

November 21, 2022

Franklin Center & Ripon Society Hold Policy Conference in Madrid Examining U.S.-Spain Relations

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Franklin Center for Global Policy Exchange and The Ripon Society held a policy conference in Madrid from November 10-14 looking at some of the key issues impacting the relationship between the United States and Spain.

Called the TransAtlantic Capital to Capital Exchange, the 36th edition of the conference included meetings, panel discussions, and breakout sessions examining such policy topics as the war in Ukraine, energy security, U.S.-EU trade, climate change and ESG, tax policy, combatting inflation, China’s influence in Latin America, medical advancement in the wake of COVID-19, funding infrastructure, workforce and immigration, data privacy and cybersecurity, the future of NATO, the agenda of the 118th Congress, and restoring trust in government.

“We hold this conference for two reasons. First, we believe America must continue to play a leadership role around the world, and the only way to know the world is to see the world,” said Jim Conzelman, the President and CEO of the Franklin Center and The Ripon Society. “Beyond that, we also believe that politics should stop at the water’s edge, which is why we believe it is important that both Republicans and Democrats attend.

“We were honored this year to have 28 Members of Congress taking part — 20 Republicans and 8 Democrats. We are appreciative of them taking time out of their busy schedules to join us. Occurring only a few days after the historic midterm elections of 2022, the 36th TransAtlantic Capital to Capital Exchange in Madrid provided an opportunity for lawmakers to take a step back from domestic politics and examine the relationship between the U.S. and Spain. From high inflation to broken supply chains to the war in Ukraine, our countries face a number of pressing challenges around the globe.

“We are very grateful for the assistance Spain provided in helping us craft an agenda that addresses these and other challenges in the conference. We are pleased they took the opportunity to fully showcase their country and its culture, and to continually demonstrate their allyship during our conference against the backdrop of global upheaval.”

Participants in the TransAtlantic Capital to Capital Exchange included representatives from Spain’s public and private sectors, and 28 Members of the United States Congress. The Members included U.S. Representatives Kelly Armstrong (R-ND), Don Bacon (R-NE), Joyce Beatty (D-OH), Stephanie Bice (R-OK), Mike Bost (R-IL), Larry Bucshon, M.D. (R-IN), Buddy Carter (R-GA), Rodney Davis (R-IL), Ron Estes (R-KS), Randy Feenstra (R-IA), Jim Himes (D-CT), Bill Huizenga (R-MI), Dusty Johnson (R-SD), John Joyce, M.D. (R-PA), Dan Kildee (D-MI), Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), Darin LaHood (R-IL), Rick Larsen (D-WA), Frank Lucas (R-OK), Nancy Mace (R-SC), Carol Miller (R-WV), Dan Newhouse (R-WA), Kathleen Rice (D-NY), Linda T. Sánchez (D-CA), Terri Sewell (D-AL), Pete Stauber (R-MN), Glenn “GT” Thompson (R-PA), and Fred Upton (R-MI).

Also attending and participating were former Representative Dave Camp (R-MI) who serves as Chair of the Franklin Center, and Stacey Glasscock, who serves as Chief of Staff to Rep. Frank Lucas (R-OK).

The Members of Congress began their visit to Spain on Thursday, November 10 with an audience with His Majesty King Felipe VI at Zarzuela Palace, the residence and working offices of the Spanish monarch. A special gift presentation to the King of an American flag flown over the United States Capitol was led by Reps. Lucas and Beatty.

The conference officially kicked off with an in-country briefing led by Conrad Tribble, the Deputy Chief of Mission for the U.S. Embassy in Madrid. Joining him on the panel were his embassy colleagues: Jon Piechowski, Counselor for Public Diplomacy; Isabel Rioja-Scott, Counselor for Economic Affairs; Joe Callahan, Counselor for Management; Maureen McGovern, Officer for Political/Military Affairs; Capt. Manny Picon, Senior Defense Official/ Defense Attaché; and Capt. Karsten Spies from the Office of Defense Cooperation.

The next morning, on Friday, November 11, the Congressional delegation visited their counterparts in the Congress of Deputies of Spain at Palacio de las Cortes. There, Alfonso Rodríguez Gómez de Celis, the First Vice President of the Congress of Deputies, received the group and exchanged gifts on behalf of

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King Felipe VI conducts an audience with the U.S. Members of Congress at Zarzuela Palace



Rep. LaHood speaks at a bilateral meeting between the U.S. Representatives and Spanish Deputies



Mr. Salvador makes a point on the data privacy and cybersecurity panel to Rep. Bucshon, Rep. Huizenga, Rep. Joyce and Mr. Ardizzone



Rep. Bucshon speaks during the health care panel while Rep. Sewell, Rep. Carter, and Rep. Rice take note



Mr. Yermo speaks during the health care panel to Rep. Joyce and Mr. Ibarra Lorente



Rep. Larsen speaks about transportation with Rep. Davis and Rep. Bost

the Spanish Congress and the U.S. delegation with Rep. LaHood. After a tour of their legislative chamber, the U.S. delegation met with representatives from the Parliamentary Groups of Congress including: Pau Mari Klose, Member of Congress of Deputies, Socialist Parliamentary Group; Carlos Rojas García, Member of Congress of Deputies, Popular Parliamentary Group; Iván Espinosa de los Monteros, Member of Congress of Deputies, Vox Parliamentary Group; María Carmen Martínez Granados, Member of Congress of Deputies, Citizens Parliamentary Group; Jon Iñarritu García, Member of Congress of Deputies, EH-Bildu Parliamentary Group; Sergio Sayas, Member of Congress of Deputies, Mixed Parliamentary Group; Noemí Villagrasa, Member of Congress of Deputies, Socialist Parliamentary Group; Pablo Hispán Iglesias de Ussel, Member of Congress of Deputies, Popular Parliamentary Group; and Valentina Martínez Ferro, Member of Congress of Deputies, Popular Parliamentary Group. Reps. LaHood and Himes delivered remarks on behalf of the group before a bilateral Q&A session.

Before beginning panel sessions that day, Reps. Bost, Beatty and Bacon delivered remarks of appreciation in honor of Veterans Day. The ceremony concluded with a flag presentation to the U.S. Embassy in Madrid. Marine Corps Attaché, Lieutenant Colonel Sam Carrasco represented the embassy and received the flag on its behalf.

The remainder of the conference consisted of eleven panel discussions and two breakout sessions over the next three days which focused on a number of key areas, including:

“NATO, European Security & the Future of the Western Alliance” – which was a discussion about the defense cooperation between the U.S. and Spain, the renewed importance of NATO in light of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, and the expansion of the alliance with the accession of Sweden and Finland.

Participating in the panel were Rep. Larsen, Rep. Bacon, Rep. Sánchez and Rep. Bice, along with Admiral Juan Francisco Martínez Nuñez, who serves as the Undersecretary of Defence for Political Affairs at Spain’s Ministry of Defense. Moderating the panel was Rep. Bucshon.

“China’s Growing Influence in Latin America” – this panel discussion was about China’s increasing interest, investment, and influence in Latin America and

how that affects the relationships and strategic interests of Spain and the United States in that region and globally.

Appearing on the panel were Rep. Himes, Rep. LaHood, Rep. Krishnamoorthi, and Rep. Johnson. Also appearing was Juan Fernández Trigo, the Secretary of State for Ibero-America and the Caribbean and for Spanish around the World at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation. Rep. Lucas moderated the discussion.

“U.S.-EU Trade” – which was a discussion about trade between the U.S. and the EU, and – absent TTIP – what alternative agreements on trade can be established to encourage balanced economic growth and make improvements to supply chains for consumer goods and critical materials.

On the trade panel were Rep. Lucas, Rep. Thompson, Rep. Kildee, Rep. Bost, Rep. Newhouse, Rep. Estes, Rep. Miller, Rep. Feenstra, and José Luis Kaiser, who serves as the Head of the Economic and Trade Office at the Embassy of Spain in Washington, D.C. Former Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dave Camp moderated the panel.

“Medical Advancement in the Wake of COVID-19” – this was a discussion about how the U.S. and Spain can build upon the successes achieved during the COVID-19 global pandemic to further medical innovation and better health care systems. The panel also discussed how the private and public sectors in their countries worked together to save lives and how they can maintain this momentum of more rapid advancement of medicines and treatments for other diseases.

Appearing on the panel were Rep. Bucshon, Rep. Sewell, Rep. Carter, Rep. Rice, and Rep. Joyce, along with two Spaniards: Manuel Ibarra Lorente, who is the Head of Pharmaceutical Inspection & Enforcement Department at the Spanish Agency of Medicines and Healthcare Products, and Juan Yermo, who serves as the General Director of Farmindustria. Rep. LaHood served as the moderator.

“Workforce and Immigration” – this panel discussed immigration in the U.S. and Spain and how successful immigration policies can address workforce challenges caused by labor shortages and aid humanitarian efforts.

The panel consisted of Rep. Sánchez, Rep. Thompson, Rep. Davis, Rep. Newhouse and Teresa Udaondo, who is the Deputy Director General for Migration



Rep. Bost, Rep. Newhouse, Rep. Estes, Rep. Miller, Rep. Feenstra, and Mr. Kaiser appear on the U.S.-EU trade panel



Rep. Stauber makes a point about energy security as Rep. Upton, Rep. Krishnamoorthi, Rep. Armstrong, and Rep. Feenstra look on



Vice President Gómez de Celis welcomes Rep. LaHood to Palacio de las Cortes



Rep. Himes and Rep. Bacon discuss the next session of Congress



Reps. Davis and Newhouse share a laugh with Ms. Udanodo on the workforce and immigration panel

at the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration. Stacey Glasscock moderated the conversation.

“Climate Change and ESG” – this was a discussion on the world’s changing climate and what, if any, actions should be undertaken by the private and public sectors to combat it. The panel explored whether continued technological innovation and cleaner energy sources are sufficient to address this problem or if further intervention by governments will be necessary. The panel also discussed how the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) movement is impacting investing, corporate strategy, and government regulation.

Appearing on the panel were Rep. Armstrong, Rep. Bice, Rep. Mace, Rep. Huizenga, and Juan Virgilio Márquez, who is the General Director of the Spanish Wind Energy Association. The panel was moderated by Rep. Rice.

“Energy Security” – the panel discussed all aspects of the energy sector, including fossil fuels, renewables, and nuclear. Given recent events, the panel addressed the geopolitics of energy as countries search for friendlier and cost-effective places to source energy from.

The panel consisted of Rep. Upton, Rep. Krishnamoorthi, Rep. Armstrong, Rep. Stauber, Rep. Feenstra, and Colonel Ignacio Fuente Cobo, who is a senior analyst at the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies (IEEE). Rep. Newhouse served as the moderator of the energy panel.

“Agenda of the 118th Congress” – this panel discussed the results of the 2022 midterm elections and how they will impact the agenda of the next session of Congress.

Appearing on the panel were Rep. Carter, Rep. LaHood, Rep. Sánchez, Rep. Lucas, Rep. Himes, and Rep. Bacon, with Rep. Upton serving as the moderator.

“Data Privacy and Cybersecurity” – the panel discussion was about the impact of GDPR in the European Union and what lessons from it the U.S. should consider as it considers its own federal privacy legislation and the potential impact on business and innovation. Additionally, the panel discussed growing cybersecurity concerns and what governments, private firms and individuals should do to combat the threat of hacking.

Appearing on the panel were Rep. Upton, Rep. Himes, Rep. Bucshon, Rep. Huizenga, Rep. Joyce, Guillermo Ardizzone, who is the Director General for Foreign and Security Policy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, and Dr. Luis de Salvador, who is the Director for Technological Innovation at the Spanish Agency for Data Protection. The panel was moderated by Stacey Glasscock.

“Funding Highways and Roads” – this was a discussion about finding long-term solutions to the funding of roads and bridges in the U.S. and Spain. The panel discussed different funding mechanisms and proposals such as adjusting fuel taxes, increasing tolling, and other user fee ideas. The panel also discussed the future of public-private-partnerships (PPPs) for constructing infrastructure. On the transportation panel were Rep. Larsen, Rep. Bost, Rep. Johnson, Rep. Stauber, Rep. Mace, and Julián Nuñez, the President of SEOPAN. Rep. Davis moderated the conversation.

“Corporate Taxation” – this panel was a discussion about corporate taxation in the United States and Spain, as well as the OECD’s work on digital service taxes and efforts to establish a global minimum tax rate.

The panelists were Rep. Sewell, Rep. Estes, Rep. Miller, and Maria Jose Garde, who serves as the Director General of Taxes at the Ministry of Finance and Civil Service. Moderating the discussion was Rep. Lucas.

“Combating Inflation” – the first breakout session discussed the actions Congress can take to combat inflation.

“Restoring Trust in Government” – the second breakout of the conference discussed what Congress can do to restore trust in government.

In addition to the panels and breakout discussions, a number of speakers addressed the group including: a speech entitled, “Preservation of the International Order” delivered by Ángeles Moreno, Spain’s Secretary of State for Foreign and Global Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation; remarks by the U.S. Ambassador to Spain and Andorra, Julissa Reynoso; and remarks by Gonzalo Ulloa, the vice chairman of the Fundación Consejo España-EE.UU.



Rep. Beatty and Rep. Lucas present a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol to King Felipe VI



Rep. Estes makes a point on the tax panel with Rep. Sewell and Rep. Miller



Ambassador Reynoso addresses the group



The bipartisan delegation enjoy the bilateral meeting with Spanish Deputies at Palacio de las Cortes



Mr. Ulloa welcomes the group



Admiral Martínez Nuñez speaks about NATO with Rep. Bacon, Rep. Sánchez, and Rep. Bice



Chairman Camp moderates the trade panel with Rep. Lucas, Rep. Thompson, Rep. Kildee, and Rep. Bost



Bilateral meeting between U.S. Congressional delegation and leaders of the Spanish Congress of Deputies parliamentary groups



Rep. Buchson thanks Secretary of State Moreno



Col. Fuente Cobo discusses energy security with Rep. Feenstra



The team from U.S. Embassy in Madrid briefs the group on U.S.-Spain relations



Ms. Garde comments on corporate tax with Rep. Estes and Rep. Miller



Mr. Nuñez speaks about transportation with Rep. Stauber and Rep. Mace



Rep. Johnson speaks about China's influence in Latin America with Rep. Krishnamoorthi and Mr. Fernández Trigo



Mr. Márquez addresses Rep. Bice and Rep. Huizenga about climate change and ESG



The U.S. Congressional delegation in the Congress of Deputies



The panel discussion on medical advancement in the wake of COVID-19