

Canada – United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group
Canadian Section



Groupe interparlementaire
Canada – États-Unis
Section canadienne

Report of the Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group

**Annual Winter Meeting of the National Governors
Association**

Washington, D.C., United States of America

From February 7 to 10, 2020

Report

DELEGATION MEMBERS AND STAFF

From 7–10 February 2020, the Honourable Wayne Easter, P.C., M.P., Co-Chair of the Canadian Section of the Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group (IPG), led a delegation to the annual winter meeting of the National Governors Association (NGA) in Washington, D.C. The other members of the delegation were Senators Julie Miville-Dechêne and Victor Oh, Mr. Brian Masse, M.P. and Vice-Chair of the Canadian Section of the IPG, and Mr. Colin Carrie, M.P. The delegation was accompanied by Mr. Grant McLaughlin, the Canadian Section’s Executive Secretary, and Mr. Alexandre Lavoie, Advisor to the Canadian Section.

The Event

Founded more than a century ago when President Theodore Roosevelt gathered state governors in order to discuss the nation’s resources, the NGA is the collective voice of U.S. governors from the 50 states, three territories and two commonwealths. It is also a public policy organization that represents the governors on Capitol Hill and before the U.S. Administration on federal issues that affect them, and that develops and implement solutions to public policy challenges.

The NGA, which meets in the winter and in the summer each year, is supervised by a chair, vice-chair and executive committee. Governors participate on five issue-related standing committees: Economic Development & Commerce; Education & Workforce; Health & Human Services; Homeland Security & Public Safety; and Natural Resources.

The theme for the NGA’s activities in 2020 – including the winter and summer meetings – is [“Infrastructure: Foundation for Success.”](#) This initiative has been selected by the current NGA Chair, Governor Larry Hogan (Maryland).

DELEGATION OBJECTIVES FOR THE EVENT

Members of the IPG’s Canadian Section have been attending the winter and summer meetings of the NGA for several years. Their interactions with governors and others enable Canadian members of the IPG to achieve better the aims of finding points of convergence in respective national policies, initiating dialogue on points of divergence, encouraging exchanges of information and promoting better understanding on shared issues of concern. Moreover, the NGA meetings provide the IPG’s Canadian Section with an important means by which to provide input to, and gather information about, state-level issues that affect Canada.

At this meeting, delegates had private meetings with Governors Tim Walz (Minnesota) and Janet Mills (Maine), and with Governor Steve Bullock’s (Montana) Chief of Staff, Mr. Ali Bovingdon. Delegates also had the opportunity to meet with Marvin Hildebrand, Minister (Economic Section), Martin Loken, Minister (Political Section), Katherine Baird, Minister (Secretariat), and other Canadian embassy’s staff for a comprehensive briefing on the Canada–U.S. relationship and related issues.

ACTIVITIES DURING THE EVENT

During the conference, delegates attended the following plenary sessions:

- **Domestic and International Innovations for Modernizing America's Infrastructure**
- **Investing in the Future: Economic Prosperity and Public Health**
- **Fortifying Our Future: States Becoming More Resilient**
- **Pathways to Opportunity**

Delegates also attended keynote addresses by the Honourable Michael R. Pompeo, U.S. Secretary of State and the Honourable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives.

The following summarizes the discussions that occurred during sessions relevant to the IPG Canadian Section's work.

A. Domestic and International Innovations for Modernizing America's Infrastructure

1. Domestic and International Best Practices

Panellists engaged in a discussion about the best practices that states can adopt to encourage the private sector to invest in the modernization of public infrastructure.

Diane Leopold, Dominion Energy

During her presentation, Ms. Leopold highlighted how new technologies to gather and analyze data allow:

- To identify more accurately the needs to replace existing infrastructure and to build new ones;
- To use infrastructure more efficiently; and,
- To improve the maintenance of infrastructure.

Doug Peterson, S&P Global

Mr. Peterson suggested that states can encourage private investors to invest in public infrastructure by:

- Making available a complete inventory of the state's assets and their condition;
- Encouraging public-private-partnership (P3) through the adoption of P3 laws that clarify each partner's responsibilities;

- Approaching infrastructure projects as investments, rather than procurement projects;
- Streamlining approval processes for infrastructure projects, for example by identifying a single agency to review and approve all proposals.

Sarah Rhoads, Amazon Global Air

Ms. Rhoads suggested that states could improve their infrastructure by:

- Partnering with private business to improve or build infrastructure that businesses use, such as airports and ports.
- Encouraging private investments in public infrastructure by adopting streamlined approval processes.
- Gathering more data on how infrastructure are used to improve their efficiency and reduce their maintenance costs.

2. Discussion with Canadian Premiers.

Premier Scott Moe, Saskatchewan

Premier François Legault, Québec

Premier Doug Ford, Ontario

Premier Blaine Higgs, New Brunswick

Premier Jason Kenney, Alberta

The five Canadian premiers engaged in a discussion with U.S. governors on building and modernizing infrastructure. They delivered the following messages:

- Infrastructure is essential to support trade between Canada and the United States.
- A greater integration between the two economies would allow businesses on both sides of the border to make use of their competitive advantages to build, repair or replace each country's infrastructure.
- The ratification of the Canada–United States–Mexico Agreement is a good step for greater economic integration, but both countries need to do more to streamline border crossings.
- Provinces are helping First Nations businesses to take part in infrastructure projects to foster First Nations economic inclusion.

B. Investing in the Future: Economic Prosperity and Public Health

The panellists discussed measures that states can adopt to curb the increasing use of e-cigarettes, vaping products and other tobacco products by teenagers in the United States.

Governor Kate Brown, Oregon

- E-cigarette use has increased by 80% between 2017 and 2019 in Oregon.
- The U.S. federal government took actions against the use of e-cigarettes by increasing the minimal age to purchase this product to 21 years old and by prohibiting flavoured e-cigarettes.

Governor Mike DeWine, Ohio

- The rise of vaping is negating all the work that has been done to combat smoking.
- The vaping industry is using the same tactics to increase the sale of e-cigarettes that the tobacco industry was using to increase the sale of cigarettes in the past.
- Ohio has acted against vaping by increasing the minimal age to buy e-cigarettes to 21 years old, by increasing taxes on e-cigarettes and related products, and by implementing public education programs in schools.

Douglas Blanke, Executive Director, Public Health Law Center

- The measures adopted by the Food and Drug Administration to prohibit the sale of certain e-cigarette products represent a good first step, but measures implemented at state and local levels are required to efficiently combat vaping.

Matthew L. Myers, President and CEO, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

- E-cigarettes are extremely addictive.
- Children who use e-cigarettes probably would not have smoked regular cigarettes.
- Increasing the minimum age for the purchase of e-cigarettes is a tool to combat vaping, but only a ban on all flavoured tobacco products would be effective to prevent children from smoking.

C. Keynote address by the Honourable Michael R. Pompeo, U.S. Secretary of State

Secretary Pompeo warned Governors against the involvement of the Chinese government in U.S. politics at the state level. Particularly, he told the governors that:

- The Chinese government is cultivating ties with all government level in the United States;
- The Chinese government's actions in the United States are meant to give China and Chinese businesses strategic and economic advantages over the United States and its businesses;

- While economic ties between the United States and China remain important and that doing business with China is still possible, Americans need nonetheless to adopt a cautious mindset (i.e., trust but verify).

D. Keynote addresses by the Honourable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives

Speaker Pelosi engaged in a conversation with Governor Andrew Cuomo (New York) and spoke about involvement of young American in politics and the importance of infrastructure. Her main messages were:

- Young Americans should be encouraged to run for public office. However, she believes that it is harder to attract young people to do so as the political environment has become more acrimonious.
- Investing in U.S. infrastructure is essential to maintain economic growth, improve citizens' quality of life, enhance American health and foster education. Although there is bipartisan support in the United States about the need to invest in infrastructure, there is a lack of agreement on how to fund these investments. She believes that Americans are willing to pay more to get better infrastructure.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Michael L. MacDonald,
Senator, Co-Chair
Canada–United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group

Hon. Wayne Easter, P.C., M.P.,
Co-Chair
Canada–United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group
ACTIVITY	Annual Winter Meeting of the National Governors Association
DESTINATION	Washington, D.C., United States
DATES	February 7 to 10, 2020
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne Hon. Victor Oh
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. Wayne Easter, P.C. Colin Carrie Brian Masse
STAFF	Grant McLaughlin Alexandre Lavoie
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 10,188.34
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 5,651.14
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0.00
PER DIEMS	\$ 2,992.35
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 36.47
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 9,476.74
TOTAL	\$ 28, 345.04