sheila Jackson Lee

Mike Thompson

Paul Tonko

Bruce Westerman

Ed Whitfield

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group
ACTIVITY	U.S. Congressional Meetings
DESTINATION	Washington, D.C., United States of America
DATES	23–25 March 2015
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Janis G. Johnson, Senator Hon. Jacques Demers, Senator Hon. Wilfred Moore, Q.C., Senator Hon. Paul Massicotte, Senator Hon. David Wells, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Gord Brown, M.P. Mr. Tarik Brahmi, M.P. Mr. John Carmichael, M.P. Hon. Ron Cannan, P.C., M.P. Mr. Peter Stoffer, M.P. Hon. Geoff Regan, P.C., M.P.
STAFF	Ms. Miriam Burke, Executive Secretary Ms. June Dewetering, Senior Advisor
TRANSPORTATION	\$16,226.38
ACCOMMODATION	\$14,636.37
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0.00
PER DIEMS	\$ 3,435.06
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$ 0.00
TOTAL	\$34,297.81