



ISSUES AND IDEAS WHERE BROAD SUPPORT WAS ACHIEVED

DRAFT MISSION AND PURPOSE

The Senate is the appointed Upper House in Canada's bicameral Parliament. The Senate plays an important complementary role to the elected House of Commons by:

- i. providing independent "sober second thought" to legislation, with particular respect to Canada's national interests, aboriginal peoples, regions, minorities and under-represented segments of Canada's population;
- ii. undertaking policy studies, reports and inquiries on public issues relevant to Canadians, and
- iii. understanding, sharing and representing the views and concerns of different groups, based on a Senator's unique perspective.



SENATE STANDING AND AD HOC COMMITTEES:

- The Senate should take advantage of its ability to promptly examine and highlight high profile/current issues with existing committees or special committees where necessary.
- Committees are the “crown jewels” of the Senate and therefore, in an effort to continuously strengthen this asset, the Senate should more actively review the mandate, size and composition of Standing Committees (ie. Not always maximum).
- Committee reports should receive a significant communications budget to promote the work, including social media and outreach by all committee members.

SPEAKER SELECTION AND AUTHORITY:

The Senate should:

Choose by election and secret ballot the Senator who shall be proposed for consideration by the Governor General for appointment as Speaker of the Senate for a term of up to three years.

Rulings by the Speaker on interpretation of the Rules shall be subject to challenge by the Assembly.



QUESTION PERIOD:

Senators should seek a more efficient use of their time by realigning Question Period to focus on key issues of committee work, committee reports and other key issues relating to the work affecting committees. In this way, the name of Question Period should change to Issues Period.

Further, from time to time, Ministers, and Officers of Parliament should be summoned to the floor of the Senate to respond to questions of Senators on issues under their responsibility.

MEMBERS' STATEMENT:

Statements are important and should continue to broadcast good and current news. Senators should be respectful and informed on the rules and should avoid opinion or debateable issues within the time outlined in the Rules.

RETIREMENT TRIBUTES:

Should be limited to a short thank you by the Leaders. All other speeches should be done at the Speaker's reception.

ELECTING CAUCUS OFFICERS:

Senate caucuses should elect all officer positions by secret ballot at intervals determined by each caucus.

BROADCASTING, COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS:

The Senate should televise and webcast its proceedings.



REGIONAL CAUCUSES:

From time to time, informal regional caucuses should meet.

ORDER PAPER ISSUES:

- Senators should receive the specific Order Paper instead of the general Order Paper.
- Senators should only be able to adjourn a Private Members' Bill, Senate Bill, or motion for 15 days only once.
Rule 6-10(2) should be amended accordingly.
- The listing of items on the Order Paper should be expressed more clearly and should be easy to follow.

All reference to “stand” should be avoided, but the ability for Senators to speak to every item should be maintained according to following procedure:

Each day, a Senator who wishes to speak to a matter should give “notice” to their respective Deputy Leaders or the Speaker. As the Chamber’s work begins, each “noticed item” should be discussed first in succession, with the Senator giving notice speaking, followed by any Senator who feels prompted to respond. Once all “noticed items” are called, the Clerk should call all skipped “non-noticed” items, giving Senators the chance to speak to these items. If no Senator speaks to a “non-noticed item”, no other items would be called and the session would be adjourned.



COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND CHAIRS:

For each Session of Parliament, the Senate shall choose committee members according to the following procedures:

- A selection committee shall be elected by the Senate as a whole, on a secret ballot vote according to guide lines agreed to by the leadership of the recognized political parties in the Senate.
- Internal economy shall be elected by the Senate as a whole, on a secret ballot vote according to guide lines agreed to by the leadership of the recognized political parties in the Senate.
- Membership of the Selection Committee shall have representation from the four Senate Divisions of Canada.
- The selection committee shall exercise its powers and populate Senate committees and subcommittees according to guidelines agreed to by the leadership of the recognized political parties in the Senate.
- The selection committee shall be responsible for all permanent committee membership changes.
- Once formed, the Committees shall elect their own chairs, vice-chairs and third members of steering committee by secret ballot according to guidelines agreed to by the leadership of the recognized political parties in the Senate.
- This process shall be reviewed after one year of operation.



OUTSTANDING IMPORTANT ISSUES WITHOUT CONSENSUS AT THE TIME (OR NOT PURSUED)

- No whipping of votes: exceptions
- Political party participation:
 - National conferences
 - National caucus
 - Regional caucus
- Equal treatment of all Senators including independent Senators (participation and funding).
- Regional Caucuses
- Omnibus Bills
- Timeframe for decision on Bills and final authority of the House of Commons on our amendments.