

EMBARGOED until 12:01 am, August 21, 2019

To request an advance copy of the report or set up an interview, please contact:

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Young Canadians aren't apathetic—they're paying attention to politics, taking action, and eligible to vote

**New report urges citizens and political leaders to help sustain
the momentum in youth voter turnout**

Toronto, August 21, 2019 – Following an unprecedented rise in turnout among 18- to 29-year old voters in the 2015 federal election, political parties, pundits, and experts are asking if the youth vote will surge again this year. Will young people be politically engaged in the 2019 election?

In the report **"You Have Our Attention: Youth political engagement in Canada"**, the Samara Centre for Democracy challenges the idea that youth are more politically apathetic than older generations. Instead, their data tell a different story.

According to a national survey, compared to older generations, young Canadians are:

- More likely to talk about politics across all six forms of communication measured;
- More active in a variety of formal political engagement activities;
- More active across six of seven forms of civic engagement; and
- More likely to volunteer, belong to a group or organization, and take part in public consultations and town halls.

Additionally, political interest among youth is rising—in 2014, 59% of youth said they were interested in politics. In 2019, 71% said they were interested in federal politics, just 2% less than those aged 30 to 55.

With more than 5 million Canadians between the ages of 18 and 29 eligible to vote in this election, they are a force to reckon with. However, young peoples' political engagement hasn't historically translated into votes, and the "youth quake" of 2015 has left the youth vote movement at a crossroads. Yvonne Su, the Samara Centre's Program Manager, notes, "whatever happens in this election could cement an upward or downward trend in youth voter turnout for elections to come. Will youth capture the moment, or let it slip?"

The Samara Centre is calling on citizens and political leaders to do their part to help ensure that the youth moment in Canadian politics hasn't passed, but has only just begun. "While it's impossible to predict whether youth voter turnout will go up," says the Samara Centre's Research Director, Dr. Michael Morden, "political parties and candidates should respond to young Canadians' political interest and engagement by reaching out to them in ways that are meaningful and relevant."

The report concludes with several recommendations aimed at increasing youth voter turnout, such as telling friends and co-workers that you're voting, encouraging people to make a plan to vote, and promoting civic responsibility as a fun social activity rather than a solitary duty. For parties and candidates specifically, it suggests tailoring their outreach to youth, asking young people what matters to them, and inviting young supporters to share their voting experiences on social media.

Please contact José Ramón Martí if you would like to receive an advance copy of **"You Have Our Attention"** or request an interview with a spokesperson from the Samara Centre for Democracy.

The report will be available at 12:01 a.m. on August 21, 2019, at:
samaracanada.com/you-have-our-attention

About the 360+ Series

In March, the Samara Centre for Democracy released the 2019 Democracy 360, our biennial report card on how Canadians communicate, participate, and lead in politics. The Democracy 360 is partly based on data from the Samara Citizens' Survey, conducted in English and French between January 16 and February 6, 2019, using an online sample of 4,054 Canadian residents over 18 years of age. Drawing from that survey, **"You Have Our Attention"** is one of several short data stories on particular issues and themes in Canadian politics. The 2019 Democracy 360 can be found at samaracanada.com/2019-democracy-360.

About the Samara Centre for Democracy

The Samara Centre for Democracy (formerly Samara Canada) is a non-partisan charity dedicated to strengthening Canada's democracy, making it more accessible, responsive, and inclusive. The Samara Centre produces action-based research—as well as tools and resources for active citizens and public leaders—designed to engage Canadians in their democracy. To learn more about how our research and educational programming is building better politics and a better Canada, visit samaracanada.com.

Covering the Upcoming Federal Election?

We are always available to comment on our areas of research, which include citizen participation and voting behaviour, political leadership and Members of Parliament, and political parties. To arrange an interview, please contact José Ramón Martí at 647-822-1731 or jose.marti@samaracanada.com.

