# Senator Grant Mitchell

*Proud to represent Alberta*

## 150 Days of Independence:
## Senate Liberal Caucus Moves Forward on Five Key Initiatives

*June 27, 2014*—150 days have passed since Liberal Party Leader Justin Trudeau announced his plan to reduce partisanship and patronage in the Senate, beginning with Liberal Senators being completely independent of the elected Liberal Caucus. The newly-independent Senators met and decided to establish themselves as the Senate Liberal Caucus, which was then recognized by the Speaker of the Senate as the official Opposition in the Senate.

On February 26, 2014, the Senate Liberal Caucus announced five initiatives to begin to do politics differently in the Senate.

1. **Open Caucus**: Since March 26, the Senate Liberal Caucus has opened the doors to its Wednesday caucus meetings to the public and to the press. During these Open Caucuses, the Senators have invited experts, community leaders, parliamentarians from all parties and the public to discuss issues of national concern that many believe should receive more attention in Parliament. To date, the Senate Liberal Caucus has held Open Caucuses on missing and murdered Aboriginal women; a national autism strategy; alternative legal approaches to prostitution; end of life issues; and parliamentary oversight of Canada's intelligence services and national security organizations. Conservative MP Steven Fletcher and Senator Hugh Segal have both given presentations, and MPs from different political parties have attended as well. The audio and speaker lists for the Open Caucuses to date are available here: http://www.liberalsenateforum.ca/opencaucus.

photo Jean-Marc Carisse

2. **'Your Question Period'**: To give Canadians a direct voice in Parliament, the Senate Liberal Caucus has invited members of the public to submit questions for Senators to ask of the Government on their behalf during Senate Question Period. Thus far, Liberal Senators have asked 38 questions on a variety of topics – including the Fair Elections Act, the silencing of government scientists on climate change, mental health, and cutbacks to veterans' benefits – submitted by Canadians from across the country. Several citizens attended in the Senate gallery and were recognized by the Speaker while their questions were asked and answered. The link to submit questions, and the text and audio of the previous queries and replies, are available here: http://www.liberalsenateforum.ca/your-question-period.

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# Senate Energy Committee Conducts Study on Renewable and Non-Renewable Energy Development in Canada's Three Northern Territories

*May 2014*—The Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources is conducting a study examining renewable and non-renewable energy development including energy storage, distribution, transmission, consumption and other emerging technologies in Canada's three northern territories.

"The committee will be examining ways of improving the affordability, availability, reliability and efficiency of energy use for industries, businesses, governments, and residents in the North. This study is both important and timely as industry continues to look to the North for ways of developing cost-effective and environmentally-friendly resource projects."

– Senator Grant Mitchell, Deputy Chair of the Committee

*Senators at the Nunavut legislature in Iqaluit: Senator Pierre Boisvenu, Senator Dennis Patterson, Senator Mitchell, Senator Richard Neufeld, Senator Joseph Day and Senator Nick Sibbeston*

- There are 80 communities located in the territories and they are not connected to the North American electricity grid or the North American natural gas pipeline system;
- Per capita energy use in Canada's North is roughly twice the Canadian average;
- NWT is the only oil-producing region in the North; most of the oil production is situated at Norman Wells, located in the Western part of the territory, and is transported via pipeline to Alberta;
- The Committee intends to submit its final report no later than December 31, 2014

To read transcripts of meetings and learn more about the Senate Energy Committee and its work, please visit: http://senate-senat.ca/enev-e.asp.

Follow the work of the Senate of Canada on Twitter @SenateCA or use the hashtag #SenCA. For Committee updates on Twitter use the hashtag #ENEV.

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## Climate Change and the Economy

*"...We are now at a crossroads in economic development for this country — probably for the planet — and there is this huge opportunity to catalyze a different kind of economic future that will inspire and motivate entrepreneurship and intellectual development, research and a new kind of economy that will pick up where this economy that we've had for 60 years is starting to leave off..."*

In June, I gave a speech in the Senate about climate change and its important connection to the future of our economy.

**Please click here to read more**

## Safe Digging Month

*In April 2014, Senator Mitchell delivered the following speech in the Senate Chamber:*

Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to an issue that has an impact on the safety of Canadian contractors, workers, businesses, homeowners and the general public. The Canadian Common Ground Alliance, or CCGA, has deemed April as Safe Digging Month for the owners and operators of buried infrastructure across the country.

Safe digging involves three aspects. The first is that excavators, all the way from professional contractors to homeowners who want to put in a new fence, need to call or click in this digital age before they dig. Secondly, there need to be structured, regulated processes by which underground infrastructure is identified by the owners of that infrastructure. That information needs to be reported religiously to a regulated authority of some kind, or a structured authority, and that information needs to be stored for easy access for those who are about to excavate or dig in any kind of way.

Reducing costs and improving safety is why groups like the CCGA and its network of provincial counterparts were established. [...]

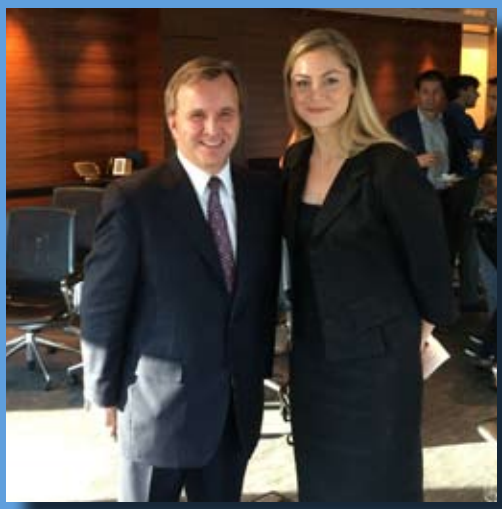
Not only does the CCGA promote safe digging practices, they also help to facilitate one-call centres where all of this effort can be coordinated. Our Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources is currently undertaking a study and will be reporting very soon on that. Now that spring has sprung and contractors and homeowners prepare for their outdoor projects, groups like the CCGA would like to remind every one of us and all Canadians to call or click before they dig.

**Click here to read more**

Mike Sullivan, Executive Director (left) and Dr. Dave Baspaly, Chair (right) of the Canadian Common Ground Alliance (CCGA) presented Senator Mitchell with a CCGA shovel for his continued work on promoting safe digging practices in Canada.

## Climate Change Lawyers Network

In June, Senator Mitchell spoke about the need for greater federal leadership on climate change at an event hosted by the Climate Change Lawyers Network. He discussed various policy alternatives for lowering Canada's greenhouse gas emissions and entered into a lively Q&A with attendees, discussing topics ranging from carbon taxes, the oil sands, transitioning to renewable energy, and the current state of the Canadian economy.



*Senator Mitchell and Christie Kneteman, Associate at Torys LLP and Executive Committee Member of the Climate Change Lawyers Network*

# 70th Anniversary of D-Day

Above: Senator Mitchell and Yukon Senator Dan Lang lay a wreath at a 70th Anniversary D-Day Ceremony in Ottawa.

As a representative of the Senate and member of the Senate Standing Committee on National Security and Defence, I attended a special ceremony honouring veterans of Canada's D-Day action. I accompanied Senator Dan Lang who is Chair of the Defence Committee and together we presented a wreath on behalf of Senators. It was held at the Aviation Museum in Ottawa on a bright and hot day, June 6.

There were probably 1,000 spectators — many elderly veterans, the Governor-General and his wife, Minister Peter MacKay and many foreign representatives both military and diplomatic. There was also a parade of current military personnel and a very crisp and competent Colonel who led the parade and shouted the commands.

Adding some more historical import to the event was the prominent presence given to a fully restored Hawker Typhoon fighter-bomber. This aircraft played a key role in the D-Day invasion of Normandy and has been given credit for stopping the German tank attack.

There was a true air of respect and honour extended by the presence of the crowd and the words of the various presenters. There was also a very special moment when former Typhoon pilots and maintenance crew members were asked to come forward for a picture with the aircraft and the Governor-General.

Of course, Canadian casualties were enormous on those beaches and during the days of heavy fighting that followed. The experience is still almost searing to the many veterans I spoke to that day, some with pictures of those days and those times and all with stories. You could look into their watery eyes, filled with emotion, and see the pride they felt for what they had done and the toll it took on their hearts and souls.

Thankfully, they went and sadly not all of them came back. What a difference they made to our world.

# Ballistic Missile Defence

In June, the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence tabled its latest report titled "Canada and Ballistic Missile Defence: Responding to the evolving threat". The committee unanimously recommended that the Government of Canada enter into an agreement with the United States to participate as a partner in ballistic missile defence (BMD), in order to preserve Canada's sovereignty, security and national interests.

In conducting the study, the committee sought to better understand the reasons for the decision in 2005 not to join the BMD program, the current threat environment, as well as a path forward which will protect Canada's sovereignty and security, while at the same time strengthening Canada's NORAD partnership.

Over the course of the study, the Committee learned from the Deputy Commander of NORAD, Lt. General Parent that Canada cannot simply assume that all of its territory will be protected by default under the existing U.S. BMD arrangement. Canada has been sharing early warning information for some time – without the benefit of BMD protection – so full participation in BMD is a logical next step in Canada's defence policy.

To read the committee's report or to learn more about the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, please visit its website at http://senate-senat.ca/secd-e.asp.

*Below: As part of this study, members of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence — including Senator Dan Lang, Senator David Wells, Senator Roméo Dallaire, Senator Lynn Beyak, Senator Joseph Day and Senator Mitchell — visited Cheyenne Mountain Complex in Colorado Springs to meet with Lt. General Parent, Deputy Commander of NORAD.*

## Questions or Comments? Please stay in touch!

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We welcome your thoughts and opinions. Please email us:
grant.mitchell@sen.parl.gc.ca

Or write to us, postage-free:
Senator Grant Mitchell
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A4

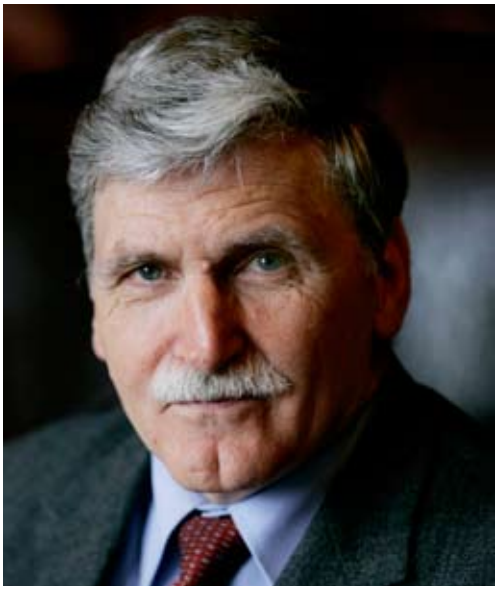
*The Senate Chamber resumes on September 16, 2014. Got a question you'd like to see asked in Senate Question Period?*

*Click on the link below*

# Paying tribute to retired colleagues

## Lieutenant-General The Honourable Roméo A. Dallaire, O.C., C.M.M., G.O.C, M.S.C., C.D., (Retired)

I have had many remarkable experiences as a Senator for which I am very grateful. One of the particularly special experiences has been the chance to work for 9 years with Senator Roméo Dallaire - we were appointed on the same day in March 2005.



I want to provide a tribute to him in this newsletter.

Roméo Dallaire is so widely known, nationally and internationally, for all the remarkable things he has done and continues to do. Clearly, we all know his history in Rwanda and the remarkable work he has done since, following that horrifying and terrible experience. We know it because he wrote an enormously widely read book, a book that was captured in a feature movie, and because he works so hard at advocating for so many important causes related to genocide, peace, nuclear disarmament, child soldiers, PTSD, and veterans. He is in many ways a Canadian icon with a huge international following.

But, because he is so well known, listing his accomplishments in a tribute runs the risk of being redundant. So, in order to mitigate this risk, I thought that I would highlight some facts and observations about Senator Dallaire that might not be so widely known:

1. Despite the fact that he has become a Canadian icon, he was not born in Canada. He was born in Holland in 1946 to a Canadian military father and a Dutch mother.

2. Coming from a military family forged in WWII may in part explain why he chose a military career, but he did so very young. In fact, as a boy, he used to recreate some of the great battles of history with toy soldiers and toy military vehicles. He was and is, to say the least, intensely focused.

3. He rose quickly to the general ranks of the army and he is amongst the youngest generals ever commissioned in the Canadian military.

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## The Honourable Catherine S. Callbeck, B.Comm., B.Ed.

I join so many colleagues in expressing admiration and applauding the clear accomplishments of Senator Callbeck. So much has been said, so well, that I will simply leave it to say that I would like to associate myself with those particular compliments and the recognition, the acknowledgment of great accomplishment by Senator Callbeck.

[...] I will also mention another personal perspective. As we all try these days, and in the past, to establish the presence, significance and importance of the Senate, I often list the names and describe colleagues in the Senate in order to establish what a great place it is and the quality of people here. At the top of that list I mention Senator Catherine Callbeck, each and every time. It is remarkable how well known she is amongst the people with whom I speak — particularly in Alberta, once again — in the public in general, and how impressed they are that somebody of that quality clearly reflects the nature and significance of the Senate and what we do in the Senate.

I will say, Senator Callbeck, what others have said, just in summary, that you have had a career that is beyond compare. You are unequaled in your accomplishments. Some people simply rise above their peers no matter where they are and what they do. You are clearly one of those. I have admired the way you have done politics — the dignity, the grace and the way you remain so issue-focused and representative. You're such an advocate for your region and for all Canadians.

I will close finally by saying that somehow you have remained absolutely understated in a very powerful way, while always overachieving. It's with that that I will say thank you very much for all that

you have done. It has been a privilege to know you, to have worked with you, to observe you, and I am very grateful to have had that chance. I wish you the best with whatever you go on to do.

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