

EMBARGOED UNTIL DECEMBER 3RD, 2012

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New research finds satisfaction with Canadian democracy at an all-time low.

Toronto, December 3rd, 2012 – New research finds that Canadians’ satisfaction with democracy is at an all-time low—55%—down 20 points in just eight years.

A new report from Samara entitled “Who’s the Boss?: Canadians’ Views on their Democracy” reveals that one cause is Canadians’ dissatisfaction with their political representation. Canadians believe their elected representatives are not accountable and don’t pay attention to what they think. In fact, only 36% of Canadians are satisfied with how MPs do their jobs.

Of particular note, Canadians said their MPs represent their political party better than they do their constituents.

The research specifically found:

- 1) Only 55% of Canadians are satisfied with the way democracy works. This is down from 75% in 2004.
- 2) In evaluating MPs’ performance across different aspects of their jobs, Canadians award MPs less than 50% in most areas.
- 3) Canadians feel MPs are doing their best work at a job that Canadians see as a low priority: representing the views of their political parties.

“This precipitous decline in Canadians’ perceptions of their democracy is troubling. It might go some way towards explaining the apathy and disengagement we see reflected in Canada’s declining voter turnout,” says Michael MacMillan, Co-founder and Chair of Samara.

“MPs are an important link between Canadians and their politics, but that relationship is not well understood and seems to be overshadowed by political party messaging,” says Alison Loat, Co-founder and Executive Director of Samara. “Canadians identify political leaders as important players in their issues of concern. This research indicates that steps should be taken to ensure political parties—and MPs—better reflect citizens’ priorities.”

About Samara's Democracy Reports

"Who's the Boss?" is part of the [Samara Democracy Reports](#) series, which is designed to shine a light on Canada's democratic system and increase Canadians' understanding of politics. Previous reports examined the attitudes of people who do not vote, explored how politics is discussed on Twitter and analyzed how the media cover politics. The next report, expected in early 2013, will examine whether the House of Commons reflects the issues Canadians care about.

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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