

Sample Case 6

Mandatory Voting

Two of the most significant problems in Canadian elections are low voter turnout and voter apathy. In recent elections, only about 60 percent of eligible voters cast a ballot in the election (Adams and Flumian). This is a significant drop from the past where voter turnout averaged around 70 percent, and means that only 60 percent of Canadians are making decisions that affect all Canadians. One of the causes of this low turnout is voter apathy, where voters are disinterested in the state of political affairs and do not see a reason to vote. A solution proposed by some is mandatory voting, where all eligible citizens are required to cast a ballot or face fines. Proponents of mandatory voting claim that “[Canadian] democracy depends upon the active participation of its citizens, and, while voting is only one element of political engagement, it remains the very foundation of our democracy” (Harb 4). Those who oppose mandatory voting claim that it goes against a citizen’s freedom not to vote, and that they choose not to vote because they are dissatisfied with the available options, or with the system itself. Others do not feel as though they are informed enough about politics to decide which candidate to vote for, which perhaps indicates a failure from our education system rather than a failure of individual voters. Should we force uninformed citizens to vote? Does mandatory voting go against an individual’s right to choose not to participate? Do voter apathy and low voter turnout indicate a larger problem with our political system?

References

- Adams, Michael, and Maryantonett Flumian. “Many Canadians aren’t voting. Have they stopped caring about democracy?” *Globe and Mail* 26 Jan. 2015. Last updated 25 Mar. 2017. <https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/the-young-are-quitting-politics-and-thats-a-danger-to-our-democracy/article22633913/> (18 Sept. 2017).
- Harb, Mac. “The Case for Mandatory Voting in Canada.” *Canadian Parliamentary Review*. Summer 2005: 4–6. www.revparl.ca/28/2/28n2_05e_Harb.pdf (18 Sept. 2017).