The Citizen and Government

Having your voice heard

The Electoral System in Canada

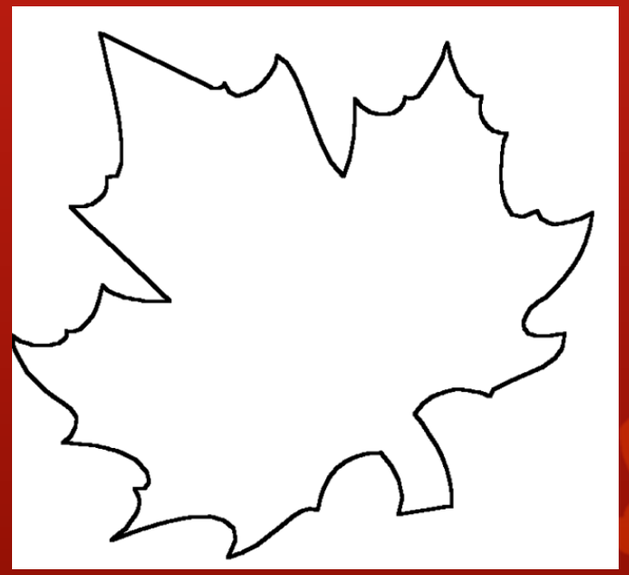
Choosing the Government

- You have the legal right to choose your government
- You have the legal right to express your views freely

Who can vote

- Canadian Citizen
- Over 18

- Why 18?
- Demeny Voting?



When?

- Federal elections
  - held at least every 5 years
  - (as of 2007 law passed for every 4)
  - Member of Parliament - **MP**

- Provincial elections
  - at least every 5 years
  - 4 in BC – 3rd Sat. in Oct (2017)
    *2nd Tues in May
  - Member of Legislative Assembly - **MLA**

- BC Municipal elections
  - every 4 years
  - Councillors & Mayor
  - School Trustees

Voting Counts

- Voting is the most widely used method of influencing the government
- voter participation varies from region to region and from province to province

- During a federal election do you think votes in BC are more or less important than those of eastern Canadian's?
- Does your vote count?

Voter turnout

- 2019 Federal Election
- 65.95 % turnout

- 2017 BC Election
- 61.2%

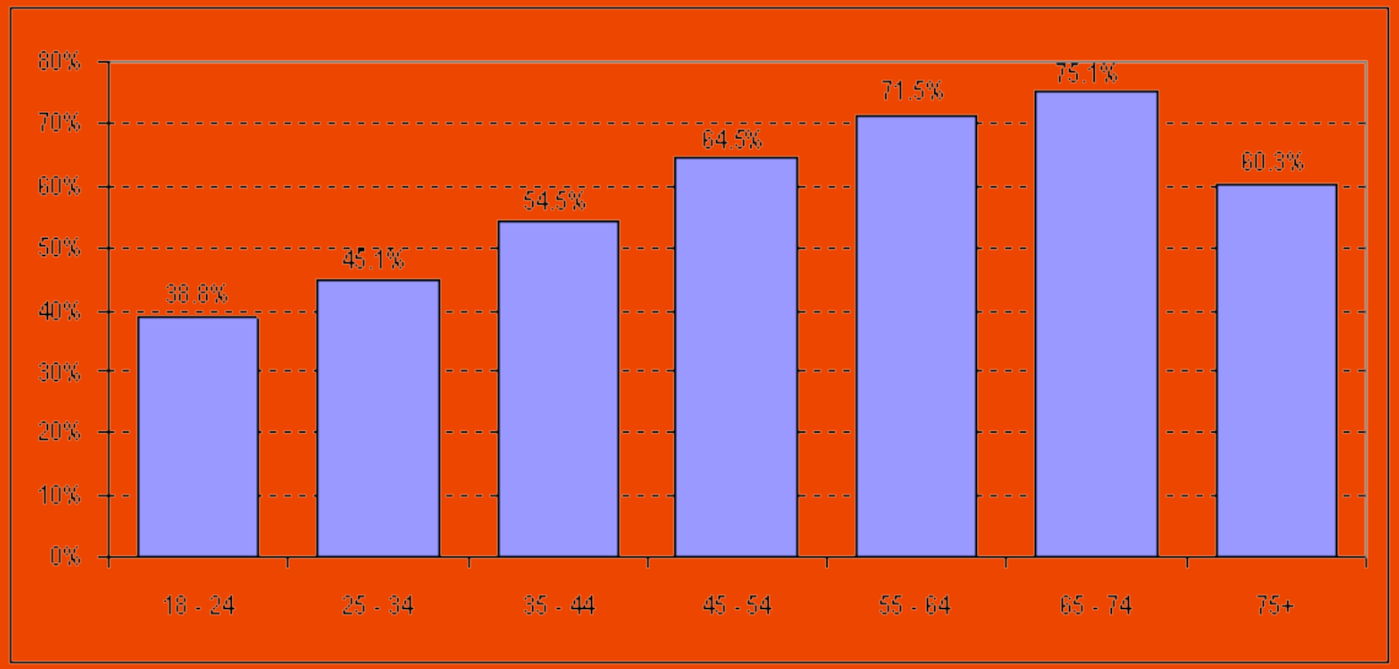
- 2018 Prince George Municipal Election
- 24%

- 13184 ballots cast out of possible 54900

Prince George 2018

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Lyn Hall Elected	11 702	53.08%
Willy Ens	1045	44.9%

Councillor
Skakun, Brian - 9475
Sampson, Kyle – 8304
Frizzell, Garth – 8199
Krause, Murry – 8008
Scott, Susan – 7775
McConnachie, Terri - 7111
Everitt, Frank – 6680
Ramsay, Cori – 5693
Fuller, Dave – 5001
Stolz, Cameron – 4971
Fox, Viv – 3697
Wood, Chris – 2266
Serup, Paul - 1746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71.5%
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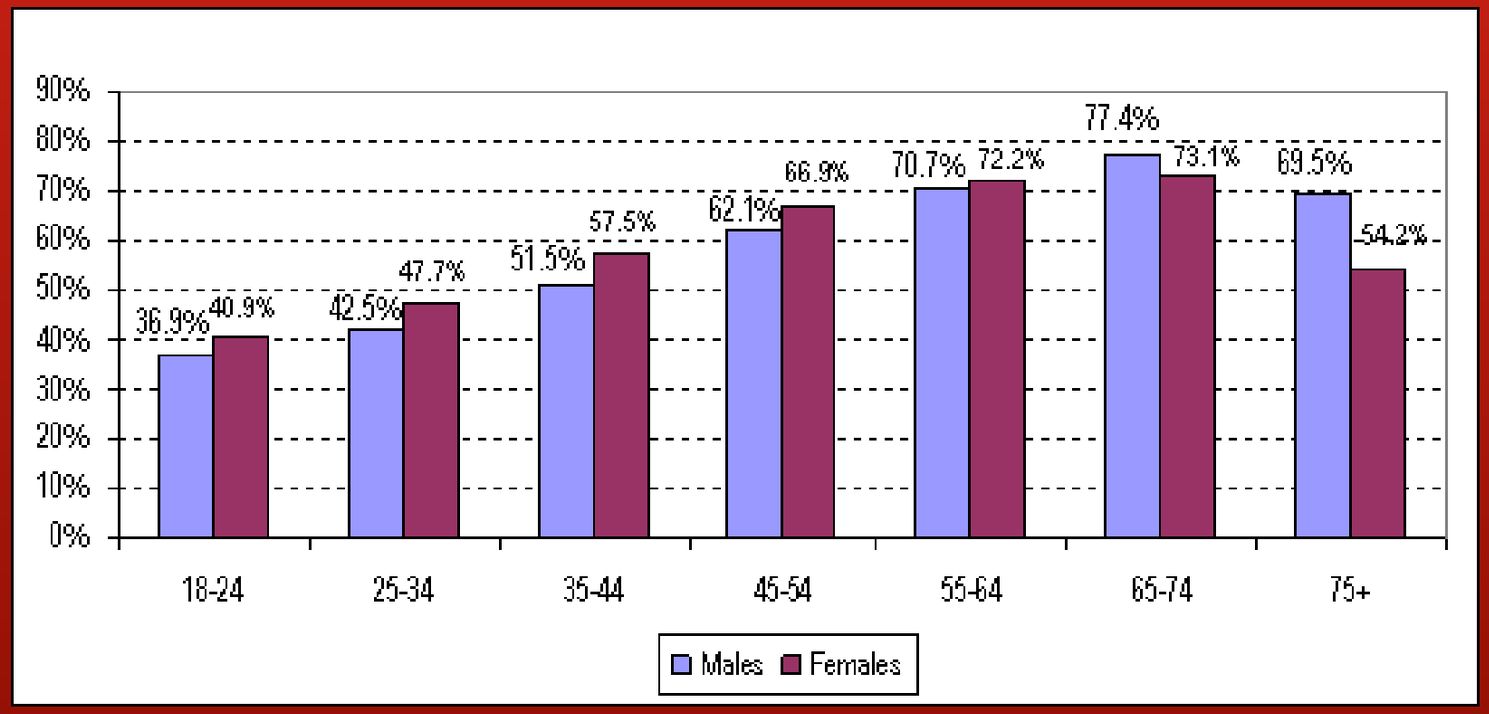
60.3%
18 - 24
25 - 34
35 - 44
45 - 54
55 - 64
65 - 74
75+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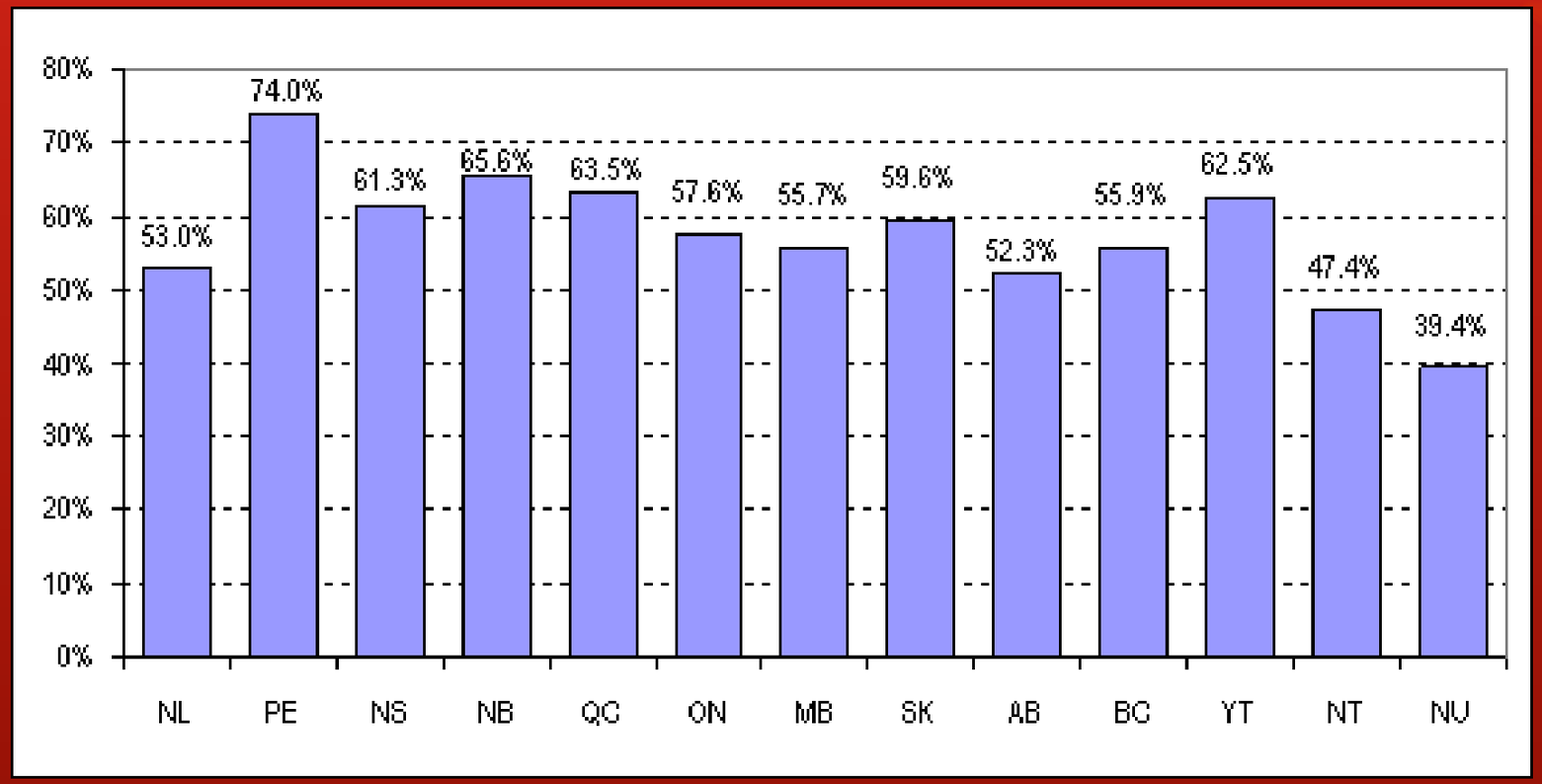
72.2%
77.4%
73.1%
69.5%
54.2%
18-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65-74
75+
Males
Females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62.5%
47.4%
39.4%
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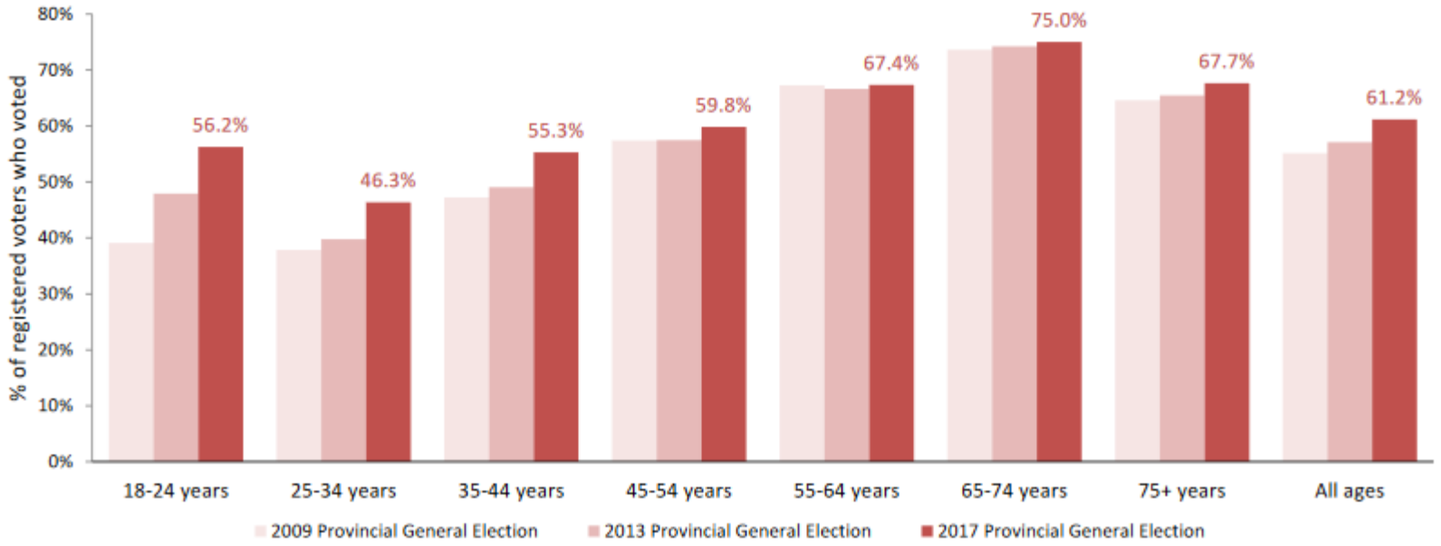
NU

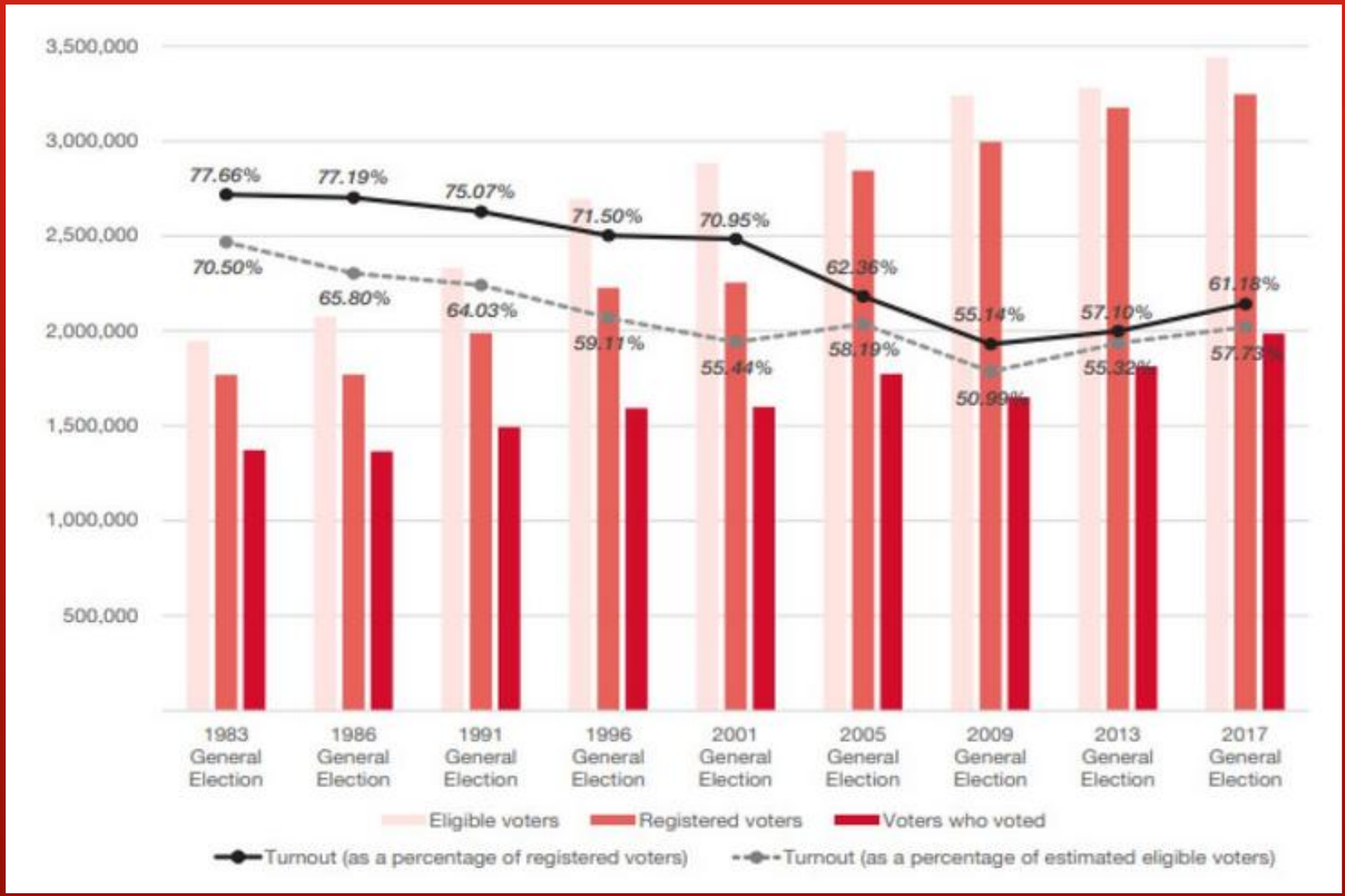
ELECTIONS BC
A non-partisan Office of the Legislature

Voter participation rates by age group: 2017 Provincial General Election



	18-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65-74 years	75+ years	All ages
Total registered voters	221,732	515,675	501,745	581,234	625,310	464,574	336,377	**3,246,647**
Registered voters who voted	124,707	239,008	277,379	347,836	421,190	348,659	227,595	**1,986,374**
% of registered voters who voted	56.2%	46.3%	55.3%	59.8%	67.4%	75.0%	67.7%	**61.2%**
Difference versus 2013 % who voted	+8.3%	+6.6%	+6.2%	+2.4%	+0.7%	+0.8%	+2.2%	**+4.1%**
Difference versus 2009 % who voted	+17.1%	+8.5%	+8.0%	+2.5%	+0.1%	+1.4%	+3.1%	**+6.0%**

Source: Elections BC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77.66%
77.19%
75.07%
71.50%
70.95%
62.36%
55.14%
57.10%
61.18%
70.50%
65.80%
64.03%
59.11%
55.44%
58.19%
50.99%
55.32%
57.73%
1983 General Election
1986 General Election
1991 General Election
1996 General Election
2001 General Election
2005 General Election
2009 General Election
2013 General Election
2017 General Election
Eligible voters
Registered voters
Voters who voted
Turnout (as a percentage of registered voters)
Turnout (as a percentage of estimated eligible voters)

Election Campaigns

- Must happen every 4 years
  - Prime Minister can call election anytime before the end of 4 year term
  - Formality: Asks the Governor General to call election (dissolve parliament)
- Why would the PM call for an early election?
  - Opinion polls indicate
    - the current government is popular
    - The opposition is weak
    - Test support on a contentious issue
      - in 2000 Chretien called an early election to prevent the Canadian Alliance's Stockwell Day from gathering support
  - Vote of non-confidence
    - Stephen Harper in 2011

How a Candidate is Chosen

- Process is called **Nomination**
- Country divided into ridings
  - Ridings based on population (approx. 100 000)

1. Party members in riding choose candidate
2. Federal Party names a candidate (regardless of what local members want)

Polling

- During election public opinion is constantly monitored
- Polling companies contact voters and ask questions about
  - political leaders
  - parties and issues

Response to Polls

- The campaign is altered to reflect public opinion
  - Speeches
  - Television appearances
  - Debate responses
  - Candidate appearance

- Some critics suggest that polls dissuade people from voting for parties they “know” can’t win

How a Candidate Wins

- First Past the Post –
  - candidate who has most votes wins
    - can win by 1 vote
    - Winner = Sally 2310 Loser = Ned 2309
- Simple and straight forward
- The more candidates that run the less votes the winner must earn

Problems with 1st past the post

- The candidate does not have to have a majority of the votes to win (over 50%)
    - Sally 51 votes / Ned 35 / Gregory 34

- Parties can control a government with less than half of the popular vote
- therefore 50% or more of the populations desires may not be represented in government

- An alternative system is **Proportional Representation**
- Voters choose a political party instead of a candidate
- If a party receives 38% of the votes they in turn are alloted 38% of the seats

Problems

- The proportional representation system does not allow for local representation

- The proportional Representation system creates a need for coalitions or alliances