

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 U.S. Congressional Meetings

Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group

Washington, D.C., United States of America

From November 13 to 16, 2023

REPORT

A. DELEGATION MEMBERS AND STAFF

From 13 to 16 November 2023, the Honourable Senator Michael MacDonald and the Honourable John McKay, P.C., M.P., co-chairs of the Canadian Section of the Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group (Canadian Section), led a delegation to Washington, D.C., for meetings with U.S. representatives and senators. The delegation included honourable senators Pat Duncan and Jean-Guy Dagenais, as well as Vance Badawey, M.P., Randy Hoback, M.P., Matthew Jeneroux, M.P., Brian Masse, M.P., and Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay, M.P. The delegation was accompanied by Lyla Malow and Sarah Lemelin-Bellerose, respectively the secretary and adviser of the Canadian Section.

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

Created nearly six decades ago, the Canada–U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group has four main objectives: find points of convergence in respective national policies; initiate dialogue on points of divergence; encourage exchanges of information; and promote better understanding among Canadian and U.S. legislators on shared issues of concern. The members of the Canadian Section of the Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group pursue their objectives primarily by meeting with their Congressional counterparts in Washington, D.C., or in Ottawa, and occasionally elsewhere in Canada or the United States. They also do so by liaising with U.S. governors and state legislators at national and regional conferences throughout the U.S. and sometimes in Canada.

C. THE DELEGATION’S VISIT AND OBJECTIVES IN NOVEMBER 2023

Meetings at the Capitol provide an opportunity for Canadian Section members to meet with federal legislators in the U.S. and inform them of critical issues that impact Canada and the U.S. and to gain their support.

In June 2023, senators Angus King and Kevin Cramer, along with representatives Mark Amodei and Lizzie Fletcher, established the American Canadian Economy and Security Caucus (ACES Caucus). The mission of this bipartisan group is to promote policies that will strengthen relations between Canada and the United States in terms of economy and security. One of the objectives of the Canadian Section’s visit in November 2023 was to meet with the representatives and senators in the ACES Caucus and speak with other representatives and senators about the importance of joining this new caucus.

During their meetings at the Capitol, the Canadian delegates addressed a number of issues affecting Canada–United States relations, including trade between the two countries and the importance of a “Buy North American” strategy, energy cooperation and defence partnerships. As the summary of the discussion below indicates, other topics were also discussed. Because discussions between Canadian Section members and U.S. federal legislators are private and held on the condition of anonymity, the report

below provides a general summary of the issues discussed by the legislators of both countries, without indicating the specific source.

The delegates also met with Arun Alexander, Deputy Ambassador of Canada to the United States, as well as representatives of the Embassy of Canada to the United States to discuss a number of issues affecting both countries. They also attended a roundtable with experts at the Wilson Center, including Christopher Sands, Director of the Canada Institute, to discuss various issues affecting both countries, including trade in North America, the North American Aerospace Defence Command, security in the Arctic, and critical minerals. The members of the Canadian Section also attended a reception arranged in cooperation with the Embassy of Canada in Washington to promote the new ACES Caucus, during which they were able to speak with several dozen representatives and senators.

D. OVERVIEW OF THE TOPICS COVERED DURING THE MEETINGS

1. Canada–U.S. border

- The Canada–U.S. border is very important, and it is important to find ways to ensure its security, while making it easier for people wanting to cross it for both business and tourism. Developing a digital identity could enable Canadians and Americans to cross the border more easily.
- At present, there are concerns about the lack of several hundred border officials, especially on the Canadian side.

2. Trade and investment

- The United States and Canada share a very important and special trade relationship that greatly benefits both countries, hence the value in building on a North American approach to trade. The two economies could be stronger if they were more closely integrated.
- Given the physical and political proximity of the two countries, their supply chains are tightly integrated. It is important to continue working to strengthen that integration. Given the resources that are shared in the Great Lakes region, it is one of the regions where this integration is particularly important and beneficial.
- The softwood lumber issue is still significant for both countries. Resolving this ongoing dispute could help reduce the costs of materials and thereby address such things as the housing crisis.
- Canada could introduce a digital services tax starting 1 January 2024 (the context has changed in the meantime with the Fall Economic Statement). Although the discussions at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are delayed, the United States is concerned about Canada's approach because they would have preferred that it wait for an approach to be decided on by mutual agreement of a group of OECD countries. The United States could retaliate if Canada introduces that tax on the anticipated date.

3. Energy and environment

- In Canada and the United States, there continues to be growing interest in critical minerals and the associated value chain. Canada has many critical minerals, which could help strengthen the supply chain by moving away from dependence on certain countries for a number of minerals. There are initiatives in Canada and the United States to try expediting the process of granting licences to operate a mine.
- It is very important for Canada that Enbridge Line 5 remain in operation because it transports a significant amount of oil each day. The line is equally important to both Canada and the United States.
- The oil produced in Canada is less emission-intensive than oil produced in most other oil-producing countries.

4. Defence

- It is critical for Canada and the United States to continue the ongoing collaboration on defence. The previously established partnerships, such as the North American Aerospace Defence Command partnership, are essential for ensuring national and regional security.
- Concerns continue to be raised in the United States about Canada's level of investment in defence.

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	Congressional Visit
DESTINATION	Washington, D.C., United States of America
DATES	From November 13 to 16 2023
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Jean-Guy Dagenais Hon. Patricia Duncan Hon. Michael L. MacDonald
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. John McKay Mr. Vance Badawey Mr. Randy Hoback Mr. Matt Jeneroux Mr. Brian Masse Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay
STAFF	Ms. Lyla Malow Ms. Sarah Lemelin-Bellerose Mr. Simon Richards
TRANSPORTATION	\$18,086.33
ACCOMMODATION	\$17,636.77
HOSPITALITY	\$3,475.76
PER DIEMS	\$4,953.48
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$0.00
MISCELLANEOUS	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$44,152.34