

# The Interim

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Curriculum Supplement For Schools

The *Interim Plus* is a periodical dedicated to educational matters and specifically designed to assist teachers in integrating relevant life issues in their lesson planning.

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This final edition of *The Interim Plus* curriculum supplement for the 2017-2018 academic year focuses on the rights, freedoms and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society. Citizens have opportunities to engage in free political discussion and to participate actively in the democratic process that determines how their society is governed.



Queen's Park, Toronto (nadineroobins.com)

Young people also have to understand the complexities of the society to which they belong. Even if high school students for the most part are not of age to vote in elections they are affected by the results of elections and therefore ought to be informed about the process and the issues that arise.

The content should help teachers of various social science courses to integrate the Ontario provincial election campaign into their lesson planning. The ideas and activities are flexible and lend themselves to use for one-period lessons or for a series of classes, as circumstances permit. Studying the election process can be an exciting introduction for young people to the electoral mechanics of a modern democracy.

Students will learn to think critically about the political process, how to investigate and express informed opinions about a range of political issues and developments that are of significance to the democratic system of government. Hopefully, some of the issues will be of keen interest to them personally. Even if the students may not possess the right to vote (not yet of age) the study material may inspire them to become more aware of the key public issues and motivated enough to volunteer for a party or local candidate of their choice. Politics can become infectious.

Although each province has its own special issues there are enough similarities among the respective provincial parties across the country to make the upcoming Ontario election experience worthy of general study.

The material is divided into four parts: a) the structure of Canada's system of government; b) party leaders and main issues/party platforms; c) suggested activities and student involvement; d) role of media, polls, and election finances.

Each section is followed by questions meant to stimulate classroom discussion of issues. Note that some of this material is reprinted from past editions of *The Interim Plus* pertaining to national elections in Canada and the United States (September 2008, May 2011, September-October 2012, October 2015, September-October 2016).

## Part A

### Nature and Structure of Canada's System of Government

Canada is legally a **constitutional monarchy**, with a monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, as titular Head of State. She is the reigning monarch, but she rules through her representative in Canada, the **Governor-General**, and more

practically, through the **elected Prime Minister**.

At the provincial level **each province has a Premier** who occupies a similar role as the Prime Minister at the national or federal level. Currently the provincial and territorial leaders and their respective political party affiliation is seen in the chart below:

	Alberta	Rachel Notley	NDP
	British Columbia	John Horgan	NDP
	New Brunswick	Brian Gallant	Liberal
	Nova Scotia	Stephen McNeil	Liberal
	Prince Edward Island	Wade MacLauglan	Liberal
	Newfoundland & Labrador	Dwight Ball	Liberal
	Manitoba	Brian Pallister	Prog. Conservative.
	Sakatchewan	Scott Moe	Sask. Party
	Ontario	Kathleen Wynne	Liberal

	Quebec	Philippe Couillard	Liberal
	Northwest Territories	Bob McLeod	Consensus Government
	Yukon	Sandy Silver	Liberal
	Nunavut	Paul Quassa	Consensus Government

Because of history and geography Canada is a **confederation**, meaning that it has two major levels of government: a national government with its headquarters in Ottawa and provincial and territorial governments at the regional level. Each level of government has its own distinct powers and responsibilities.

Canada’s federal parliamentary system features three branches of government: the **executive** (consisting of the Prime Minister, his Cabinet and the Prime Minister’s Office); the **legislative** (which introduces and passes the laws and has two chambers, the **House of Commons** whose 338 members are elected by the people in various ridings from across the country, based on population and according to allotment by province, and the **Senate**, having 104 members **appointed** by the Governor-General upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister); and, finally the **judicial** branch, consisting of the Supreme Court of Canada and corresponding provincial Superior Courts. It is the responsibility of this last branch to interpret the constitutionality of laws passed by the legislative branch in light of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms passed in 1982. The provincial system likewise has three branches, but does not include an upper chamber or Senate. All provinces have a Legislative Assembly as the equivalent to the federal House of Commons, except for Quebec whose legislature is called the National Assembly.

The **Prime Minister** is a member of House of Commons and is **the leader of the political party that obtains the majority of the parliamentary seats or ridings** as a result of a national election (or provincial election for the Premier). The leader of that winning party is invited to form a “government”, that is, to choose a Cabinet to run the affairs of state and to be held responsible by the House of Commons. The Prime Minister governs through a **Cabinet**, a group of elected officials who head up various departments of government like defense, health & welfare, justice, transport, finance, immigration, heritage, external affairs etc. Similarly, at the provincial level **Premiers** have the same general functions, assisted by a provincial Cabinet. The British North America or Constitutional Act grants distinct powers to the provinces, namely things like health, education, direct taxation for provincial purposes, municipalities, school boards, hospitals, property and civil rights, the administration of civil and criminal justice, prisons, celebration of marriage, provincial civil service, local works and corporations with provincial objectives. There are four areas of power shared by the provinces and the federal government: agriculture, immigration, old-age pensions and supplementary benefits. Education is allocated to the provinces, but is subject to certain religious guarantees according to Section 93 of the Constitution.

### Why Do We Have Elections?

Because of population, geographic size and other factors modern nations do not have direct democracy like in ancient Athens where this form of government originated. Instead, qualified citizens have the right to vote for



the people who are entrusted with the responsibility to wield power on behalf of the citizenry. People are free to organize themselves into “political associations or parties” and present a platform or set of policies to convince voters to select their party’s candidates across the divisions known as ridings. The party that wins the greatest number of seats gets to form the government. A change in government occurs either as a result of a scheduled election or as the result of losing a **vote of confidence** in the Provincial Legislative Assembly. This does not happen very frequently at all, and if it does it is usually

over the issue of the budget.

If there is no clear majority following an election there are two choices possible: the original Cabinet can resign and the leader of the largest opposition party can be asked to form another Cabinet that would enjoy the confidence of the majority of the members of the Legislative Assembly. Or, the original Cabinet can stay in office and meet the newly elected Assembly hoping to enjoy its confidence. If the majority of the members in the Legislative Assembly vote “no confidence” then the “government” is deemed to have been defeated, thus triggering an election prematurely. We say “prematurely”, because as of 2005 elections have been fixed to take place every four years. Since an election would have just been held, in this case the Lieutenant-Governor would ask the leader of the next largest party to attempt forming a government. This is the scenario that could result in a **formal or informal coalition** government, where there is power sharing among the parties forming the coalition. This eventuality, in fact, did occur recently in British Columbia where the NDP government is ruling with the tacit support of the Green Party.

Here is a list of interesting, short videos on the nature of government and more specifically that of Canada. Students could be asked to evaluate the various videos as learning tools: Which ones are clear, persuasive, promoting understanding of the concepts being presented? Which are perhaps too puerile and not very good at contributing to a better understanding of government systems?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgBBfM8SYPA> government and democracy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EUS1m5MSt9k> how government works, government explained, what we can do and can't do

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEEuwmMIPas> different forms of government explained by teen age girl

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIPDJ1Cc\\_uw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIPDJ1Cc_uw) different forms of government explained by using two cows (funny satire, but may be too advanced for many students)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNcrSnufvc8> good short introduction to regional and municipal government.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7C8uDuhLqvg> another short version of intro to levels of govt. and respective powers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USK3Q4rsgnw> explains electoral process

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USK3Q4rsgnw> right to vote, basic citizen right

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrtdZ-LOXfw> communism vs socialism

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/distribution-of-powers/>

[www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/idb/forsey/author-e.asp](http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/idb/forsey/author-e.asp)

[www.parl.gc.ca/Information/about/education/resources/index-e.asp](http://www.parl.gc.ca/Information/about/education/resources/index-e.asp)

### Questions to Consider

Here are a few of the questions meant to impart a basic understanding of our government system:

1. What is the purpose of government?
2. Why does Canada have a Confederation system of government?
3. What are the main responsibilities or powers of the federal and provincial governments respectively?
4. Which level of government has the greater powers and why?
5. What would be the most important provincial powers in your opinion?
6. What are the most important rights and responsibilities of a citizen regarding elections?
7. How may I organize and participate in the political process?
8. What are the strength and weaknesses of the parliamentary system?
9. Do we have a real democratic system if local candidates are not chosen largely by the local party members? See this article penned by Raymond J. De Souza from the March 31, 2011 National Post <http://www.nationalpost.com/opinion/columnists/real+democracy+deficit/4532881/story.html>

## Part B

### Identifying and Tracking the Key Issues in the 2018 Ontario Provincial Election

Party leaders play a dominant role in any election campaign. The upcoming June election in Ontario will be no exception. The three party leaders are expected to be effective proponents of their party’s philosophy and legislative program they are proposing to address the opportunities and challenges facing the province.



Kathleen Wynne  
Liberal



Doug Ford  
Progressive Conservative



Andrea Horwath  
New Democrat

No doubt they will be facing off against each other in one or two formal debates, but, they also will be subjected to formal interviews by the various media outlets and informal scrums at rallies staged by their supporters. Voters who actually participate in the election process, by casting their ballot, try to inform themselves in some way about the key issues of an election campaign. It is assumed by some (perhaps falsely) that issues decide the outcome of elections, rather than personalities, or the amount of money spent on the campaigns. Parties and leaders can make tactical mistakes in choosing, emphasizing or ignoring certain issues altogether. There is much planning and strategizing prior to and during an electoral campaign which officially lasts about 28 days in a provincial election. (see <http://discoveryportal.ontla.on.ca/en/about-parliament/how-parliament-works/parliamentary-traditions/what-parliament/electoral-process-0>)

Who determines what constitutes the **key issues**? Political parties build political platforms that ostensibly reflect party philosophy and principles as shaped and approved by party leaders, and based on resolutions proposed by local party associations at provincial party conventions. In the current Ontario situation the Progressive Conser-

vative platform was called the People's Guarantee and had been adopted under the leadership of Patrick Brown. The latter was ousted as leader and has been replaced by Doug Ford. That party's platform may evolve to reflect the new party leader's views about issues and priorities.

Parties also conduct **internal polling** and use **focus groups** to help identify those issues that they feel will gather maximum support from the electorate. Parties rely partially on the **media** to promote their messages. The media in turn plays an important role by giving some issues prominence and ignoring some issues altogether just as the parties do.

As an election campaign unfolds there is frenetic competition among the parties, with their **spin doctors** and media talking heads trying to turn topics/problems/developments/gaffes into **hot issues**. The public can be swayed by the presentation of "the issues" and the debate of those "issues". How does one keep track of what parties and candidates say about the issues? How can one make an intelligent decision in casting a ballot? Given the complexity of some issues and opposing points of view, it is a challenge to exercise one's franchise intelligently.

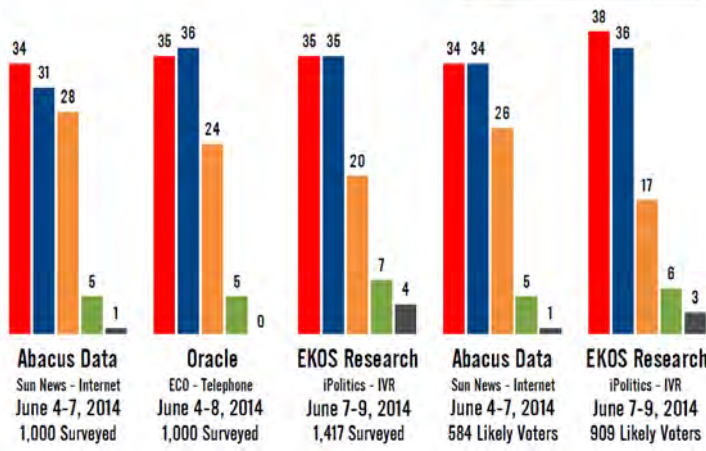
Then there is the **role of polls** and the influence that the release of such information may have on the election process. Many people never stop to take stock of what is being debated or reported. They either find it too confusing or they simply lose interest in the entire process. They may rely on a headline announcing a change in the polling results but not bothering to find out why there may have been a change in reported voter preference.

A common complaint revolves around **voter apathy** among all sectors of the population. Provincial participation levels hover around 52% **voter turnout**. A slight majority or **52.1% of the province's 9.2 million eligible voters cast their ballots in the 2015 election, and only 48.2% in 2011**. This is less than the national elections, and regardless of national or provincial levels, **the youth participation level** is usually much lower than that of other demographic groups in the electorate (men, women, seniors, etc.) Since youth is relatively the most inactive segment, perhaps teachers can consider classroom activities that might make the whole election experience more meaningful to the students. One suggestion would be to conduct a model election in civics and history classes and then compare classroom results with actual election results and examine what if any differences there were in both sets of results.

**When students embark on the activity of research and tracking issues, have them bear in mind these factors in their research and note taking:**

- Select and organize relevant information on the issues from a **variety of primary and secondary sources**: whether primary, like interviews, podcasts, speeches, statistics, surveys; or secondary, like news stories read in newspapers, or heard or seen on radio, television and websites. They should try to make sure the sources reflect multiple perspectives.
- Assess the **credibility of sources**, their purpose, their intended audience, and the context of a source as to the bias, values, and expertise of the speaker/author/journalist/blogger.
- **Interpret and analyse** the information, assess the validity and rank the importance of the points made in their sources.
- Consider **how to apply the concepts of political thinking** and translate them to political action.

### LIKELY VOTERS



### Questions

1. Define each of these terms: a) issue b) polls c) focus group d) voter apathy.
2. Explain why it is important for people to engage in civic action, and identify various reasons why individuals and groups engage in such action. (e.g., to protect their rights or the rights of others, to advocate for change, to protect existing programs, get rid of a corrupt government). How may people's positions be influenced by their beliefs/values?
3. Divide the class into three groups with perhaps 6-9 students per group (depending on the overall size of

the class) and have each group track the Ontario (or other provinces) election campaign.

4. The groups create a chart (or use the one below) on which they record the positions of the major parties and their respective leaders, Kathleen Wynne (Liberals), Doug Ford (Progressive Conservatives), and Andrea Horwath (New Democratic Party).
5. Have students research the issues as reported in the various print and digital media, including blogs run by various organizations with distinctly partisan views or in the provincial media supposedly claiming to be objective and non-partisan. Have students also consider other issues that do not make it onto the main radar screen and inquire as to why that may be.
6. Groups can divide the task further by getting each member to concentrate on one issue each and become the trackers par excellence on those issues.
7. Each group presents its summary in class orally and in a written form.
8. Each group should note whether their particular summary includes or excludes issues found in that of the other groups, and if so let the group explain what may account for the differences.
9. Ask students if there are any issues or basic principles that must be respected in order to win their vote if they were eligible/qualified to vote? Some argue that one of the most important considerations in electing a government should be whether, on balance, the party believes in and upholds fundamental beliefs and values associated with democratic citizenship in Canada (e.g., rule of law; freedom of expression; freedom of religion; recognizing the right to life for all humans; fairness and equity; respect for human dignity; respect for the rights of others, pursuit of the common good, fiscal responsibility, care for the environment, building a just society).
10. Which consideration should be of greatest importance in your opinion? Do voters think that way? What if anything prevents them from putting those types of values first? How would you drive this point home to the candidates in your area? How could you make your voice heard, regardless of your ability to vote or not? (suggestions - writing letter/arranging a meeting with a local politician, organizing a petition, by expressing their views through the media, including social media, or at a town-hall meeting; through court challenges; through art, drama, or music.)
11. Elections are often a tacit conspiracy where the three main parties adopt platforms that are “silently pro-choice” with respect to abortion related matters. Is there truth to the charge? If so, why do the parties act in this way?
12. An alternative possibility is for student groups to take several issues and then investigate how different stakeholders might view those issues. For example, health care - how would each of these groups see the issue’s importance and why - doctor or nurse, recipient of care, tax payer, rural resident, poor person, an older person, insurance company executive, etc.



Issue	Liberal	Progressive Conservative	New Democratic Party	Democratic Principles to be upheld
Health care, pharmacare, dental care, hospital wait time, abortion funding,				
Education costs, reform of curriculum, parental rights, health and sex education				
Crime rate, police powers, justice system and the power of judges				
Public and personal scandals, associated with the party and/ or leadership				
Affordable Housing, Construction, Real Estate				
The Economy (jobs, taxes, cost of living, pension, poverty, guaranteed income)				
Child Care Availability and Costs				



Budget, balanced, debt level, interest costs and payment							
Government Programs and services. Waste							
Life and Family Issues Abortion, euthanasia, conscience rights, parental rights							
Environment, carbon tax, green energy sources, electricity prices							
Transportation, subways, transit, roads, repairs, congestion, car insurance prices							
PartyLeader, character, experience, strengths, weaknesses							
Distribution of alcohol marijuana, government outlets, private store?							
Agriculture, resource development, indigenous rights, need							

## Part C Participation, Media, and Finances

### Activities to Stimulate Student Direct Involvement

As mentioned above, political apathy abounds in Canada as only 52% to 70% of the electorate bother to vote in national elections, and much fewer at the provincial level. Schools can help to elevate political intelligence among youth by encouraging students to become involved. Consider these suggestions and incorporate one of them into a lesson plan or individual assignment. The chosen activity could be done through duos or trios. It could be an independent study unit for the individual student. Considerations should include: recording or communications equipment needed; the dates of all-candidates' meetings; preparing interview questions in advance; obtaining name(s) of responsible staffers at a campaign's headquarters; deciding on who will ask the questions or write up the report. Teachers should also provide an outline of the criteria to be used for evaluation.

1. Students can volunteer to help out in the local election campaign headquarters for the candidate of their choice (telephoning, mailing out literature, delivering brochures, stuffing envelopes, putting up lawn signs, etc.) and then write a report on their experience. Or the student might do an interview with a candidate's campaign manager or other available staffer.
2. Role-play a television news interviewer. Prepare interview questions for the local candidate or the provincial leader based on research of the candidate's background and his/her stand on important issues. Use the video taping capabilities of the communications department in the school. Prior to the role-playing, brainstorm and discuss what makes a good interview question. Point out that open-ended questions elicit more information than closed-ended questions (questions that require a yes/no or one-word answer). For example, if a reporter only has time to ask one question, which question would be more effective?
  - a. *Do you care about parental rights in education? or If you were elected, would you vote to repeal the sex education curriculum in Ontario schools?*
  - b. *What is your view on cannabis? or Do you favor the privatization of marijuana sale and its distribution, why or why not?*
  - c. *Do you believe in free speech? or Would you reconsider or repeal the bubble zone legislation currently in effect around abortion centres, why or why not?*
3. Even the most interested and well-informed citizen cannot always make it to an all-candidates' meeting where voters have the personal opportunity to interact with and ask questions of the local candidates. Young people can help these voters become informed and at the same time contribute to the democratic process by video recording 'all-candidates' meetings or an interview conducted at the campaign headquarters of the local candidates, and then posting the video on YouTube or sending it to an organization like Campaign Life Coalition (to [jack@campaignlifecoalition.com](mailto:jack@campaignlifecoalition.com)) that has the capacity to collect and disseminate such videos as part of their efforts to educate the public on life issues in particular. In fact, students can become citizen-reporters by engaging in this exercise.



### Media's Role in Elections: Telling the People "What's Going On"

Media coverage can influence election campaigns, although there is some evidence that the large traditional media's influence has waned somewhat in the new age of social media. The public needs to understand how much the media affects their opinions and be able to screen the media and look at the issues more objectively.

In Canada the media bias may be very upfront or somewhat subtle. Although newspapers, radio, television stations and networks claim to be neutral they often exhibit a definite left-of-center bias. Take for example Toronto radio stations AM 640 and AM 1010 Talk Radio. Have students listen for 15 minutes at a time (four times a day and at different times of the day). Then ask them to identify and explain what if any bias they detect in the choice of subject matter and the views expressed by host and guests.

There is another important role for the media, namely being the conduits for delivering a message to the voters

through campaign ads. Political advertisements on TV have become one of the fastest growing sources of TV revenue during the elections. Television is one of the most influential forms of media and the candidates make use of this, blasting a single message to a mass audience, or tailoring appeals to local communities. But another major development demands attention, and that is the rise of website ads and the shift of advertising dollars in general to the digital media. Currently, there is a rethinking about the reliability of social media tools like Facebook and how they can be manipulated and also be manipulators of data.

Media also create interest and hype by highlighting the results of opinion polls during the election campaigns. Some claim that they do not heed the polls since they are constantly changing; on the other hand, some political operatives depend on these poll findings to shape their campaigns and to change tactics according to these polls. There continues to be great controversy over the use of polls, their veracity or reliability, and their general influence on the electorate.

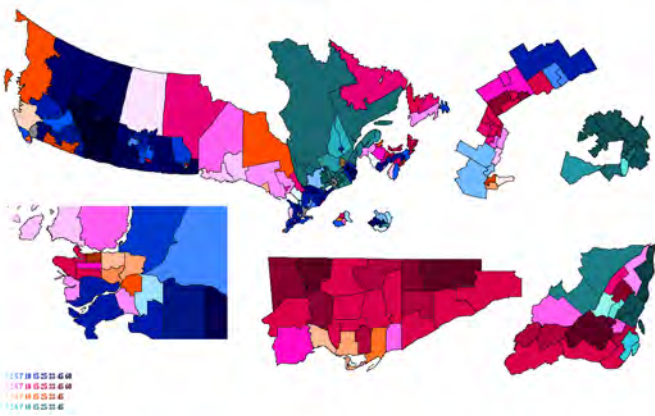


### Questions to Consider

1. What do you think is the most important function of the media during an election?
2. How has the internet changed the election coverage of the established media? Has it changed the way that the political parties have structured their campaigns?
3. a) Compare and contrast the daily reporting of the major networks on their coverage of the Ontario election campaign respectively for any two-day period. (CBC, CTV, GLOBAL NEWS)  
b) Are the reporters objective, or are they biased and intent on influencing the viewers? Use the reaction of various media to the leaders' debates as a case in point.
4. What is the role of public opinion polls? Are they just reporting actual opinions, or are they shaping peoples' minds? Should polling be banned during the last two weeks of a campaign? Why or why not?
5. Is the polling process manipulated? Who commissions the polling? Who frames the question(s) being posed?
6. How much money do parties put into media/ad campaigns? Does money influence the results? Based on money spent, which party is most effective in the use of its finances?
7. Observe the political ads run by the different parties on television, the internet and in newspapers. What is the nature of the ads run by each party? Positive? Negative? Are they effective or a waste of money?
8. What makes a television political ad powerful and effective? Give examples.
9. If one were to judge coverage and presentations on the basis of civility, respect, honesty and a certain idealism – which media did the best job in delivering news and commentary about the election? Which did the worst? Explain your opinion.
10. Cartoons can be lethal in portraying a policy or a political personality. Ask students to track election-related cartoons that appear in their local or a national newspaper and then discuss its effectiveness, appropriateness and truthfulness in rendering an opinion or judgment on said policy or personality.

## Costs of Election Campaigns

Many people question the ever-spiraling costs of holding elections and running for political office. In fact some observers fear that the future of democratic government may be doomed since only the extremely wealthy can participate, or only people with huge financial backing of special interest groups or companies. The whole system stands to be corrupted by the influx of big sums of money. Others maintain with some justification that the internet has leveled the playing field somewhat, making it a more democratic source of numerous political donations. The internet makes it possible to reach millions of people who can contribute small amounts and thus affect the outcome of elections by their sheer numbers. And the internet, through the social media, offers even the less financially-endowed parties and candidates the opportunity to reach huge numbers of citizen-voters.



### Questions to Consider

1. How much do parties raise for election purposes? Which parties raise the most? Which parties spend the most? Try to get hold of a party letter in which the party asks for a donation. Note the tone of the letter. Is it emphasizing fear, hate, concern, partisanship?
2. What are the major sources of election finances?
3. Who are the biggest individual donors? Which are the largest corporate donors? Why do some companies donate to more than one candidate or more than one party?
4. Are there any controls on the amount of money that can be raised or the amount that can be spent, riding by riding?
5. What incentives would there be for individuals and companies to donate to political candidates or to political parties?
6. Is public tax money available to candidates running for office? Should it be? Why treat political donations more generously than charitable donations?
7. How were the finance laws reformed? Here is a very succinct summary of key changes:  
*Under the new regime, corporate and union contributions are prohibited, individual contribution limits are reduced, and there are new restrictions on fundraising events. To offset the resulting loss in fundraising income, registered political parties and constituency associations will receive public quarterly allowances based on votes in the last general election. How will these impact on the 2018 election in Ontario?*

<https://www4.elections.on.ca/internetapp/EFSearch.aspx>

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/ontario-overhauls-campaign-finance-rules/article33121202/> Ontario Overhauls Campaign Finance Rules with Sweeping Reform

<http://www.blakesbusinessclass.com/new-ontario-election-finance-laws-take-effect-january-1-2017/>

## Free Speech and Freedom of Religion Under Attack?

In the past year, Canadians have seen their rights and freedoms curtailed in many ways, although most Canadians may be unaware of the dangers that they are facing with this new attack on citizens' rights. Many may believe that the restrictions don't impact them personally so why should they care. Or in some instances, some Canadians may actually be in favour of the actions taken by the various levels of government, both at the national and provincial levels.

Some argue that the very nature of democracy itself is under assault and unless people become aware and oppose these actions they will soon see a creeping form of totalitarianism in place in our country.

Many faith based organizations have taken issue with the federal government's policy of demanding an attestation from applicants if they wish to qualify for funding associated with some government sponsored programs like the *Canada Summer Job* program. For more specific information please go to this site (<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/funding/canada-summer-jobs/apply.html>)

Faith groups and others who simply believe in civil rights have been outspoken in defending the charter rights and freedoms of religion, speech and conscience, via newspaper columns and opinion pieces, as well as on television programs and through websites and blogs. In the spiritual/philosophical arena, many leaders have exposed the dangers of totalitarian approaches to solving/managing human problems and challenging situations. One of the best expressions of this can be found in the encyclical *Splendor Veritatis* (The Splendor of Truth). Pope John Paul II had this to say about totalitarianism:

*...the root of modern totalitarianism is to be found in the denial of the transcendent dignity of the human person who, as the visible image of the invisible God, is therefore by his very nature the subject of rights which no one may violate — no individual, group, class, nation or State. Not even the majority of a social body may violate these rights, by going against the minority, by isolating, oppressing, or exploiting it, or by attempting to annihilate it”.*

*...”if there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political activity, then ideas and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. As history demonstrates, a democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism”.*



But governments may have false and twisted values too. The government of Canada says it has values and is intent on upholding those values. Their spokespersons maintain that access to government programs must be free from the harm that young people would be exposed to if working in the environment of organizations that do not agree with the government's views on abortion, gender fluidity ideology, or same-sex marriage and other social issues being promoted by the current federal government. If these organizations cannot attest/agree with the rights of Canadians as defined by the government, they cannot qualify for the government grants/funds allocated for that program.

At the provincial level, various provinces have been taking similar measures to restrict free speech on campuses by not providing protection for pro-life advocates or by allowing student councils to ban pro-life clubs on the campuses. There have been loud and sometimes violent protests preventing speakers from actually speaking on topics that the angry protesters object to, or they make it impossible for the guest speaker to deliver their address to the invited guests. Professor Jordan Peterson of the University of Toronto has experienced this intolerant approach of a vocal, disruptive minority



who take it upon themselves to shut down debate on views they don't agree with. See these examples of extremist actions and immoderate reporting:

<http://www.queensjournal.ca/story/2018-03-06/news/jordan-peterson-protesters-break-window-at-grant-hall-barricade-exits/>

and also here

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/03/21/shouting-down-controversial-speaker-mcmaster-raises-new-concerns-about-academic>.

Another insidious form of gagging people is the bubble zone law enacted by the Ontario government, preventing opponents of abortion to be within 150 metres of an abortion facility, whether hospital or private clinic or to express opposition to abortion in that zone, whether silent prayer, any signage, or song, or simply standing there.

On the question of conscience rights for doctors and nurses and other health personnel, an Ontario Divisional Court has decided that doctors who object to helping in the killing of patients who request assisted suicide are not free to follow their conscience but must refer the patient to a doctor who will carry out the request and kill that patient. Despite the right to follow their conscience the court is saying that in this case and also in the case of contraception and abortion services, doctors have to ignore their own moral or religious convictions and refer the patients to another doctor who will perform the service.



People in a free society are able to protest against what they may perceive as unjust and unfair government laws and policies. **On May 10, thousands will gather in Ottawa to challenge the federal Liberal government's highly dubious claims that abortion is a human right and that it is a Charter right.** Protesters will be marching for protection of unborn human life and respect for our core freedoms. They believe that the Liberal government is acting in an unfair and arbitrary manner in many of its policies, laws, and regulations, specifically those pertaining to life and family issues like abortion, euthanasia, the expenditure of taxpayer dollars to promote abortion in developing nations, legalization of abortifacient pills, imposition of gender speech, and a host of other pronouncements that many people take exception to as denying them rights or which they consider not to be in the interest of the general good of society.

Young people and Canadians in general have the opportunity to participate in the **March for Life** held each May on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Its theme this year is **Pro-Life! All.In!** Students can be encouraged to take part by watching a short introductory video that shows other young people getting involved and doing something positive for their fellow human beings. It can be accessed at <https://marchforlife.ca/>. That same site offers information on how students, schools, churches and the general public can voice their concerns about these serious public issues that the organizers, Campaign Life Coalition, consider harmful to human life and human dignity.

### March for Life! Respect for Human Life!



#### Questions

1. What is the March for Life? Why is it held? For how long has it gone on?
2. Is it an effective way to express one's concern with life issues?
3. What are the conflicting rights at play with each of the issues - attestation, campus speeches, bubble zone restrictions, conscience rights?
4. Can one truly conclude that all these developments smack of a creeping form of totalitarianism as many increasingly fear? Or is this all an overreaction to social developments some people are not comfortable with?



INVITES STUDENTS TO ATTEND

# 2018 MARCH FOR LIFE YOUTH BANQUET AND YOUTH CONFERENCE



## 2018 YOUTH BANQUET

Thursday May 10, 2018  
6pm - 9:15pm  
Ottawa Conference and Event Centre  
200 Coventry Road, Ottawa, ON



Paul J. Kim

## 2018 YOUTH CONFERENCE

Friday May 11, 2018  
8:15 am - 2:15pm  
Ottawa Conference and Event Centre  
200 Coventry Road, Ottawa, ON

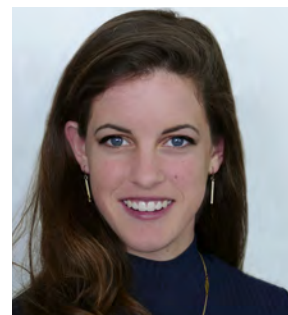
Singer  
Songwriter  
Speaker



Stephanie Gray  
Love Unleashes Life



Dr. Christina Lamb  
Doctor of Philosophy  
(Ph.D.), Nursing



Marie-Claire Bissonnette  
CLC Youth

Register at:  
[www.niagararegionrighttolife.ca](http://www.niagararegionrighttolife.ca)  
or call 905.481.0510 - 1.800.730.5358