



Columbus Statement on U.S.-Canadian Relations

June 30, 2016

On June 15, 16 and 17 2016 in Columbus, Ohio we met on the campus of The Ohio State University in a gathering of stakeholders in the U.S.-Canadian relationship to confirm the fundamental principles and essential features of the historic partnership between our two great countries in the 21st century.

We are raising our voices together in support of the efforts by U.S. President Barack Obama and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to strengthen and deepen the bilateral partnership with improved border cooperation, regulatory cooperation, and energy and environmental collaboration to advance toward a single market for goods, services and investment, goals adopted with the ratification of the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement and the North American Free Trade Agreement a generation ago.

We are raising our voices furthermore to declare our conviction that a good U.S.-Canada relationship cannot be taken for granted; it must be fostered and recommitted to by leaders in each era. And this work begins with us. Stakeholder voices have always been essential to building a consensus for action among leaders in both countries.

Principles for the Management of the U.S.-Canadian Relationship

We approach U.S.-Canadian relations in the spirit of **friendship** because of the friendship between the people of the United States and Canada. This is why we have maintained good relations successfully since 1814, overcoming disagreements and disputes, natural disasters and global threats.

We acknowledge that **interdependence** is an abiding and defining feature of the U.S.-Canadian relationship, such that it is imprudent for us to be indifferent to one another when making policy decisions. Supply chains, data flows, transportation linkages, pandemic disease and a shared environment cross borders and bind us together; managing these flows is a joint responsibility in the public interest.

We endorse the principle of **partnership** that has guided the leaders of the United States and Canada since the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 to work together as sovereign equals despite asymmetries of population, wealth and other disparities.

We call on fellow stakeholders and leaders in both countries to respect the principle that disputes should be resolved wherever possible according to a **rule of law** process, rather than by political or coercive means. Trade dispute settlement mechanisms, domestic courts, institutional fora, and diplomacy should remain the accepted means for the resolution any conflict.

We believe that a healthy relationship is characterized by the fundamental constitutional principles of our two governments: the management of U.S.-Canadian relations must preserve **life, liberty** and the **pursuit of happiness** in the spirit of **peace, order** and **good governance** of cross-border flows.



In the 21st century, we hold that the management of U.S.-Canadian relations should unleash the secure flows of goods, services, investment, ideas and people across our shared border consistent with mutual prosperity and security.

A Call for Action

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1926, following Canada's early days as a British colony, there has been a tradition of advancing bilateral relations in pragmatic ways that benefit citizens in both countries. Central to this tradition has been the periodic convening of stakeholders in good relations between Canada and the United States. These meetings have generated policy alternatives and agendas for constructive engagement that would be impossible for political leaders and officials in Washington D.C. or Ottawa to generate alone, given the diffuse and decentralized nature of this relationship.

In Columbus, we met to establish a new coalition to develop common **strategies**, coordinate plans for **advocacy** on behalf of good U.S. Canadian relations to governments, demonstrate support for the **gateways** both physical and virtual that connect the two countries and promote **engagement** by stakeholders in order to work to improve U.S.-Canadian relations as technologies and opportunities change and challenge both countries.

Several challenges confront governments in the United States and Canada and we urge leaders to work together to address them, including:

Innovation is essential to economic growth, and thriving in the manufacturing and energy sectors of both countries, but requires policy support. This is particularly true in the case of innovative energy solutions that support a healthy environment.

Expanded labor mobility is required to match people with skills with employers, innovators with investors, and to support the growing cross-border trade in services.

Standards alignment between the U.S. and Canadian markets is essential to business and current supply chains, and the work of the U.S.-Canada Regulatory Cooperation Council should be sustained, accelerated and expanded.

Border security cooperation between U.S. and Canadian officials must continue to keep citizens safe and seek to reduce the compliance burden (whether measured in terms of time or monetary costs) and error rates in inspections and enforcement action.

Subnational governments, including states, provinces and cities can and do contribute to problem solving and good governance in the U.S.-Canadian relationship and help to connect citizens to bilateral relations. Federal government leaders and stakeholders need to welcome and help integrate these governments into current discussions on cross border infrastructure, regulatory alignment, worked education and training, public health, economic development, disaster preparedness and response, energy and environment policies, and security.

In the 21st century, leaders of the United States and Canada must increasingly conceive the bilateral relationship in a global context, and not in isolation. The place of Mexico in a North American partnership, and commercial linkages to markets in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America should be discussed bilaterally, and wherever possible acted upon in a coordinated manner.



U.S.-Canadian Relations from Columbus Forward

We will seek consensus among ourselves to support specific actions to improve the relationship so that with stakeholder support decision makers can work constructively to find lasting solutions. We have committed ourselves in Columbus in 2016 to a spirit of dialogue and cooperation as stakeholders that will continue in the spirit of friendship and equal partnership, respecting the imperatives of interdependence and respect for a rule of law in this relationship and through dialogue hope our efforts may foster new principles and agendas to sustain the U.S.-Canadian relationship through the 21st century and beyond. While we recognize the importance of our political leaders and systems, an examination of our shared history reveals that the best policy and practical solutions arise from engagement with the stakeholder community. As the stakeholder community, we reaffirm our commitment to provide data, recommendations, and resources to demonstrate best practices, develop innovative solutions, and, ultimately, manage the bilateral relationship.

Signed by:

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