



SENATE
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Membership of the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators

Report of the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament

The Honourable V. Peter Harder, P.C., *Chair*
The Honourable Denise Batters, *Deputy Chair*
The Honourable Percy E. Downe, *Deputy Chair*
The Honourable Pierrette Ringuette, *Deputy Chair*

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The Committee Membership

The Honourable V. Peter Harder, P.C., *Chair*
The Honourable Denise Batters, *Deputy Chair*
The Honourable Percy E. Downe, *Deputy Chair*
The Honourable Pierrette Ringuette, *Deputy Chair*
The Honourable Sharon Burey
The Honourable Bev Busson
The Honourable Chantal Petitclerc
The Honourable Raymonde Saint-Germain
The Honourable Allister Surette
The Honourable David M. Wells
The Honourable Kristopher Wells
The Honourable Judy A. White
The Honourable Suze Youance
The Honourable Hassan Yussuff

Ex officio members of the committee:

The Honourable Pierre Moreau, P.C., or the Honourable Patti LaBoucane-Benson
The Honourable Leo Housakos or the Honourable Yonah Martin
The Honourable Lucie Moncion or the Honourable Joan Kingston
The Honourable Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler or the Honourable Robert Black
The Honourable Brian Francis or the Honourable Judy A. White

Other senators who have participated in the study:

The Honourable Diane Bellemare (until October 12, 2024)
The Honourable Robert Black
The Honourable Patricia Bovey (until May 14, 2023)
The Honourable Pierre J. Dalphond
The Honourable Pat Duncan
The Honourable Renée Dupuis (until January 16, 2024)
The Honourable Stephen Greene (until December 7, 2024)
The Honourable Leo Housakos
The Honourable Paul J. Massicotte (until September 10, 2025)
The Honourable Marilou McPhedran
The Honourable Judith G. Seidman (until August 31, 2025)
The Honourable Scott Tannas

Library of Parliament:

François Delisle, Analyst

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Senate Committees Directorate:

Céline Ethier, Committee Clerk

Lexley Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant

Brigitte Martineau, Administrative Assistant

Senate Communications Directorate

Sabryna Lemieux, Communications Officer

Order of Reference

Extract from the *Rules of the Senate*:

12-7. (2) the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament, which shall be authorized:

- a) to propose from time to time, on its own initiative, amendments to the Rules for the consideration of the Senate

Extract from the *Journals of the Senate*, Thursday, October 9, 2025:

The Honourable Senator Harder, P.C., moved, seconded by the Honourable Senator White:

That the papers and evidence received and taken and work accomplished by the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament pursuant to rule 12-7(2) during the First Session of the Forty-fourth Parliament be referred to the committee.

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

Shaila Anwar
Clerk of the Senate

Introduction

On June 21, 2021 and February 10, 2026, the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament (RPRD), examined the current framework governing the membership of the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators (CONF). Specifically, RPRD examined the recommendations made by CONF in its Third Report (2021), entitled *Consideration of matters relating to the Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code for Senators* (Third Report).

After considering the Third Report and hearing testimony from the chair and deputy chair of CONF at the time it was tabled, RPRD recommends that certain amendments be made to the *Rules of the Senate of Canada* (the Rules).

Background

On June 2, 2021, CONF presented its Third Report to the Senate, recommending that the Senate direct RPRD to consider and propose amendments to the Rules regarding CONF's membership based on the six principles outlined in that report.¹ The report was adopted the following day.²

On June 7, 2021, the Honourable Senator Judith G. Seidman, Chair, CONF and the Honourable Senator Scott Tannas, Deputy Chair, CONF, appeared before RPRD to discuss the Third Report.³ The 43rd Parliament was dissolved on August 15, 2021 due to a federal election. RPRD did not resume this study in the 44th Parliament.

In the 45th Parliament, on October 2, 2025, RPRD received a letter from CONF reiterating the importance of updating the Rules concerning its composition and asking it to propose amendments to the Rules informed by the Third Report.

On February 10, 2026, RPRD resumed the study, and reinvited Senator Tannas to discuss the Third Report.⁴

¹ Senate, Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators (CONF), *Third Report: Consideration of matters relating to the Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code for Senators* ("Third Report"), 43rd Parliament, 2nd Session, June 2, 2021.

² Senate, *Journals*, June 3, 2021.

³ Senate, Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament (RPRD), *Evidence*, June 21, 2021 (Hon. Senator Judith G. Seidman, Chair, Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest of Senators and Hon. Senator Scott Tannas, Deputy Chair, Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest of Senators).

⁴ RPRD, *Evidence*, February 10, 2026 (Senator Tannas).

Provisions Governing the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators

CONF operates under a dual framework established by both the Rules and *Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code for Senators* (the Code). While the Rules set out CONF's procedural foundations – such as its mandate and general responsibilities – the Code provides the substantive ethical standards, authorities, and obligations that guide CONF's oversight of senators' conduct. Moreover, its composition is governed by provisions found in both the Rules and the Code.

A. Role

According to the Rules, CONF is “responsible, on its own initiative, for all matters relating to the Code, including all forms involving senators that are used in its administration, subject to the general jurisdiction of the Senate.”⁵ The Rules also mandate CONF to exercise general direction over the Senate Ethics Officer (SEO),⁶ who is an independent and non-partisan officer of the Senate.

The Code constitutes an exercise of the Senate's parliamentary privilege to govern its internal affairs and to discipline its members. According to subsection 37(2) of the Code, CONF may give general directives to the SEO concerning the interpretation, application and administration of the Code.⁷ Moreover, under subsection 49(4) of the Code, CONF is required to publicly recommend to the Senate remedial measures or sanctions when a breach of the Code has been found by the SEO.

Additionally, section 68 of the Code requires a five-year comprehensive review of its provisions and operations.

It should also be noted that section 38 of the Code provides for an Intersessional Authority during a prorogation or dissolution of Parliament. All members of CONF serve under this Intersessional Authority until the members of a successor committee are appointed by the Senate.⁸

⁵ Senate, *Rules of the Senate of Canada* (“the Rules”), September 2024, Updated November 2025 (the Rules), [rule 12-7\(3\)\(b\)](#).

⁶ The Rules, [rule 12-7\(3\)a](#).

⁷ *Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code for Senators* (the Code), [subsection 37\(2\)](#).

⁸ The Code, [subsection 38](#).

B. Composition

Until the 44th Parliament, rule 12-26(1) and subsection 35(5) of the Code stipulated that members of CONF were determined solely by the Leader of the Government and the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate.⁹

On May 8, 2024, the Senate adopted a motion modifying the wording of rule 12-26(1) governing the appointment of Senators on CONF.¹⁰ The revised wording prescribes that members are to be named by the Senate following the adoption of a motion moved by the Leader or Representative of the Government, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and the leader or facilitator of the largest recognized parliamentary group or recognized party not already represented by the government or opposition leadership. This motion is deemed adopted without debate or vote as soon as practicable, at the beginning of each session.¹¹

Rule 12-3(2)(f) and subsection 35(2) of the Code specify that CONF is composed of five members. Rule 12-26(2) and subsection 35(2) of the Code provide that the quorum for CONF consists of three members.

Currently, the Rules do not specify how members are selected by their group or party. Subsection 35(4) of the Code, however, indicates that at the opening of a session:

- two members shall be elected by secret ballot in the Government caucus;
- two members shall be elected by secret ballot in the Opposition caucus;
- and
- the fifth member shall be elected by a majority of the other four members of CONF.¹²

Rule 12-3(3) and subsection 35(3) of the Code provide that CONF shall have no ex officio members.

Since the 42nd Parliament, the Senate has opted not to apply the rules on membership, quorum and requirements (e.g., election), as they do not reflect the

⁹ RPRD, [Third Report](#), May 11, 2005. From December 2016 to the 44th Parliament, sessional orders were adopted to derogate to the Rules. For example, the Senate adopted a sessional order on December 7, 2016 to consider the appointment of senators who chose not to be affiliated with neither the government nor the opposition. See Senate, [Journals](#), December 7, 2016.

¹⁰ Senate, [Journals](#), May 8, 2024.

¹¹ Current wording of rule 12-26(1) was adopted by a majority of the Senate on [May 8, 2024](#) along with a series of Rules changes recognizing that the Senate was now composed of multiple recognized parliamentary groups and recognized parties and providing for the equal treatment of these then-existing groups and parties.

¹² The Code, [subsection 35\(4\)](#).

Senate’s current composition, and has instead adopted sessional orders governing these matters. For example, at the beginning of the 45th Parliament, a sessional order was adopted on May 29, 2025,¹³ which among other things, set the quorum at four members, until the retirement of its sixth member, who would not be replaced. After that retirement, the quorum would become three. At the beginning of the 44th Parliament, a similar motion was adopted on December 9, 2021,¹⁴ establishing the membership at six and the quorum at four. A similar motion was adopted at the beginning of the Second Session of the 43rd Parliament on December 3, 2020.¹⁵

Evidence and Considerations

In the Third Report, CONF notes that the Rules and the Code should be updated to reflect changes regarding recognized parliamentary group and recognized party membership in the Senate. CONF recommends that such amendments be consistent with the six principles expressed within its report.¹⁶

In their appearance before RPRD on June 21, 2021, Senator Seidman and Senator Tannas agreed that amendments to the Rules should occur before amendments to the Code.¹⁷ As is noted in CONF’s Third Report, “[CONF] has the authority to propose amendments to the Code [but] does not have the mandate to recommend amendments to the Rules.”¹⁸

The evidence and recommendations are presented around the six principles provided by CONF in the Third Report.

Principle 1: Fair and Balanced Composition

The Third Report’s first principle is that the composition of CONF should be “fair and balanced,”¹⁹ with each recognized Senate parliamentary group and recognized party being allowed to select a member of that committee. It further recommended that once these members have been selected, an additional member should be elected by secret ballot, by all senators.

In her appearance before RPRD, Senator Seidman explained that “the composition of the committee no longer reflects the Senate [...] In recent years, the Senate has addressed this issue by circumventing the rules and proposing sessional motions to

¹³ Senate, *Journals*, May 29, 2025.

¹⁴ Senate, *Journals*, December 9, 2021.

¹⁵ Senate, *Journals*, December 3, 2020.

¹⁶ Senate, CONF, *Third Report*, 43rd Parliament, 2nd Session, June 2, 2021, p. 11.

¹⁷ RPRD, *Evidence*, June 21, 2021 (Senator Seidman, Senator Tannas).

¹⁸ Senate, CONF, *Third Report*, 43rd Parliament, 2nd Session, June 2, 2021, p. 14.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

change the membership.”²⁰ She held that amendments to the Rules and the Code would provide a more “lasting” solution.²¹

In his appearance on June 21, 2021, Senator Tannas explained the rationale for CONF’s recommendation that the Senate elect an additional member to the committee. He indicated that electing an additional member would ensure that all senators, including non-affiliated senators and those serving in the Government Representative’s Office (GRO), can participate in the selection process.²²

During the same meeting, Senator Tannas further added that members of the GRO would not be entitled to a position on CONF since they were not a recognized parliamentary group, but that they could “potentially get on through that extra member that the entire Senate elects.”²³

On February 10, 2026, RPRD discussed the composition of CONF in light of the GRO’s recently recognized status as a “recognized group,” following the adoption of a sessional order,²⁴ which is in effect for the remainder of the 1st Session of the 45th Parliament. Senator Tannas indicated that he would support CONF being composed of representatives from the five recognized groups or parties, including the GRO. He added that, if a significant number of senators were not affiliated with any recognized group or party, he would also support electing an additional sixth member to ensure their representation.²⁵

At this meeting, Senator Tannas also explained that “the most important principles are that every group, through their own process, determines who they want to put on that committee.”²⁶

RPRD Considerations

RPRD agrees that the composition of CONF should be fair and balanced and that each recognized group and recognized party should be represented.

RPRD agrees that all senators — including those affiliated with the GRO and those who are non-affiliated — should have the opportunity both to participate in determining CONF’s membership and to be considered for appointment to the committee.

RPRD affirms the value of the representation of all recognized parliamentary groups and recognized parties on CONF. RPRD also acknowledges that members of CONF,

²⁰ RPRD, *Evidence*, June 21, 2021 (Senator Seidman).

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² RPRD, *Evidence*, June 21, 2021 (Senator Tannas).

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Senate, *Journals*, September 24, 2025.

²⁵ RPRD, *Evidence*, February 10, 2026 (Senator Tannas).

²⁶ *Ibid.*

regardless of their affiliation, are accountable to the Senate, act with integrity and honour, and serve in an individual capacity. As such, they are expected to determine the appropriate remedial measures or sanctions applicable to members who are the subject of an inquiry report, independently, rather than to act on behalf of their group or party, including when making recommendations involving members of their own affiliation. In doing so, members must remain mindful that the unique nature and mandate of CONF is based on impartiality.

RPRD encourages recognized parliamentary groups, recognized parties and individual senators to consider the concepts of equity, such as gender and regional diversity, when selecting members to serve on CONF.

Some members of RPRD expressed concerns regarding the election of a member by the Senate as a whole, rather than selecting a member from a recognized parliamentary group or recognized party. It was noted that having representation directly tied to a group or caucus on CONF may facilitate the appropriate sharing of information within those groups or parties, to the extent permitted, and provide a channel through which senators may raise concerns about sensitive matters in a confidential setting.

RPRD observes that the GRO, having been recognized as a parliamentary group for the remainder of the first session of the 45th Parliament, has opted not to designate a representative to serve on CONF. RPRD notes that maintaining one member-at-large position ensures that all senators, including those affiliated with the GRO and those who are non-affiliated, can participate in the selection of at least one member and have a chance to be appointed.

Some members of RPRD express concern over the potential size of CONF, should significantly more recognized groups or recognized parties be formed.

In light of these considerations, RPRD concludes that the Rules should be amended to provide that each recognized parliamentary group and recognized party should designate one member to serve on CONF. Once those members have been selected in accordance with their respective internal process, an additional member should be elected by secret ballot, by all senators.

RPRD also concludes that the selection process should occur on a sessional basis.

Principle 2: Flexible Number of Members

The Third Report's second principle stipulates that CONF's number of members be flexible, as it may vary with fluctuations in the number of recognized parliamentary groups and recognized parties in the Senate.

Senator Seidman explained that CONF's small membership is beneficial when working on sensitive issues and when scheduling emergency meetings. She noted that while there should be some flexibility in the Rules regarding CONF's membership size, it should remain small.²⁷

Senator Tannas agreed the Rules should be flexible with respect to CONF's membership numbers – as large as necessary to incorporate all recognized parliamentary groups and recognized parties, but no larger.²⁸

Senator Tannas drew RPRD's attention to a nuance that may affect the committee's membership: where, over the course of a session, a member of CONF belongs to a group or party that ceases to be recognized. He asked RPRD to consider whether, in such circumstances, the member should be entitled to remain on CONF.²⁹

RPRD Considerations

RPRD acknowledges the importance of stability in CONF's membership.

RPRD agrees that, if a new group is recognized during a session, it should be permitted to designate a member to serve on CONF at the beginning of the following session, when CONF's membership is reconstituted.

To promote stability, RPRD agrees that where a recognized parliamentary group or recognized party falls below the threshold required for recognition, a member of that group or party may continue to serve on CONF until the end of the session.

RPRD recognizes that the Senate may, where necessary, adopt sessional orders to ensure that the number of members on CONF remains limited.

Some members of RPRD are of the view that the rules governing CONF's membership should not entitle every recognized parliamentary group or recognized party to appoint a member, noting that an increase in the number of recognized parliamentary groups or recognized parties could result in an unnecessarily large committee.

In light of these considerations, RPRD concludes that Rule 12-3(2)(f) be amended to specify that the number of members on CONF should reflect the number of recognized parliamentary groups and recognized parties in the Senate at the beginning of a session.

²⁷ RPRD, *Evidence*, June 21, 2021 (Senator Seidman).

²⁸ RPRD, *Evidence*, June 21, 2021 (Senator Tannas).

²⁹ *Ibid.*

As well, RPRD agrees that Rule 12-26.(2), which provides that quorum for CONF is three, be maintained.

Principle 3: Process for Filling a Vacancy

CONF's third principle recommends that when a vacancy occurs in the membership (e.g., through retirement, following a death, etc.), the departing member should be replaced in the same manner as provided for under the selection process recommended by CONF.

RPRD Considerations

RPRD agrees that the current process for filling vacancies has generally functioned effectively and is treated as a priority, given the importance and specific nature of CONF's mandate.

RPRD agrees that CONF's membership should be established at the earliest reasonable opportunity.

RPRD agrees that being overly prescriptive in the Rules, including by establishing a fixed timeline for filling a vacancy, may not be practical.

RPRD is of the view that no amendments need to be made to the Rules respecting the process for filling a vacancy. When a vacancy arises in CONF's membership, the replacement should be selected in the same manner as the departing member was chosen, at the earliest reasonable opportunity.

Principle 4: Change in Affiliation

The Third Report's fourth principle provides that a CONF member's change of affiliation should have no impact on that senator's membership for the duration of the session. The Third Report underscores "the importance of stability and continuity" in CONF's "membership as it is often called to consider complex questions that benefit from the committee's institutional memory."³⁰

Under the fourth principle, CONF emphasizes the importance of stability on CONF and states that "in order to preserve stability and ensure a certain level of institutional memory, it would be preferable to maintain the membership of the committee for the duration of a Parliament rather than for the duration of a session."³¹

³⁰ Senate, CONF, [Third Report](#), 43rd Parliament, 2nd Session, June 2, 2021, p. 13.

³¹ Ibid.

Senator Seidman noted that a member of CONF could remain impartial despite a change in group or party affiliation. She added that continuity is important for maintaining institutional memory.³² Senator Tannas added that members of CONF who change their group or party affiliation would, as a matter of common sense, step down if they could no longer remain impartial.³³

On February 10, 2026, Senator Tannas explained that when CONF made this recommendation, it was “a different time,”³⁴ during which there was considerable movement of senators between recognized parliamentary groups and recognized parties, and existing rules allowed senators who changed their affiliation to retain their seats. He explained that in his current view, senators that change group or party affiliation, should relinquish committee seats obtained through their previous group or party.³⁵

RPRD Considerations

RPRD does not agree with CONF’s view that if a member of CONF changes their affiliation, they should remain on the committee. RPRD is concerned that such a change could disrupt the balance on the committee.

Therefore, RPRD concludes that if a senator who is a member of CONF ceases to belong to the recognized parliamentary group or recognized party that made their appointment, that senator should cease to serve on CONF, and that recognized parliamentary group or recognized party should determine the successor committee member.

Principle 5: Continuity of Membership Between Sessions

The Third Report’s fifth principle provides that at the beginning of each session, CONF should be reinstated at the first opportunity with the last membership from the previous session until a new membership is selected. The Third Report indicates that this would “avoid any risk of delay in the establishment of the committee at the beginning of each session” and ensure “continuity” of its work.³⁶

The Third Report recognizes the importance of reinstating CONF “within a certain number of days”³⁷ at the beginning of a session but a timeline is not specified.

³² RPRD, *Evidence*, June 21, 2021 (Senator Seidman).

³³ RPRD, *Evidence*, June 21, 2021 (Senator Tannas).

³⁴ RPRD, *Evidence*, February 10, 2026 (Senator Tannas).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Senate, CONF, *Third Report*, 43rd Parliament, 2nd Session, June 2, 2021, p. 13.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

Senator Seidman noted that, as per the Third Report's fifth principle, the Rules should be amended to clarify timelines for establishing CONF's composition.³⁸ She stated, "it is important to try to clarify the members of the committee as soon as possible. Right now, it depends on a motion in the chamber, and there isn't that kind of specificity in the Rules."³⁹

RPRD discussed whether CONF's membership should continue to be established on a sessional basis or instead for the duration of a Parliament, to promote stability and continuity. While acknowledging that long-serving members can benefit the committee's work, Senator Tannas expressed support for retaining a sessional approach, noting that membership turnover is inevitable.⁴⁰

RPRD Considerations

RPRD is of the view that amending the Rules to provide a fixed timeline for the establishment of CONF's membership may be overly prescriptive and may not be practical.

RPRD agrees that CONF's membership should continue to be established on a sessional basis.

RPRD notes that the election of CONF's additional member should take place only after recognized parliamentary groups and recognized parties have selected their nominees and the Senate has confirmed those appointments, thereby allowing senators, as they see fit, to consider factors such as gender, regional and other forms of representation when casting their vote.

RPRD acknowledges that the selection process depends, in part, on the time required for recognized parliamentary groups and recognized parties to convene, deliberate and select their respective member to serve on CONF. This stage of the process must be followed by the election by the Senate of an additional member, followed by the adoption by the Senate of a motion establishing the membership of CONF pursuant to rule 12-26(1).

RPRD acknowledges CONF's intersessional authority and emphasizes that, should a matter arise between sessions or early in a session before new members are appointed, the previous membership would retain the authority to carry out the committee's duties, if necessary.

³⁸ RPRD, *Evidence*, June 21, 2021 (Senator Seidman).

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ RPRD, *Evidence*, February 10, 2026 (Senator Tannas).

Therefore, RPRD agrees that Rule 12-26(1), which provides that the appointment of CONF be done “[a]s soon as practicable at the beginning of each session,” be maintained.

Principle 6: Reduce Membership Barriers

The Third Report’s sixth principle stipulates that membership on the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration (CIBA) or the holding of a leadership position within a recognized parliamentary group or recognized party should not preclude a senator from serving on CONF.

In its Third Report, CONF recognized “the importance of separating the work of the committee from that of CIBA and the role of senators in leadership positions” and the “increased risk of potential conflicts of interest inherent to serving on both committees or serving on the committee while holding a leadership position.”⁴¹ However, CONF explained that all senators are expected to perform their parliamentary duties “with dignity, integrity, and honour,”⁴² and it trusts that members who also serve on CIBA or hold leadership roles will take appropriate measures, such as recusal where required, to avoid any potential issues.⁴³

The Third Report also recognizes that “imposing such membership restrictions could negatively impact smaller recognized parties or recognized parliamentary groups.”⁴⁴

Of note, in 2019, CONF expressed an opposite view in its Seventh Report, stating that “no member of the committee should serve on CIBA as a regular member.”⁴⁵ As its rationale for this recommendation, CONF stated:

*[N]o member of the committee should serve on CIBA as a regular member, in order to preserve the integrity of decisions made under processes within the Senate that regulate the conduct of senators and minimize the potential needs for recusals.*⁴⁶

Senator Tannas explained that leadership restrictions and limitations on dual committee membership can disproportionately affect small groups or parties, given that the minimum recognized parliamentary group size is nine members. As a result,

⁴¹ Senate, CONF, [Third Report](#), 43rd Parliament, 2nd Session, June 2, 2021, p. 13.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Senate, CONF, [Seventh Report](#), 42nd Parliament, 1st Session, August 2019, p. 40.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

a small number of leadership appointments in these groups or parties can significantly reduce the pool of available members.⁴⁷

Some members of RPRD questioned whether serving on CIBA and CONF could create conflicts of interest, given the access both committees may receive on confidential and/or overlapping matters (e.g., harassment policy).

In response to this concern, Senator Tannas said that he “never felt uncomfortable” while simultaneously serving on CONF, CIBA and as a group leader. He added that groups and parties should use their best judgment in deciding which member to serve on CONF.⁴⁸

RPRD Considerations

RPRD acknowledges the issues raised regarding members serving on CONF while also sitting on CIBA or holding a leadership position, and observes that these questions may be considered by recognized parliamentary groups or recognized parties when selecting a member to serve on CONF.

RPRD recognizes that prohibiting senators who serve on CIBA or who hold leadership positions from serving on CONF could create challenges for smaller groups and parties.

RPRD agrees that senators may serve on CONF while also serving on CIBA or holding a leadership position, and can perform their responsibilities with integrity and impartiality.

RPRD acknowledges that the existing practice does not impose any prohibitions and that this approach has functioned well.

RPRD agrees, on division, that the current practice, which does not preclude any senators from serving on CONF, should be maintained. RPRD does not recommend any amendments to the Rules on this practice.

Coming into Force

RPRD agreed that the amendments included in this report come into effect on the last day of the First Session of the Forty-fifth Parliament.

⁴⁷ RPRD, *Evidence*, June 21, 2021 (Senator Tannas).

⁴⁸ RPRD, *Evidence*, February 10, 2026 (Senator Tannas).

Recommendations

Therefore, pursuant to rule 12-7(2)(a), your committee recommends that the *Rules of the Senate* be amended by:

1. replacing rule 12-3(2)(f) with the following:

“the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators, one member from each recognized party or recognized parliamentary group, and one member at large elected by secret ballot by the Senate, as provided in rules 12-26. (1) to 12-26. (3); and”

2. replacing rule 12-26(1) with the following:

“As soon as practicable at the beginning of each session, the Leader or Representative of the Government shall move a motion appointing a member from each recognized party or recognized parliamentary group with a recognized status at the beginning of the parliamentary session, to the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators. This motion shall be seconded by the Leader of the Opposition and the leaders or facilitators of any other recognized parties or recognized parliamentary groups. Except as otherwise provided, substitutions in the membership of the committee shall be made by way of a motion moved in the Senate by the leader or facilitator whose member is being substituted. Nomination motions shall be deemed adopted without debate or vote.”

3. adding the following new rules immediately after rule 12-26(1):

“Election of a member at large

12-26. (2) After the adoption of the motion provided in subsection (1), and at any subsequent time during the course of a parliamentary session that the position of member at large becomes vacant, a member at large shall be elected by secret ballot, provided that if more than two senators stand for election, the election will be conducted by ranked ballot.”

Election process for a member at large

“12-26. (3) Within the first five sitting days after the adoption of the motion provided in subsection (1), and subsequently within the first five sitting days of a vacancy arising in the position of member at large, the Speaker shall, after consulting with the Leader or Representative of the Government, the Leader of the Opposition, and the leader or facilitator of any other recognized party or recognized parliamentary group, inform the Senate of the process for senators to become candidates and for the conduct of the election.

Duration of committee membership

12-26. (4) If a senator who is a member of the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators ceases to be a member of a particular recognized party or recognized parliamentary group for any reason, other than as provided for in subsection (6), they simultaneously cease to be a member of that committee. The resulting vacancy shall be filled by the leader or facilitator of the recognized party or recognized parliamentary group to which the senator had belonged, following the process established for substitutions in subsection (1), or in the case of the member at large, following the process established in subsections (2) and (3).

Duration of committee membership for member at large

12-26. (5) If a non-affiliated senator occupying the position of member at large becomes a member of a recognized party or recognized parliamentary group, they simultaneously cease to be a member of the committee, with the resulting vacancy being filled following the process established in subsections (2) and (3).

Committee membership and loss of recognized status

12-26. (6) If a senator ceases to be a member of a recognized party or recognized parliamentary group because that party or group ceases to exist or no longer meets the requirements for recognition as provided in these Rules, they shall remain a member of the committee for the remainder of the session, or until they become a member of another recognized party or recognized parliamentary group, whichever comes first. ”

4. **By renumbering current rule 12-26(2) as 12-26(7).**
5. **By updating all cross references in the Rules, including the lists of exceptions, accordingly.**

Your committee recommends that these amendments come into effect on the last day of the First Session of the Forty-fifth Parliament.

Appendix A – Witnesses

Monday, June 21, 2021

The Honourable Senator Judith G. Seidman, Chair, Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators

The Honourable Senator Scott Tannas, Deputy Chair, Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators

Tuesday, February 10, 2026

The Honourable Senator Scott Tannas, former Deputy Chair, Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators



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