

**EMBARGOED until October 19, 2016**

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## ***New research shows young people did more than just increase voter turnout in the 2015 federal election***

### ***Young Canadians most likely cohort to discuss politics, but least likely to be contacted by politicians***

**Toronto, October 19, 2016**—It's been one year since youth turned out to vote in historic numbers and yet the results still have politicians, journalists, and community leaders talking.

A new report from Samara Canada, titled "Can You Hear Me Now? Young People and the 2015 Federal Election," digs deeper than youth turnout to examine how different generations of Canadians discussed politics and were—or weren't—contacted by politicians.

While 72% of Canadians aged 18 to 29 discussed politics during the 2015 federal election campaign, their generation was the least likely to be contacted by politicians, according to the report.

The report uncovers young people's willingness to defy convention. Rather than stay silent about politics, young Canadians were much more likely to share their voting experience with friends and family. Indeed, 60% of the 56 and older cohort did not share that they voted. By contrast, the youngest cohort of 18 to 29 overwhelmingly shared that they voted—only 36% of those who voted said they kept it to themselves. Once again, these "digital natives" defied expectations when it came to how they shared: with more than half of them sharing their experience face to face or on the phone, compared to only 13% sharing on Facebook.

"Social pressure helps get people to the polls," says Samara's Executive Director Jane Hilderman. "Young voters proved in the 2015 federal election that they will vote in large numbers—and tell their friends that they did so. Political parties that learn to involve young people can benefit from youth's powerful social networks."

"Yet, currently, only 52% of young Canadians reported contact with parties, compared with 82% of the oldest cohort," Hilderman notes.

Across all three traditional forms of contact—phone, in person and by mail—young Canadians were less likely than older Canadians to be contacted. Surprisingly, even across digital platforms, older people reported more contact from political parties.

Indeed, more young people turned out to vote (57%) than were contacted (52%), a trend that was reversed in the other two groups.

With so many more young Canadians finding their political voice in the 2015 election, young Canadians have sent a strong message to political parties that they will be making their political mark.

#### **Some key findings:**

- Compared to older people, younger people were more likely to discuss politics, with 72% of them saying they discussed politics using one or more methods. Young people reported talking about politics offline more than online.
- Young people were also more likely to share that they voted, indicating a generational shift in attitude, from voting as a private act of duty to voting as a social, shared experience.
- Parties did not contact young people as much as they did older people: Only 52% of young Canadians reported contact, compared with 82% of the oldest cohort. Even online, older people reported more contact from political parties. Only 22% of people of any age reported digital contact from parties and candidates.
- Only 1 in 5 Canadians want to be contacted by political parties—and they'd prefer to talk about issues than about why they should vote for a certain candidate.

**The full report will be available at the following link on October 19, 2016:**

**[www.samaracanada.com/can-you-hear-me-now](http://www.samaracanada.com/can-you-hear-me-now)**

La version française de ce rapport sera disponible. Nous vous invitons à écrire à [info@samaracanada.com](mailto:info@samaracanada.com) pour en obtenir une copie.

### About Samara's research on political contact

"Can You Hear Me Now?" is part of Samara's Democracy 360 series on the complex relationship between citizens and political leadership. Democracy 360 expands the measurement of democracy and kick-starts a conversation using measurable indicators focused on three areas essential to a healthy democracy: communication, participation and political leadership.

Public opinion data in this report was drawn from Samara's 2015 Post-Election Survey. The survey was conducted in English and French using an online sample of 2,030 Canadian citizens over 18 years of age, living in ten provinces. Data was collected from November 4-6, 2015. The survey has a credibility interval of 2.17 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

For more on the methodology used, see page 15 of the report.

### About Samara

**Samara Canada** is dedicated to reconnecting citizens to politics. Established as a charity in 2009, we have become Canada's most trusted, non-partisan champion of increased civic engagement and a more positive public life.

Samara Canada's research and educational programming shines new light on Canada's democratic system and encourages greater political participation across the country to build better politics, and a better Canada, for everyone.

A samara is the winged "helicopter" seed that falls from the maple tree. A symbol of Canada, it is also a reminder that from small seeds, big ideas can grow.