

August 12, 2025

## Franklin Center & Ripon Society Hold Policy Conference in Geneva Examining U.S.-Swiss Relations

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Franklin Center for Global Policy Exchange and The Ripon Society held its annual policy conference, the TransAtlantic Capital to Capital Exchange (C2C) in Geneva, Switzerland from August 5-9, 2025.

The 39th edition of the conference included panel discussions, keynote speakers, meetings, and briefings focused on the relationship between the United States and Switzerland, and our nation’s engagement with several of the notable international organizations based in Geneva. Among the topics explored were trade, financial services and economic policy, AI and technology, energy and climate change, tax policy, and health care and pharmaceuticals.

“This year’s conference comes at a unique time in the history of the U.S.-Swiss relationship, to say the least,” stated Jim Conzelman, the President & CEO of The Ripon Society and Franklin Center. “From the threat of tariffs to the threat from China, this relationship is facing a host of unprecedented challenges. At the same time, our two countries are also facing a number of unprecedented opportunities, from rapid advances in health care to revolutionary leaps in AI.

“As we confront these threats and meet these opportunities, one thing is needed above all else — cooperation. Simply put, America cannot go it alone in the world. Nor can Switzerland. We have to work together. One of the goals of this policy conference was to strengthen the relationship between our two nations so we are in a better position to do just that in the coming years.”

Participants in this year’s conference included representatives from the Swiss Confederation, top officials from international organizations, and 28 Members of the United States Congress. These Members included U.S. Representatives Joyce Beatty (D-OH), Cliff Bentz (R-OR), Stephanie Bice (R-OK), Mike Bost (R-IL), Mike Carey (R-OH), Ed Case (D-HI), Ron Estes (R-KS), Vince Fong (R-CA), Scott Franklin (R-FL), Kevin Hern (R-OK), Ashley Hinson (R-IA), Erin Houchin (R-IN), Bill Huizenga (R-MI), Kevin Kiley (R-CA), David Kustoff (R-TN), Bob Latta (R-OH), Frank Lucas (R-OK), Greg Murphy (R-NC), Dan Newhouse (R-

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Councillor Guy Parmelin, Vice President of the Swiss Confederation, with Rep. Lucas

WA), Zach Nunn (R-IA), Jay Obernolte (R-CA), Jimmy Panetta (D-CA), Linda T. Sánchez (D-CA), Pete Sessions (R-TX), Terri Sewell (D-AL), Tom Suozzi (D-NY), and Emilia Sykes (D-OH), as well as U.S. Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett (D-VI). Also participating was former Representative Jim Renacci (R-OH), who serves as Vice Chair of the Franklin Center.

The delegation met with Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and Ms. Angela Ellard, Deputy Director-General of the WTO. This visit occurred at the WTO’s headquarters on Wednesday and represented the largest U.S. congressional delegation to ever visit this global body.

Several keynote addresses occurred throughout the conference including:

Councillor Guy Parmelin, the vice president of the Swiss Confederation



The Congressional delegation with WTO Director General Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala



and leader of its Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research, who gave keynote remarks on “the future of Swiss-U.S. Relations” on Friday. And Dr. Martina Hirayama, the Swiss State Secretary for Education, Research and Innovation at the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research spoke about Switzerland’s renown apprenticeship system over lunch on Thursday.

A quartet of Americans serving as key leaders from some of the forty international organizations based in Geneva also spoke to the conference: On Wednesday, Ms. Amy Pope, the Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Ms. Kelly Clements, the Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees both delivered remarks. Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union, also delivered remarks before the AI and Technology panel on Thursday, while Mr. Marc Rivers, the CFO and Managing Director of the International Committee of the Red Cross, spoke to the group on Friday.

The U.S. Mission Geneva kicked off the conference on Tuesday with a briefing on “The China Challenge in Geneva.” The Chargé d’Affaires, Ms. Tressa Rae Finerty, led her team at the Mission in a panel discussion: Mr. Rodney Hunter, Acting Deputy Chief of Mission and Minister Counselor for Multilateral



Economic and Political Affairs; Ms. Tania Ghazar Peace and Security Officer; Dr. Matthew Lim, Global Health Attaché; Ms. Heather Kalmbach, Counselor for Humanitarian Affairs.

The next session that afternoon was an “In Country Briefing” led by Finerty and the Chargé d’Affaires of the U.S. Embassy in Bern, Mr. Brad Bell. These top officials from two U.S. diplomatic outposts in Switzerland discussed U.S.-Swiss relations and U.S. engagement with the scores of multilateral organizations based in Geneva.

The panel sessions on Wednesday kicked off with a discussion titled “the future of U.S. trade engagement and policy.” The panelists were Rep. Sánchez, Rep. Sewell, Rep. Newhouse, Rep. Hinson, Rep. Emilia Sykes, Ambassador Ivo Germann, Head of the Foreign Economic Affairs Directorate for the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, and Dr. Rahul Sahgal, the CEO of the Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce. The trade discussion was moderated by former Rep. Renacci.

The financial services and economic policy panel showcased senior members of the House Financial Services Committee: Rep. Lucas, Rep. Sessions, Rep. Huizenga, Rep. Beatty and Rep. Nunn, alongside Ambassador Michael Manz, who is the Head of Financial System and Financial Markets for the Swiss State Secretariat for International Finance. The moderator was Rep. Sewell.

On Thursday, the panels occurred at CERN with the first topic being “AI and technology: shaping society and security.” With ITU’s Secretary General Bodgan-



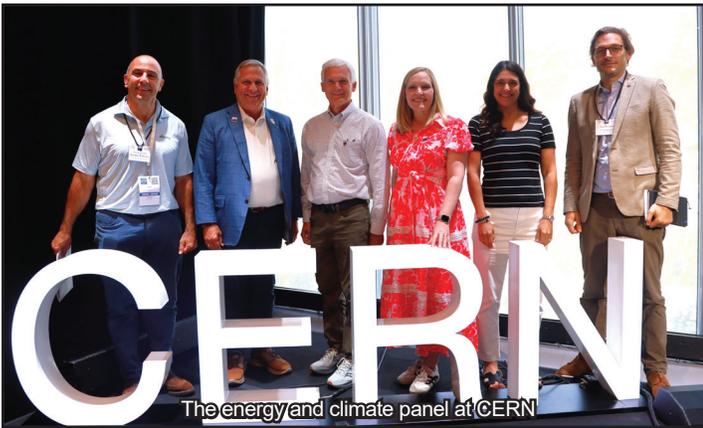
Martin setting the stage with opening remarks, a panel of Reps. Case, Franklin, Obernolte, Kiley, and Fong discussed the questions from the moderator, Rep. Beatty, as well as the audience.

Rep. Houchin served as the moderator of the second panel at CERN: Energy security and climate policy. The panelists were Rep. Latta, Rep. Bost, Rep. Panetta, Rep. Bentz, Rep. Bice and Ambassador Guillaume Cassaigneau, who serves as the Head of International Energy Affairs for the Swiss Federal Office of Energy.

On Friday, the panel “U.S. tax policy and its international impact” explored the freshly enacted One Big Beautiful Bill Act with Ways and Means Committee members Congresswoman Plaskett, Rep. Estes, Rep. Hern, Rep. Suozzi and Rep. Carey, alongside Switzerland’s Ms. Daniela Stoffel, who is the State Secretary for International Finance at the Federal Department of Finance. Former Rep. Renacci moderated this panel discussion.

The last panel of the day was on “Health care and pharmaceuticals.” Appearing on that panel were Rep. Sánchez, Rep. Kustoff, Rep. Murphy, Rep. Houchin, and Mr. Michael Oberreiter, who serves as the International Head of External Affairs for Roche, a Swiss pharmaceuticals company. Rep. Hinson served as the moderator for this final policy panel of the conference.

A special Members of Congress-only bilateral meeting and working lunch with members of the Swiss Parliament and Swiss government occurred on Friday afternoon. The meeting featured a panel discussion with four Swiss



parliamentarians, including: Mr. Damien Cottier, who is a Member of the National Council (FDP.The Liberals-Neuchâtel) and is the President, Parliamentary Association Switzerland-USA; Mr. Fabian Molina, who is a Member, National Council (SP-Zürich), serves as the Vice President, Parliamentary Association Switzerland-USA and is on the Foreign Affairs Committee; Mr. Laurent Wehrli, who is a Member of the National Council (FDP.The Liberals-Vaud) and President of its Foreign Affairs Committee; and Mr. Simon Michel, who is a Member of the National Council (FDP.The Liberals-Solothurn) and its Foreign Affairs Committee. Also speaking on the panel were two leaders of the Congressional Delegation, Rep. Panetta and Rep. Bice. The panelists spoke about the challenges and opportunities facing our fruitful bilateral relationship. Dr. Sahgal served as the moderator.

Also in attendance at this meeting were: Mrs. Christa Markwalder, who is a former Member of the National Council (FDP.The Liberals-Bern) and former Speaker of the House; Ms. Isabelle Moret, who is a Member of the State Council of Vaud (FDP.The Liberals) and a former Member of the National Council, in addition to being its former Speaker of the House; Ms. Brigitta Gadiant, who is a former Member of the National Council (BDP Switzerland-Graubünden); State Secretary Stoffel; Mr. Alexandre Epalle, who is the Director General of the Office for Economic Development and Innovation (OCEI), Department of Economy and

Employment (DEE), Geneva; Mr. Matthieu Aubert, who is the Head of Service for Economic Affairs for the Canton of Neuchâtel; Mr. Jerry Krattiger who is the Managing Director of the Fribourg Development Agency (Canton of Fribourg); Ambassador François Voeffray Peyro – who serves as the Assistant Secretary for the Americas for the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs; Mr. Marcus Rothen, who is the Head of Regional Coordination North and Central America for the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs; and Ms. Ariane Michaud who is the Deputy Regional Coordinator for the United States of America at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

In addition to their visit to the headquarters of the WTO, the delegation had a number of special visits in and around Geneva: A historian from the International Committee of the Red Cross showed them the Hôtel de ville de Genève – Geneva’s City Hall – where the first Geneva Convention was signed in 1864. While another showed them Cathédrale Saint-Pierre, the spiritual center of Reformation leader John Calvin’s Geneva.

The visit to the CERN campus featured welcoming remarks by Ms. Charlotte Lindberg Warakaulle, who is its Director for International Relations, and Ms. Sarah Charley, who is a Communications Officer with U.S. CERN. Experts then led the group to different parts of the international campus to learn about the home to the largest particle physics laboratory in the world.





The Congressional delegation visits the room where the Geneva Convention was signed



Mr. Oberreiter speaks on the health care and pharmaceuticals panel



Rep. Suozzi discusses taxes with Rep. Estes, Carey, Rep. Hearn and Rep. Carey



Ms. Kelly Clements of UNHCR and Rep. Murphy



State Secretary Hironaka addresses apprenticeships



Mr. Bell and Ms. Finerty give the In Country Briefing



Rep. Case asks Councilor Parmelin a question



Ms. Bodgan-Martin of ITU delivers keynote remarks before the AI and technology panel



Rep. Latta, Rep. Bost, and Rep. Panetta listen as Amb. Cassaigneau speaks about energy in Switzerland



Rep. Sewell and Dr. Sahgal discuss U.S.-Swiss trade



The Congressional delegation meets with WTO Director General Dr. Ngozi