



The Honourable Diane Bellemare, PhD
Senator for Quebec (Alma)
Senate of Canada

Developing Essential Skills:
Senator Bellemare presents two bills at the annual conference of
Colleges and Institutes Canada

Ottawa, November 5, 2018 – Senator Diane Bellemare presented her two bills at the annual conference of Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan). Bill S-254, An Act to establish Promotion of Essential Skills Learning Week, and Bill S-256, An Act respecting the development of a national framework for essential workforce skills, both aim to encourage the collective leadership that Canada and the provinces need to create tools and a national strategy to develop the essential skills of all Canadians.

During her presentation, Senator Bellemare stressed that these bills flow from recommendations to establish a national strategy to develop essential skills made at the 2013 Leaders Forum organized by CICan, and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. The first phase of this initiative involves making literacy and essential skills development a national priority, and the second involves improving the quality of practices, for example, by introducing a framework with targets for essential skills so that employers and individuals know what to expect.

Senator Bellemare added that “continuing education, particularly upgrading everyone’s essential skills, should be considered a right, just like the right to education, and not simply an individual responsibility.”

Colleges and Institutes (CICan) is a national, voluntary membership organization representing publicly supported colleges, institutes, cegeps and polytechnics in Canada and internationally. Its mission is to champion the innovations, applied research, international development and employment or entrepreneurial opportunities created by its member institutions and partners in Canada and around the world. www.collegesinstitutes.ca

Diane Bellemare has a PhD in Economics from McGill University and an M.A. from the University of Western Ontario. She has been a full professor at the school of management sciences at the University of Quebec at Montreal, a consultant with government and labour organizations, President and CEO of the SQDM, and Vice-President of the Conseil du patronat du Québec. Senator Bellemare has published several books and articles on labour market and employment issues. She was appointed to the Senate in September 2012 and has been an independent senator since 2016. Senator Bellemare is currently the Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate.

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