

The Senate is Canada's best retirement home (16, 02, 13)

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Like many seniors, Miriam and I are seeking a suitable retirement home where we might feel comfortable and mix with like minded people who share similar values. A retirement home is unfortunately sometimes seen as an "old people's home" but we are looking more for a multi-residence housing facility intended for senior citizens.

We have learned that not all retirement homes are created equal. Some try to lure tenants with fancy names that suggest peace, tranquility and gorgeous panoramas. "Whispering Pines Retirement Home" might be an example. Or perhaps "The Elliot Lake Retirement Spa." Some have no shame in how they play with words, and yes, I feel a tinge of guilt there as well.

The best retirement home in Canada is plainly referred to as "The Senate." People from all across Canada try to get into this placid place. It's located in Ottawa, so you better like dealing with snow, but on second thought, some of its residents merely fly south for extended periods because the rules at the Senate are quite lax.

If you work for CTV, you have a good chance to get into the Senate Retirement Home. Both Mike Duffy and Pamela Wallin live there, Mike supposedly from the province of Prince Edward Island and Pamela from Saskatchewan although both are more likely associated with big cities versus rural Canada.

The great thing about retiring to the Senate is that you need not possess any unique talent other than remaining sober with ability to think just a little bit. Your thinking need not even be considered original. You can sit around in the Senate all day in one of their comfy leather chairs, order drinks from an attendant (non-alcoholic) and be engrossed in secondary thought which must remain sober. That's all there is to it. And amazingly, for your trouble, they will pay you \$130,000 a year, another \$22,000 a year for expenses and they will even send you on important fact-finding trips all over the world for free! What a great country we have for retirees. It doesn't get better than this. Show me another country in the world that treats retirees better.

And as for the fact-finding that I mentioned earlier, you can simply Google miscellaneous items, any items and then merely list them in a report and your fellow retirees in the Senate, all sitting in their comfy leather chairs, will read your report soberly, and say something like, "Here, here" or perhaps "There, there" and that's it. You are free to go on another Senate fact-finding trip.

For qualifications, you must be a citizen of Canada and at least thirty years of age to be considered eligible for appointment to the Senate, and typically it's us older types that do get in, but if you are First Nations, you might get in at 30.

There is a stipulation about maintaining residency in your province or territory, but this is easily circumvented, and if there is any trouble, the retirees who live there will look it over or add up expenses and then say "Here, here" or perhaps "There, there" and that's it again.

Originally, women did not fit in so well at the Senate, but in 1927, five Canadian women called "The Famous Five" (our first women's hockey team) asked if females were eligible to become senators. Actually, they asked if women were considered "persons" under the British North America Act of 1867, and to everyone's great surprise, despite their tendency to purchase inordinate amounts of shoes, this impediment did not stop them from being considered people. The Senate was never the same as you will readily observe when you visit. It used to be a huge red chamber, but now it's painted in myriad Martha Stewart colours, mainly blues, yellows and some pinks.



Apparently, it was Sir John A. Macdonald, our first prime minister, who said the Senate was to be a place of "sober second thought" so if you and your spouse are capable of unoriginal thinking like Miriam and me, we all might all have a good shot at getting in.

