

# Why doesn't 40 percent of the population vote?

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Contrary to conventional wisdom, non-voters are not apathetic, lazy, or ignorant, according to a new [study](#) released Wednesday.

Samara Canada, a charitable organization that studies citizen engagement within Canadian democracy, queried 56 Canadians about their voting habits between August and October of this year.

Billed as the first of its kind in Canada, the study contends most non-voters stay away from politics because the system has failed to serve them "in specific and personal ways."

Some of those interviewed chose to disengage from politics after seeking assistance from elected representatives but ultimately receiving little help.

Others, especially younger Canadians, came to understand very early on that the political system disregards their concerns.

"[Politicians] don't really care what people want," said one study participant.

"They say they are going to do something, then they just never do it. It doesn't make sense, so why vote?"

Similarly, a francophone woman stated, "regardless of what they say or promise, they never honour it."

In contrast, participants in the "voters" group approached politics from the position of an insider and saw politics as a system that was accountable to them.

The findings "reveal a troubling situation," the study concludes.

"The political system has separated the Canadian public into insiders who have the capacity and energy to fight and remain engaged in the system, and outsiders who simply walk away out of frustration or disappointment."

So how do we get more Canadians to vote?

While the report's authors fail to offer any specific solutions to improving voter-turnout levels, the authors say governments across Canada need to improve the "responsiveness, inclusiveness and participatory nature of our democracy between elections."

"Participants told us that they are not asking for much. They simply need to feel that those in power will consider their voices, and that politics can become relevant to their everyday concerns."