

Canada – United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group
Canadian Section



Groupe interparlementaire
Canada – États-Unis
Section canadienne

Report of the Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group

National Governors' Association Summer Annual Meeting

Portland, Maine, United States of America

July 13–15, 2022

REPORT

A. DELEGATION

From 13–15 July 2022, Senator Michael MacDonald, Co-Chair of the Canadian Section of the Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group, led a delegation to the National Governors Association (NGA) Annual Summer Meeting in Portland, Maine. The other delegates were Mr. Mike Lake, M.P. and Mr. Brian Masse, M. P. The delegation was accompanied by Mr. David Chandonnet, the Canadian Section’s Executive Secretary, and Ms. Marie Dumont, Advisor to the Canadian Section.

B. THE EVENT

Founded in 1908 when President Theodore Roosevelt gathered state governors to discuss the nation’s resources, the NGA is the collective voice of the United States (U.S.) governors from the 50 states and five territories.¹ 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 implements 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 issue-related task forces, at present there are the following three: [Community Renewal Task Force](#); [Economic Recovery and Revitalization Task Force](#); and [Pandemic and Disaster Response Task Force](#). In addition, the [Council of Governors](#), which was created in 2008, serves as a forum to improve state-federal partnerships on issues related to the National Guard, homeland security and civil support.

The current Chair of the NGA, Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson, chose “K-12 Computer Science Education” as the NGA Chair’s Initiative. This initiative aims to promote computer science education, which, as stated by the governor, develops “foundational skills that help students succeed in all subjects, such as critical thinking and problem solving.”²

C. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE CANADA–UNITED STATES INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

Members of the IPG’s Canadian Section had been attending the winter and summer meetings of the NGA in the years leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic. This Annual Summer Meeting was the first NGA event attended that the Canadian Section of the IPG has attended since February 2020. At NGA meetings, interactions with governors and others enable Canadian members of the IPG to better achieve 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

¹ The United States’ five territories are American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

² Catherine Van Ness, “Governors Convening on Computer Science Education,” National Governors Association, 23 March 2022.

an important means by which to provide input to, and gather information about, state-level issues that affect Canada.

At this meeting, delegates arranged a private meeting with Governor Doug Burgum (North Dakota) and had interactions with many of the 16 governors who were in attendance, their staff, and other stakeholders attending the annual summit.

D. ACTIVITIES DURING THE ANNUAL SUMMIT

During the conference, delegates attended the following plenary sessions:

- K-12 Computer Science Education
- The Return of Travel and Tourism
- Annual Meeting – Election of 2022-2023 Officers

In addition, members attended the Imagination Library Session featuring Dolly Parton, who engaged in a conversation with Arkansas' Governor Asa Hutchinson over videocall.

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

E. K-12 COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION

Governor Asa Hutchinson, the Chair of the NGA for 2021-2022, discussed the theme of his chairmanship: K-12 computer science education. He emphasized that governors must lead on this priority, because computer science education leads to many benefits, including jobs that are in high demand and with relatively higher wages. For example, the graduates of college with a computer science major earn approximately 40% more in salaries than other college graduates. He outlined the following four factors for success of the initiative in Arkansas:

- Strong legislative support for K-12 computer science education.
- State budgetary funding for the initiative.
- Setting up a state office for computer science education.
- Leadership from the governor.

The plenary session continued with remarks from Patrick Gelsinger and Dean Kaman.

Patrick Gelsinger, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Intel

- There is a global shortage of microchips and semiconductors in an era where there is increased digitalization.
- In the 1990s, the United States produced 40% of the global supply of semiconductors, today, it produces 12%. Hopefully, the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors and Science Act of 2022 bill will pass into law, to help to increase the competitiveness of U.S. semiconductor manufacturing.
- It is important to build the technology pipeline through education. Students need to be aware of how to read and write computer code.

Dean Kaman, Founder and Inventor, DEKA Research and Development Corporation

- The United States spends more on education than any other country, yet there is a lack of demand to prioritize education as a national value.
- You get what you celebrate. Whereas role models in the United States tend to be in the athletic or entertainment industries, there should instead be a focus on creating role models and mentors for youth in the technology sector.
- The FIRST non-profit organization provides mentors for youth in the science, engineering and technology sectors.

F. THE RETURN OF TRAVEL AND TOURISM

The plenary discussion about the return of travel and tourism following the lifting of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions had the following speakers:

- Tori Emerson Barnes, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs and Policy, U.S. Travel Association
- Amir Eylon, President, CEO and Partner, Longwoods International
- Al Hutchinson, President and CEO, Visit Baltimore
- Keiko Orrall, Executive Director Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism
- Chris Thompson, President and CEO, Brand USA

These speakers had a discussion that included the following points:

- Economic recovery in the travel and tourism sector is very uneven. Whereas the domestic leisure sector is now rebounding, international travel is still well below pre-pandemic levels.
- Consumers have shifted from having concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic, to having concerns about inflation. Both factors are deterrents to travel.
- While hospitality and leisure activities make destinations unique, younger generations are not seeking long-term careers in such sectors.
- There are 13 U.S. states that border Canada. With the closure of the Canadian border during periods of the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism in border states decreased significantly.

G. ANNUAL MEETING – ELECTION OF THE 2022-2023 OFFICERS

Current Chair of the NGA, Governor Asa Hutchinson (Arkansas), passed the gavel to Governor Phil Murphy (New Jersey), who is the Chair of the NGA moving forward. Governor Spencer Cox (Utah) was approved as the Vice Chair for 2022-2023. Governor Phil Murphy announced the NGA's theme under his chairmanship, "Strengthening Youth Mental Health," which comprises the following four pillars:

- preventing mental health challenges by building resilience;
- reducing the stigma of mental health challenges by making care accessible;
- building support systems at the state level; and
- providing parents and caregivers training and support for mental health challenges in youth.

In addition, New Jersey First Lady Tammy Snyder Murphy – who took her position as the Chair of the Spouses’ Program – convened a panel discussion introducing her NGA initiative: “Creating a National Model to Tackle the Maternal and Infant Health Crisis” with the following speakers:

- Heidi Baskfield, Children’s Hospital Colorado
- Amy Kennedy, Education Director, The Kennedy Forum
- Dr. Mary-Ann Etiebet, Associate Vice President, Health Equity; and Lead, Merck for Mothers, Merck.

With First Lady Tammy Snyder Murphy, the speakers’ discussion, which included questions from the governors in attendance, included the following points:

- Maternal and infant mortality are vital signs of our society. The United States ranks 55th globally for maternal mortality rates.
- Maternal mortality is highest among minority groups in the United States. Doctors need to centre women’s voices and listen
- Indigenous maternal mortality rates tend to be higher than other segments of American society. The underfunding of the Indian Health Service contributes to this disparity.

Respectfully submitted,

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

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

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group
ACTIVITY	National Governors Association Annual Summer Meeting
DESTINATION	Portland, Maine, United States of America
DATES	July 13–15, 2022
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Michael MacDonald

HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mike Lake; Brian Masse
STAFF	David Chandonnet, Association Secretary Marie Dumont, Advisor
TRANSPORTATION	\$7,269.17
ACCOMMODATION	\$9,352.32
HOSPITALITY	\$0.00
PER DIEMS	\$2,084.19
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$0.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$9,267.62
TOTAL	\$27,973.30