

EMBARGOED UNTIL MAY 13TH, 2013

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New research finds Cabinet Ministers are among the quietest MPs in the House

Toronto, May 13th, 2013 – New research from charitable think tank Samara illustrates the huge diversity in how much MPs speak in the House of Commons.

Recent debates about the role of backbench MPs, including the Speaker’s recent ruling on a question of privilege, have raised questions about who speaks in the House and how often.

To celebrate the upcoming summer reading season, Samara is releasing two infographics that pair Members of Parliament with a notable book by a Canadian author to illustrate—in terms everyone can understand—how much MPs spoke in the House of Commons in 2012.

The first infographic, “**MPs by the Books**,” shows the most talkative, the least talkative, and also allows people to find how their own MP ranked.

The second, “**House of Words**,” reveals how word counts break down by gender, age and party in the Commons and shows that underrepresented groups speak disproportionately more than they represent.

“Though there are many ways MPs can represent the views of their constituents in Ottawa,” notes Alison Loat, Samara’s Executive Director, “one of the most public ways is to speak up in Parliament.”

Almost 8 million words were spoken by MPs in the House of Commons in 2012 alone, but some MPs have more to say than others. Over the course of 129 days of the House sitting, some MPs only speak the equivalent of the children’s book, *M is for Maple: A Canadian Alphabet*—about 963 words—whereas others speak a tome equivalent to Conrad Black’s *A Matter of Principle*—222,451 words.

Key takeaways:

1. **Conservative MPs take up less air time:** Despite making up 53% of the House, Conservatives spoke only 36% of the words. The NDP dominate the debate, speaking 44% of the words while comprising only 33% of the House. The Liberals are 11% of the House and speak 16% of the words.
2. **The most talkative MPs:** Peter Julian, Kevin Lamoureux, Elizabeth May and Kellie Leitch are the most vocal MPs, while Alice Wong, Tilly O’Neill-Gordon, Peter Penashue (currently contesting a by-election) and Rob Anders are the quietest.

3. **Harper lays low, May dominates:** Prime Minister Stephen Harper spoke the least of all four leaders and Elizabeth May spoke more than all three other leaders combined.
4. **Underrepresented groups speak more than their numbers would suggest:** Female MPs make up 25% of MPs (51% of Canadians) and spoke 31% of words; and similarly MPs under age 35 are 9% of the House (while 22% of Canadians are aged 18 to 34) but speak 11% of the words.

These infographics were produced from data gathered for Samara's latest Democracy Report, "[Lost in Translation or Just Lost](#)", which analyzed the issues discussed in the House of Commons and compared them to the issues Canadians care about.

The report found that while Parliamentary discussion is more aligned with the issues Canadians prioritize than might be expected, there are several areas, including healthcare and the environment, that are less discussed by MPs. This report underscores a real need to look at the problems with our current political institutions and encourage wide-spread discussion on possible solutions. Read the full methodology for this research [online](#).

About Samara

[Samara](#) is a charitable organization dedicated to improving political participation in Canada. Through research and educational programs, Samara reconnects citizens to politics.

Samara's initial research project was the first-ever [exit interviews for former Members of Parliament](#).

Our areas of research include:

- Members of Parliament
- Political parties
- Citizens' attitudes towards politics
- Citizen participation and voting behaviour
- Political journalism and writing

Our research and information on our programs can be found at www.samaracanada.com. We are always available to comment on our areas of research.

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