



Human Security Centre

Advisory Board Member

The Hon. Senator Thanh Hai Ngo



The Honourable Senator Thanh Hai Ngo was appointed to the Senate of Canada on 6 September 2012 by the Right Honourable Governor General David Johnston on the advice of the Right Honourable Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Senator Ngo is a member of the Conservative Party caucus and is the first person of Vietnamese origin to sit in the Senate of Canada. He is currently an active member of several standing Senate committees: Human Rights; Banking, Trade and Commerce; and Aboriginal Peoples.

Senator Ngo was born in Vietnam and completed his undergraduate and postgraduate education at the University of Paris – Sorbonne (Paris IV) and the University of Ottawa. From 1971 to 1973, he was Bureau Chief of the Press and Information Office and spokesperson for the Department of Foreign Affairs in Saigon. He subsequently served for two years as Press Attaché and Political Bureau Chief at the Embassy of the Republic of Vietnam in Bangkok, Thailand. In his role as diplomatic attaché, he was also a representative to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ENAP). He also taught French and English at the French Cultural Centre in Saigon and at the Vietnamese-American Association and worked for the Alliance française, teaching French in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

After Saigon fell in 1975 and the Vietnam War ended, Senator Ngo was forced to leave his native land and flee the Communist regime that had come to power. Like more than 120,000 other Vietnamese refugees who came to Canada at that time, Senator Ngo, his wife and their two children found a warm welcome in their new homeland. Since then, he has been an advocate for freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and a champion in the fight against Communist oppression. During his distinguished career in Canada, Senator Ngo taught at the Carleton District School Board in Ottawa for close to 30 years, served as the Chairperson of the Employment Insurance Board of Referees from 2002 to 2007 and then became a Citizenship Judge in 2007.

In 1979, Senator Ngo and the Honourable David Kilgour, former Minister of State of Canada for Asia and the Pacific, formed the International Committee for a Free Vietnam. The Committee advocates human rights and is composed of Parliamentarians from Canada and around the world. In 1982, Senator Ngo received the Citation for Citizenship from the Minister of State for Multiculturalism. Between 1980 and 1982, he served as President of the Vietnamese Community Association of Ottawa, and he continues to be an active member of various Vietnamese community organizations in Canada and around the world.

He is the founder and President of the Ottawa Vietnamese Non-Profit Residence Corporation, an organization that supports greater access to decent housing for low-income families. Senator Ngo speaks fluent French, English and Vietnamese.