

# CBC Asks: Many Canadians distrustful of federal politics, poll indicates

**4 in 10 Canadians never talk politics, Samara Canada survey suggests**

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A strong majority of Canadians don't take part in politics beyond voting and don't trust their federal parties or MPs, a new report suggests.

What's more, four in 10 Canadians said they hadn't had a single political conversation in the past 12 months, according to Samara Canada, a non-partisan charitable organization that works to improve Canadian democracy.

Samara's report comes as the CBC hosted a live debate on voter engagement. CBC's chief correspondent Peter Mansbridge moderated the event, which asked the question: Is Politics Broken?

Samara Canada co-founder Alison Loat, political columnist Andrew Coyne and writer and community organizer Dave Meslin argued that it is, while former MPs Sheila Copps and Monte Solberg, as well as U.S. political strategist Aisha Moodie-Mills, defended the current political process.

In Democracy 360, Samara's report card on the state of Canadian politics, a wide-ranging poll of Canadian residents shows strong levels of distrust and disengagement.

Among the highlights:

- Only 40 per cent of Canadians say they trust their MPs to do what is right, and only 42 per cent place some trust in political parties.
- Sixty-two per cent feel politicians only want their vote.
- When asked to rate MPs across six areas of responsibility, Canadians gave failing grades in five categories, including helping people in their riding and explaining decisions made in Parliament. The only passing grade was for "representing their parties' views."
- Thirty-one per cent of Canadians say they have contacted an elected official in the last year.
- Thirty-nine per cent of Canadians say they haven't had a single political conversation in a year, online or off.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/cbc-asks-many-canadians-distrustful-of-federal-politics-poll-indicates-1.3005779>

## Many see politics as irrelevant

Samara says in its report that Canadians are withdrawing from the democratic system, because they see politics as irrelevant. Less than a third of Canadians (31 per cent) believe politics affects them daily, and slightly more than half (54 per cent) believe MPs can shape the direction of the country.

Despite the apparent negativity toward the country's democracy, 65 per cent of poll respondents said they are "very" or "fairly" satisfied with democracy.

### Samara's democracy grades

- Overall: C
- Communication between MPs, citizens: B
- Citizen participation in politics: C–
- MP leadership: D

Samara said in its report that there is some cause for hope: while only 37 per cent of Canadians give time or resources to political activities between elections, 83 per cent did participate in at least one civic engagement activity such as donating or volunteering.

"This is proof that many citizens do care about their communities and their country and are willing to give their time or resources accordingly. But this activity is often at a distance from politics." the report says.

Samara plans to use their report as a baseline and re-do the survey in 2017 in time for Canada's 150th birthday.

Samara Canada conducted its survey online, surveying what it called a nationally representative sample of 2,406 Canadians in English and French from Dec. 12 to Dec. 31.