

LARGE SECTOR OF CANADIAN VOTERS TOLD TO "GET LOST"!

A significant number of Canadian voters won't be able to "Decline Their Ballot" or vote for "None of the Above" in the upcoming federal election.

This, despite the fact that in the last provincial election (June 12, 2014) Ontario voters were able to "Decline Their Ballots." As a result 31,000 Ontarians were recognized as having registered an official protest vote. This amounted to 0.6 % of all votes cast. (<http://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/declining-your-ballot-not-in-the-next-federal-election>)

Instead, those who wish to exercise their franchise to vote in the October 19th federal election are being forced to either vote for one of the candidates or have their protest vote counted as a 'spoiled' or 'rejected' ballot.

Is this fair? According to *Elections Canada*, "The *Canada Elections Act* should be amended to provide for the means for a ballot to be declined, recorded and reported as such in the official ballot results ..." [Modernizing the Electoral Process – Nov. 27, 2000] Despite the recommendation, the Harper government passed the *Fair Elections Act* in June 19, 2014 failing to address this important issue. (The Liberal government quashed a private members bill in 2001 – Bill C-319 – which would have allowed voters to decline their ballots federally.)

There is no way of telling how big the invisible sector of would-be protest voters is, because millions of voters aren't even aware of the option that one can "Decline Your Ballot" in three of the ten provinces (Ontario, Manitoba and BC). It could be as many as 50% of those who don't go out to vote because they don't like any of the choices ... which represents 25% of all eligible voters in Canada.

According to *Democracy Watch*, there should be some way to engage disgruntled voters: "It should be on the ballot as "None of the Above" on the bottom, with a couple of lines to give a reason [why]," said Duff Conacher, co-founder of the Ottawa-based think tank. (<http://www.dwatch.ca/camp/RelsAug2411.html>)

The way it stands right now, the feds are saying "You either play our game, or stay home and don't complain!"

Some of us who aren't happy with this version of "mis-representative" democracy are going to write "DECLINED" across their ballot in the upcoming federal election, or write "None of the Above" at the bottom of the ballot and place an 'X' in a circle drawn beside it. Some of us are putting up lawn signs saying: "VOTE FOR NONE OF THE ABOVE" ... I am one of them.

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