

**Remarks of Senator Patrick Leahy**  
**Introduction of the Promoting Travel, Commerce and National Security Act of 2016**

When I talk about our shared border with Canada, I usually point out Marcelle's Quebec family roots – and that she speaks better French than I do. I must say, my French has improved.

Many Vermonters have family members on both sides of the border. We share economic interests, environmental goals, and we enjoy all that this vibrant cultural hub offers.

We all know how in the wake of 9-11 our borders changed. Some of these changes were common sense, others made life incredibly difficult. Since 9-11 I've worked consistently in the Senate to find balance, between strong borders and easy travel.

Legislation I introduced this year, builds on the important strides made to expanding safe and efficient cross border trade and more efficient travel. By having travelers from Canada pass through Customs before they board a plane or train, we can make their arrival in the US easier and can detect potential threats before they arrive here.

Under Prime Minister Trudeau's new leadership, both the United States and Canada have committed to passing this necessary legislation to make this happen.

The breadth of who is here shows you how important this is to our state of Vermont and the board dedication and commitment to passing this legislation.

We have leaders in travel and tourism like Tom Torti and Megan Smith who work to bring commerce opportunities into our state; Secretary of Transportation, Chris Cole, who has been charged with bringing back the Montrealer; Burlington airport officials who work in lock step with Customs and Border Patrol, Porter Airlines, and Toronto Port Authority on winter air travel between Canada and Vermont, and of course we are honored to host the General Consul of Canada, David Alward.

Canada is the United States largest trading partner. In the first 11 months of 2015, \$85 billion in commerce moved between the U.S. and Quebec. That is trade in business, energy, machinery and aerospace products, and agriculture. There are a lot of great things happening on either side of the border and I want to ease that experience, whether a traveler is coming and going on business or tourism, while enhancing security for both countries.

My legislation is a tangible step forward to establish a process that will make a real difference in the lives of citizens on both sides of our border. Expansion of preclearance sites in both air and rail provides options for all of us. And I know Vermonters look forward to the benefits of preclearance with Porter Airlines, and eventually, in bringing back the Montrealer passenger rail service.

I want to thank all of you for your support of this legislation, and I especially thank our guests here today for their work in helping to achieve this breakthrough. I will do all I can to make sure that this bill becomes a reality.