

Green Party of Canada Youth Voting Fact Sheet

January 4, 2006

Green Party of Canada and Youth

- The youngest Green Party candidate in this election is Juliet Burgess who is running in Calgary Nose Hill. Juliet turned 18 in September.
- There are Campus Greens organizations at the University of Victoria, University of British Columbia, University of Calgary, University of Alberta and University of Regina.
- The Green Party is the only party on the ballot talking about lowering the voting age to 17-years old.

Youth Participation in Canadian Politics

Toronto, December 5, 2005 – The following facts were compiled by the Democracy Project to illustrate the level – or lack thereof – of youth participation in elections and formal political processes.

Youth Voter Turnout

According to Elections Canada, only about 38% of persons who voted in the last general election (2004) were between the ages of 18 and 30 years old.

Surveys of voters and non-voters after the 2000 elections revealed that only 22% of first-time voters (e.g., Canadian citizens age 18 to 24 years old) cast a ballot.

Rates of voting among first-time voters (age 18 to 24 years old) in Canada are lower than those of the United States (42% in 2004) and just below those of the U.K. and most other developed democracies.

In Canada, more than 80% of voters age 55 and older cast a ballot in the 2004 general election.

Almost the entire decline in voting rates over the past two decades (61% in 2004, down from 64% in 2000 and 70% in 1993) is the result of low rates of voter participation by youth.

For persons born after 1970, the likelihood of their participation in the first election in which they have the opportunity to vote determines their participation rate in each subsequent election.

According to an Elections Canada 2003 study, the three most common reasons younger Canadians give for not voting are: "don't have enough information about the candidates and issues" (48%); "politics doesn't make a difference in my life" (15%); and "too busy" (13%).

Youth and Political Parties

Only 5% of Canadians under the age of 30 belong to a political party.

The average age of membership of all of Canada's political parties is 63.

Only 18% of Canadians identify "very strongly" with a political party – down from 37% in 1980.