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Autor: Michelle Caplan, Christopher Alcantara & Mathieu Turgeon.

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Teléfono: +44 (0) 20 8052 0400

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ABSTRACT:

The Canadian Senate was originally designed to act as an independent check on the House of Commons but over time, rampant and increasing partisanship rendered the Senate illegitimate in the eyes of the public. In 2014, Liberal leader Justin Trudeau tried to reverse these trends by expelling all Liberal Senators from his party in hopes of reducing partisanship and restoring the Senate to its original, independent function. To what extent did this decision reduce partisanship? Using a difference-in-differences design, we analyse almost 7000 interventions over an 11-year period to find that partisanship remains strong in the Senate, with ex-Liberal Senators more likely to raise women's issues compared to Conservative Senators post-2014. This trend seems consistent with the Liberal Party's strong and the Conservative Party's weak feminist agenda after the Liberals formed the government in 2015.

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