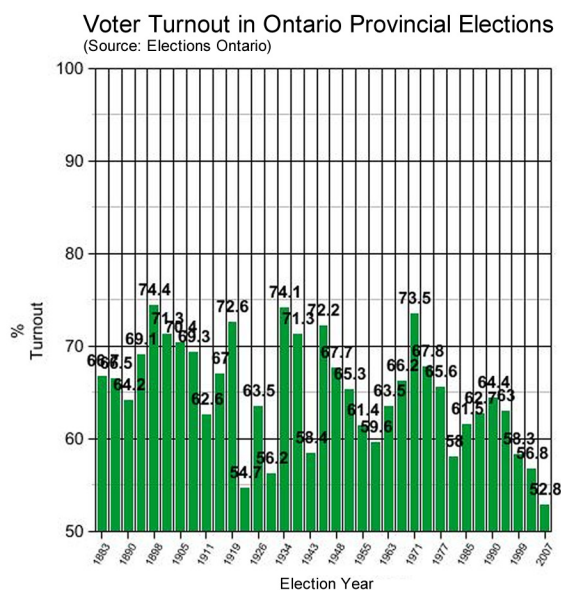




SECURE, PRIVATE, CONVENIENT VOTING

A FREEDOM PARTY OF ONTARIO 2011 ELECTION PLANK

The percentage of eligible voters who actually get out to a polling station to vote has been declining election after election. There are a number of reasons.



One reason is that voting takes time. Most of us are working or studying long hours every day. We are facing crushing deadlines. We are commuting in traffic jams. Some of us are taking our children to soccer or hockey, to swimming or martial arts lessons, to piano or guitar lessons. Some of us are helping our children with their homework. We are cooking, cleaning, and paying the bills. We are collapsing with exhaustion after a long day of getting everything done. For many of us, figuring out where to vote, knowing what ID to bring, and figuring out who we can vote for requires even more work and time, and requires us to break our usual routines.

Another reason is that nothing ever seems to change. For decades, the reigns of power have been passed back and forth between the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives (with the exception of a one-time blip in the early nineties that gave the NDP a win). The pendulum swings back and forth between the two parties, but replacing the one party with the other never results in any significant change in government. Hundreds of thousands of voters vote for other parties, only to feel that voting was pointless because the Liberal, Progressive Conservative, or NDP candidate won...again.

One of the most widely-held misconceptions is that Liberals and Progressive Conservatives win because of their ideas or their election platforms. The reality is that, generally, Liberals and Progressive Conservatives spend their election time trashing their opponents, and saying very little at all about what they would do were they to form a government. Why, then, do they win elections, election after election?

One of the biggest factors is their ability to “get out the vote”. The reality is that most people who are eligible to vote are much more likely to go to a polling station and vote if somebody is calling them on the telephone, or knocking on their door, and reminding and encouraging them to get out and vote. Unlike most political parties, the Liberals, Progressive Conservatives, and NDP have thousands of workers who work, on election day, to make those calls, and even to drive people to polling stations. When armies of Liberals are reminding and encouraging Liberal voters to get out and vote; when armies of Progressive Conservatives are reminding and encouraging Progressive Conservative voters to get out and vote; Liberals and Progressive Conservatives can greatly increase their vote count in ways that smaller parties cannot due to having far fewer phone-callers and door-knockers.

In fact, successive Liberal and Progressive Conservative governments have drafted election laws in ways that foster and protect their advantage. In the years and months leading up to an election, the Liberal Party uses its army of workers to ask voters whether or not they are likely to vote Liberal. Progressive Conservatives and NDP have their workers do the same. Those parties each end up with a list of voters who are likely to vote for their respective candidates. At election time, those are the people who will receive repeated telephone calls and door-knockings until they vote. How, you might ask, does a party know that a person on its list has voted?

If you have voted before, you will remember that when you attend a polling station, you tell the election staffer your name. He or she finds your name on the list of

voters and strikes your name off of the list to indicate that you have come in to receive your ballot and vote. Liberals and Progressive Conservatives have passed election laws that give their party workers the right, throughout the duration of voting day, to see who has voted and who has not. As names are struck off of the list of electors at the polling station, the Liberals, Progressive Conservatives, and New Democrats strike the same names off of their internal lists of people who are likely to vote for their respective parties. In other words, the privacy of voters is violated so that Liberal, Progressive Conservative, and New Democrat armies can focus their efforts on people who have not yet voted and who are likely to vote for their respective parties.

As life gets ever busier, the Liberal, Progressive Conservative, and NDP advantage - targeting their respective supporters and encouraging them to get out and vote - works increasingly in favour of those three parties. Elections become more and more focused not on ideas, but on the size of their respective workforces, which gives a party a much greater ability to get its own voters out to the polls.

Ontario faces a large number of serious crises. The quality of a party's ideas must matter if it is to be trusted with forming a government. Ontario voters deserve better than an election determined mainly by how many worker bees each party has at its disposal. Voters who do not want to vote for Liberal, Progressive Conservative, or NDP candidates need voting to be made easier, less time consuming, and more convenient.

A Freedom government will introduce changes to level the election playing field, improve voter privacy, and make voting easier, less time consuming, and more convenient. Specifically:

1. A Freedom government will issue a voter card, including a photo, voter number, and Personal Identification Number (PIN) to every eligible voter. The voter card will ensure that your name does not get left off of the list of eligible voters. If you attend a voting station to vote in person, your possession of the card, and the photo, will serve as sufficient identification to prove your identity and your eligibility to vote in person. The voter card will minimize the likelihood of in-person

voter fraud. Moreover, by moving to a voter card system, the Ontario government will eliminate the current wasteful expense of constantly tracking people down and making voter lists current.

2. A Freedom government will introduce telephone voting and online voting. Using your Voter ID number and your PIN, you will be able to cast your vote while commuting to or from work or school; while you are with your children at an evening activity such as sports, or music lessons, or swimming lessons; while you are visiting your parents; while you are studying in a library; even while you are out for dinner with friends or family. In short, no matter where you are or what you are doing, you will have the time and ability to take a few seconds to vote.

3. A Freedom government will eliminate the right of political parties to monitor Elections Ontario records concerning who has voted and who has not. Whether or not you vote, no political party will know unless you choose to tell them. Your privacy will be improved and restored.

Together, these changes will reduce or eliminate the advantages that the taxpayer-funded political parties - the Liberals, the Progressive Conservatives, and the NDP - have over other registered political parties. The quality of a party's ideas and candidates will play a more important role; the size of a party's army of election foot soldiers will play a much smaller role. The electoral playing field will be more level. Voters will have greater reason to hope that change will actually occur. People who have difficulty getting out to a polling station to vote will have easy, quick, and convenient methods of casting their ballot. How you vote - and whether you vote - will be kept a more private matter, as it should be.