

# Canadians give MPs a failing grade on most key duties

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**Adrian Wyld / The Canadian Press**

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current status quo.

A new poll from Samara Canada finds that just 55 per cent of Canadians surveyed are currently satisfied with democracy in Canada -- a drop of 20 points from eight years earlier. In fact, the report found Canadians feel their elected representatives are not accountable -- and that they do a better job representing their political party rather than their constituents.

"This precipitous decline in Canadians' perceptions of their democracy is troubling. It might go some way toward explaining the apathy and disengagement we see reflected in Canada's declining voter turnout," Michael MacMillan, co-founder and chair of Samara, said in a statement.

While those surveyed felt that their MP's top priority should be holding the government to account, they gave them an average failing grade of just 45 per cent when it came to actually doing that.

Those surveyed also said an MP's duty to represent the views of his or her constituents was the second most-important responsibility they had in Parliament. But when asked how their MP was doing in that area, the results were almost as dismal, with an average score of just 46 per cent.

Debating or voting on important issues was considered the third most-important role for an MP in Ottawa, and those surveyed gave their representatives a slightly improved average score of 53 per cent in this category.

Interestingly, Canadians gave MPs an average score of 61 per cent when asked to grade them on how well they represented the views of their party, considered to be the fourth most-important job of an MP.



"In other words, Canadians feel MPs are doing the best job at the very thing Canadians see as a low priority: representing the views of their political parties," the study noted.

Of the 2,287 Canadian adults who took part in the online survey, only 36 per cent said they were overall satisfied with how their MP is doing his or her job.

And while Canadians tend to have a dismal view of overall political performance overall, they still appear to value the position of an MP and are likely to turn to them for help when needed, the survey found.

"When asked to whom they turn when it comes to policy issues that concern them, Canadians' number one choice was members of Parliament, followed by elected leaders at other levels," the study said. "In fact, political leaders outranked all other groups, including business, interest groups, the media, protesters, non-profit and international organizations or religious leaders."