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**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting  
its participation at the 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Regional  
Policy Forum of the Council of State Governments' Eastern  
Regional Conference (ERC)**

**Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group**

**Uncasville, Connecticut, United States of America  
13–16 August 2017**

# **Report**

## **DELEGATION MEMBERS AND STAFF**

From 13–16 August 2017, Senators Lynn Beyak and Michael Duffy represented the Canadian Section of the Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group (IPG) at the 57<sup>th</sup> annual meeting and regional policy forum of the Council of State Governments' Eastern Regional Conference (ERC) in Uncasville, Connecticut. The delegation was accompanied by Ms. Tanya Dupuis, Advisor to the Canadian Section.

## **THE EVENT**

The ERC is a regional association of legislators from 11 U.S. states and five Canadian provinces (see the Appendix); Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are also members. By facilitating co-operation among its member jurisdictions, the ERC promotes multi-state or region-wide solutions to the problems and challenges facing the United States' eastern states and Canada's eastern provinces. Each year, the ERC holds an annual meeting and regional policy forum.

The ERC's 57<sup>th</sup> annual meeting and regional policy forum had the theme of "States of Change."

## **DELEGATION OBJECTIVES FOR THE EVENT**

The IPG aims to find points of convergence in respective 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.

Members of the IPG's Canadian Section meet regularly with their federal counterparts and, in recent years, have attended regional and national meetings of governors and state legislators. At these events, Canadian delegates engage in conversations that help the Canadian Section to achieve its objectives.

The ERC provides provincial legislators from eastern Canada with an opportunity to discuss, with their eastern U.S. state counterparts, issues of shared concern. Canada and the 11 U.S. states that are a member of the ERC share a mutually beneficial relationship, and Canada is the largest foreign export market for the United States' Northeastern states.

Attendance at the ERC's 2017 annual meeting and regional policy forum provided members of the IPG's Canadian Section with an occasion to discuss opportunities for Canada, especially its eastern provinces, and the eastern U.S. states to collaborate in a number of areas. Furthermore, they benefited from presentations on a variety of issues, including Canada–U.S. relations and border issues, the political outlook in the United States, and criminal justice.

## **ACTIVITIES DURING THE EVENT**

The ERC's 57<sup>th</sup> annual meeting and regional policy forum included the following plenary and concurrent sessions, and other presentations:

- Agriculture and Rural Development Committee
  - Agriculture Policies in the New Administration
  - Food Safety and U.S.–Canada Trade
- Bioscience Initiatives: Improving Health and Growing the Economy
- Canada Ups Its Game: Engaging the States
- Canada-U.S. Relations Committee
  - Trump, Travel and Trade: Navigating the U.S.–Canada Relationship under a New Administration
- Climate Change and Communities of Color
- Education Committee
  - The Every Student Succeeds Act: Looking at State Plans
- Energy and Environment Committee
  - The Offshore Wind Opportunity in the Northeast
  - Creating a Sustainable Energy Future in the Northeast
- Farewell Breakfast - Famous Cases Revisited
- Farm Bill Renewal
- Fiscal Roundtable: Budget and Tax Chairs
- Health Committee
  - The Future of the State-Federal Partnership on Health
- Governor's Panel on Criminal Justice Issues - Face to Face: Informing Criminal Justice Policy Through Personal Connections
- Luncheon Plenary Sessions
  - Genomics and Precision Medicine: Investing in the Future of Health Care
  - Government's Cybersecurity Challenge: Protecting U.S. Elections Systems from Hacking
  - Charting the Course through Demographic Change
- Professional Development Program: Facing the Media

- Military and Veterans Affairs Committee
  - Veterans Mental Health 2.0
- Overseas Voting Initiative
- State Efforts to Address Retirement Security
- States of Democracy: Building Engagement and Confidence in the Era of Hacks and Voter Purges
- Transportation Committee
  - Emerging Transportation Issues.

This report summarizes the plenary and selected concurrent discussions that occurred at the annual meeting and regional policy forum.

## **TRUMP, TRAVEL AND TRADE: NAVIGATING THE U.S.–CANADA RELATIONSHIP UNDER A NEW ADMINISTRATION**

### **James Phillips, *Canadian/American Border Trade Alliance***

- There are concerns and rumours about tougher admissibility rules for Canadians wishing to enter the United States; however, recent U.S. Customs and Border Protection data show that the refusal rates at the U.S.–Canada border have declined.
- In July 2017, U.S. President Donald Trump rejected the notion of a border adjustment tax, which had been opposed by Canada’s federal government; this action was taken in order to advance his tax reform agenda.
- Canada –U.S. trade is mutually beneficial.
- The *North American Free Trade Agreement* (NAFTA) discussions between the United States and Canada should consider such issues as cross-border labour activity, and efforts to increase and strengthen supply chains.
- The changes made to NAFTA should ensure free, as well as fair, trade.
- Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is engaging with stakeholders and lobbyists, which is very different from the historical “top down” approach.

### **Sarah Goldfeder, *Earnscliffe Strategy Group***

- The early rounds of negotiations regarding changes to NAFTA might occur quickly; however, the U.S. midterm elections will then slow the pace of the negotiations.

**Leslie Blakey, Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors**

- The Twitter campaign @NAFTANext was created to raise awareness about the benefits of NAFTA, and to address negative comments being made about the agreement.

**GOVERNOR'S PANEL ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE ISSUES FACE TO FACE:  
INFORMING CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY THROUGH PERSONAL CONNECTIONS**

**Scott Semple, *Connecticut Department of Correction***

- The U.S. prison system has forgotten its primary function: reforming offenders, which is the core function of the U.S. Department of Corrections.
- Chronic recidivism among offenders is an issue that needs to be addressed.
- Older offenders should act as mentors to help alleviate chronic recidivism among younger inmates; such mentoring programs have yielded a 20% reduction in recidivism in Connecticut.
- The United States is paying close attention to a practice in Germany whereby prisoners are prepared for their upcoming release by learning basic skills and by being gradually reintegrated into society.

**Governor Dannel Malloy, *State of Connecticut***

- Connecticut's criminal justice system is being significantly reformed.
- Inmates who receive employment skills before they are released from prison have a better chance at obtaining meaningful employment upon their release; gainful employment is a key component of reintegration, and inmates who become employed after their release have increased self-esteem and a better chance at remaining crime-free.
- A "tough on crime" philosophy is no longer considered to be an appropriate approach to corrections; the United States was building prisons when it should have been building schools, and too many offenders – a number of which were youth – entered the U.S. prison system.
- The number of youth in the U.S. prison system is concerning; the decriminalization of marijuana could help some youth offenders avoid a criminal record.
- A reduction in the number of youth in the U.S. prison system would have lasting effects; many of the United States' "hard criminals" were incarcerated as youth.
- In many U.S. states, youth who are 16 years of age are being prosecuted as adult offenders.

**Glenn E. Martin, *JustLeadershipUSA***

- Prisons have very limited resources for job training; such training has a positive impact on an offender's self-esteem.
- Prison sentences are leading to lost opportunities to reform offenders.
- The job skills that are taught in prisons should adequately reflect the needs of employers.
- The U.S. prison system treats youth inmates as adults, yet they are not old enough to buy alcohol.

**Jeff Dion, *National Center for Victims of Crime***

- Criminal justice reform should consider the needs of victims.
- Victims want access to more information about offenders.
- Many hurdles prevent victims and their families from obtaining information about court cases.

**FOOD SAFETY AND U.S.-CANADA TRADE**

**Richard Ball, *New York State Agriculture Commissioner***

- The dairy sector, which is both critical to the ERC region and beneficial for producers and consumers, is regulated and subsidized by the Canadian and U.S. governments.
- The ERC region values the trading relationship between Canada and the United States in dairy products, and believes that it should be protected; consequently, both countries should be extremely careful during the NAFTA negotiations.
- There are long-standing irritants regarding the dairy sector that could be addressed during the NAFTA negotiations, including the paperwork burden related to products crossing the shared border.
- The overall impact of supply management on international trade should be studied.

**CANADA UPS ITS GAME: ENGAGING THE STATES**

**Speaker Dave Levac, *Legislative Assembly of Ontario***

- Canada will continue its advocacy in the United States regarding the benefits of NAFTA.

- The ERC's Canada-U.S. Committee is monitoring the NAFTA negotiations very closely.

**Lawrence L. Herman, *Herman and Associates***

- The United States' political context today is difficult, and many are concerned about the potential impact of President Trump's policies on the Canada–U.S. relationship.
- Public engagement between Canada and the United States is at an unprecedented level.
- Canadian and U.S. citizens should be educated about the benefits of the Canada–U.S. trade relationship.
- Canada is the primary foreign export market for 35 U.S. states.

**Jeremy Wilson-Simerman, *Government of Ontario***

- The provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan have offices in Washington, D.C.
- There is still much work to be done on the Canada–U.S. relationship.
- During the NAFTA negotiations, workforce training and cross-border movement of workers should be addressed.

**Daniel D. Ujczo, *Dickinson Wright PLLC***

- The U.S. Congress is asserting its presence in trade negotiations in an unprecedented way.
- The timing of the NAFTA negotiations has led trade to be a campaign issue for the upcoming midterm elections in the United States.
- There are elections in Mexico in 2018.

**GOVERNMENT'S CYBERSECURITY CHALLENGE: PROTECTING U.S. ELECTIONS SYSTEMS FROM HACKING**

**Chris C. Demchak, *U.S. Naval War College***

- Systemic cyber operational resilience is needed, and the U.S. states should work together to fend off cyber-attacks.
- A whole-of-society approach is needed to build resilience against cyber-attacks, with everyone "on the frontline" and "all in"; individuals and businesses are potential cyber victims.

- A whole-of-society approach to cyber-attacks would build resilience and yield benefits, such as complementarities, increased efficiency, and cooperative development of shared technological, social and economic knowledge.
- Collectively, there is a need to create robust cyber powers.
- Increased leadership would be a deterrent to cyber-attacks.
- Since the Internet “exploded” in the 1990s, crime and global ransomware have become “massive.”
- Advanced democracies are losing 1–2% of their gross domestic product annually due to cyber events.

**Ryan Harkings, Microsoft**

- Each minute, malware is created and millions of dollars are lost.
- Cyber threats are real, profound and imminent; previous perceptions of what hackers “look like” no longer apply, and actions can be taken to combat cyber-attacks.
- Microsoft spends US\$1 billion annually on cybersecurity, and has created digital crime units and allocated human resources to dismantling botnets.
- Everyone should be operating their computer systems with the latest software, and should regularly back up their data.
- More than 90% of the intrusions into computer networks start with a phishing email.
- In order for technology to keep pace with cyber threats, training is vital; in particular, training on password protection should be a priority and computer antivirus software should always be operating.

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

## **Appendix**

### **MEMBER U.S. STATES OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS' EASTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE**

|               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| Connecticut   | New Jersey   |
| Delaware      | New York     |
| Maine         | Pennsylvania |
| Maryland      | Rhode Island |
| Massachusetts | Vermont      |
| New Hampshire |              |

Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are also members.

### **MEMBER CANADIAN PROVINCES OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS' EASTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE**

|               |                      |
|---------------|----------------------|
| New Brunswick | Prince Edward Island |
| Nova Scotia   | Quebec               |
| Ontario       |                      |

## Travel Costs

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| <b>ASSOCIATION</b>                       | Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group   |
| <b>ACTIVITY</b>                          | 57 <sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Regional Policy Forum of the Council of State Governments' Eastern Regional Conference (ERC) |
| <b>DESTINATION</b>                       | Uncasville, Connecticut, United States of America  |
| <b>DATES</b>                             | 13–16 August 2017  |
| <b>DELEGATION</b>                        |  |
| SENATE                                   | Hon. Lynn Beyak, Senator<br>Hon. Michael Duffy, Senator  |
| HOUSE OF COMMONS                         |  |
| STAFF                                    | Ms. Tanya Dupuis, Advisor  |
| <b>TRANSPORTATION</b>                    | <b>\$ 4,222.56</b>   |
| <b>ACCOMMODATION</b>                     | <b>\$ 2,757.06</b>   |
| <b>PER DIEMS</b>                         | <b>\$ 885.35</b>   |
| <b>MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES</b> | <b>\$ 2,990.03</b>   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                             | <b>\$ 10,855.00</b>  |