

**BE THE VOTE**  
**2015 FEDERAL ELECTION**  
**ACTIVITY REPORT**

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# BE THE VOTE 2015 FEDERAL ELECTION ACTIVITY REPORT

## MISSION

Be the Vote is a non-partisan organization, led by a group of young Canadians passionate about getting youth to vote. Be the Vote is powered by volunteers, and works on creative awareness campaigns to foster a widespread culture of political engagement in Canada.



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## NOTE FROM OUR LEADERS

Claiming the 2015 federal election was “exciting” would be an understatement for the Be the Vote team. Overall voter turnout was the highest since 1993, and Statistics Canada has estimated record-breaking youth voter turnout (official numbers will be released by Elections Canada later in 2016).

As we reflect on our activities, what stands out most is the passionate support of our contributors, volunteers, partners, and communities. Canadians truly want to see our democracy represent more of its citizens, particularly youth.

While it is challenging to measure our overall impact on getting youth out to vote, this report attempts to capture as much of our influence as possible. Certainly, our team members feel they motivated innumerable youth to vote throughout our activities.

We want to thank all of our supporters for making our ideas a reality, and we look forward to our next chapter, working towards strong, long-term voter participation.

Sincerely,

Grace, Katie, and Matthew



Grace Kennedy  
Executive Director,  
Board Member



Katie Amodeo  
Outreach and  
Communications



Matthew Hazen  
Policy



Jacqueline Keena  
Chair of the Board



Andrea Crump  
Board Member



Andrew Rose  
Board Member

## NOTE FROM OUR BOARD

Be The Vote began as a conversation over coffee, 18 months prior to election day on October 19, 2015. Through consultation with student and community leaders across the country, this idea quickly grew into a not-for-profit organization with more than 100 contributors and supporters, 27 committed volunteers, and several strong organizational partnerships.

Be The Vote created clear, concise, and accessible communications to reach young people at schools, festivals, and community groups. Our social media and online presence was strongly utilized as a point of contact for young people to learn about voting and the democratic process in Canada. Be the Vote's PSAs reached massive audiences online, with the help of our financial contributors, and on national television, with the support of Shaw Media.

Be The Vote will continue to be an impactful force seeking to inform and mobilize the vote of young people from a non-partisan perspective. Young people have the ability to shape the political landscape as they become more engaged, and we will strive to provide them the information and tools to do so.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline and the Board of Be The Vote

## Thank you to our outstanding Contributors and Supporters

The following is a list of contributors and supporters who have agreed to be publicly acknowledged:

### YOUTH VOTE BUILDERS

Arkells

Rethink

Shaw Media

### YOUTH VOTE MOBILIZERS

Alan Borger  
 Gary Buckley  
 Stewart Burton  
 Elections Canada  
 Greg Farrell  
 Jay Forbes  
 Dave Gens  
 Councillor Matthew Green  
 David Johnston  
 John Kelleher  
 Jeanette & Gerard Kennedy  
 Stella & Edward Kennedy  
 Steve Kroft  
 Ladco

Laidlaw Foundation  
 Dave Johnston  
 John Loewen  
 Nick Logan  
 Arthur Mauro  
 Keith Martell  
 Elizabeth McGarry  
 Greg Merasty  
 Murray Palay  
 Theresa Parrish  
 Madeleine Paquin  
 Gordon Pollard  
 Wayne Pratt  
 Gerry Price

Lily & Ailbe Prendiville  
 Sandy Riley  
 Samara  
 Charlie Spiring  
 Roman Stanko  
 Eric Stefanson  
 Dennis Stewner  
 Ted Tomchak  
 Theatrics Plus  
 Annette Verschuren  
 Vote Savvy  
 Dawna Wallace & Dave Brown

### YOUTH VOTE SUPPORTERS

Balzac's Coffee  
 George Bell  
 Alejandra Bravo  
 Centre for Social Innovation  
 Ruth Franks  
 Gabriela Gonzalez  
 Craig Goodman  
 Barbary Gory

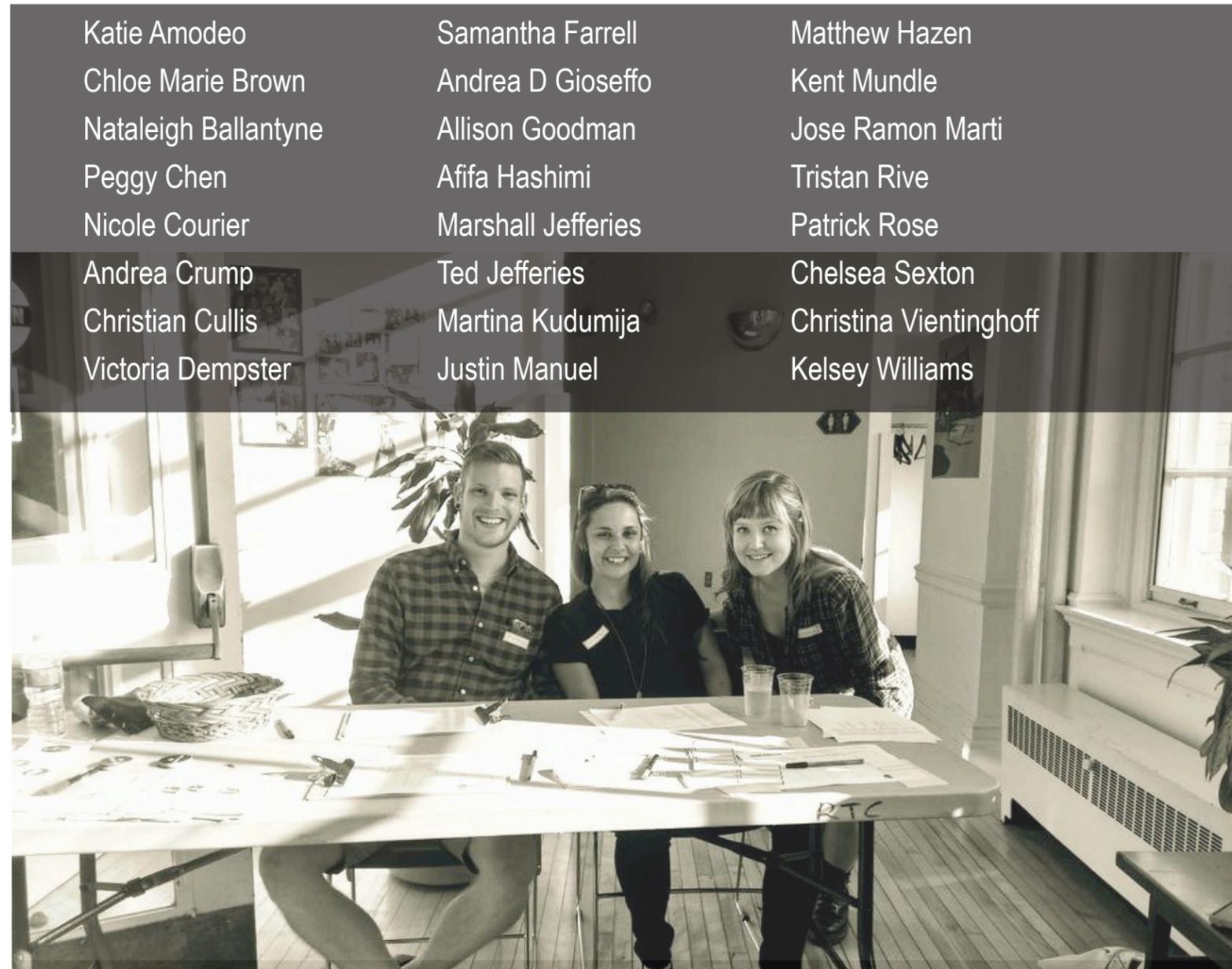
Liz & Steve Jefferies  
 Danielle Martin  
 Jason McDougall  
 Betty McGarry  
 Greg Merasty  
 Tom Monteyne  
 Murray Palay  
 Theresa Parrish

Ron Planche  
 Marc Poulin  
 Wayne Pratt  
 Jonathan Sas  
 Ken Sharratt  
 Brian & Hannah Silverman  
 Ian Sutherland  
 Jeff York

Be the Vote is powered by a team of committed volunteers who devoted **thousands of hours** to our organization in 2015.

**Thank You.**

Katie Amodeo	Samantha Farrell	Matthew Hazen
Chloe Marie Brown	Andrea D Gioseffo	Kent Mundle
Nataleigh Ballantyne	Allison Goodman	Jose Ramon Marti
Peggy Chen	Afifa Hashimi	Tristan Rive
Nicole Courier	Marshall Jefferies	Patrick Rose
Andrea Crump	Ted Jefferies	Chelsea Sexton
Christian Cullis	Martina Kudumija	Christina Vientinghoff
Victoria Dempster	Justin Manuel	Kelsey Williams



Be the Vote created five PSAs highlighting how voting relates to everyday life, in a comedic light. The videos focussed on the economy, education, the environment, healthcare, and the arts.

With the generous support of Shaw Media, two of Be the Vote's PSAs aired on television networks across Canada, between October 4-18, 2015. The PSAs were also advertised and shared on YouTube and across social media platforms.

**Total viewership over the election period:**

**5,574,300** views on Shaw Media television channels

**154,394** views on YouTube

**58,869** views on Facebook

**1,400** views on Twitter

[View the PSAs on YouTube](#)

On the set of Be the Vote's "The Future of the Environment" PSA



A scene from Be the Vote's "The Future of Education" PSA

**"I saw your commercial about the cute guy from the office. I have to say it's a GREAT commercial... I hope this kind of advert aimed at the younger generation has some impact and gets them out to vote....Keep making great ads and keep encouraging young people to vote."**

- Email received from a parent who saw a Be the Vote PSA on TV

Be the Vote would like to thank the following individuals and organizations who made this project possible:

- Arkells
- Derek Barnes
- Nick Basra
- John Beebe
- Steven Clarke
- Mikey Decker
- Ted Jefferies
- Marshall Jeffries
- Laidlaw Foundation

- Merrill Liu
- Darwin Lyons
- Eamonn MacNeish
- Jose Ramon Marte
- James McDougall
- Mountain Man Media
- Mark Nuttall
- Red Sandcastle Theatre



Over 60 attendees participate in breakout groups at Outside the Ballot Box.

## Outside the Ballot Box: Let's Talk About Youth Voter Engagement

August 2015

Be the Vote partnered with Women in Toronto Politics (WiTOpoli) to host an interactive event on the topic of youth voter turnout. Two speakers active in civic engagement spoke, and a slam poet performed, followed by breakout groups and a twitter chat: #youthtalk42.

## City of Hamilton Town Hall on Electoral Reform

May 2015

Hamilton City Councillor Matthew Green invited Be the Vote to speak on the topic of engaging youth in politics and voting, as part of town hall series on electoral reform. Be the Vote's Grace Kennedy discussed the current political climate in relation to youth, and shared aspirations for what the City of Hamilton could pursue to get more youth to vote.

Councillor Green commended Be the Vote for their initiatives for the upcoming federal election and extended an invitation to Be the Vote to consult on the topic in council.

Media coverage: [The Public Record](#)

Be the Vote 2015 Federal Election Report

## TedX Youth Jamesville

May 2015

TedX Youth Jamesville is an independent TED Talk event in Hamilton. Be the Vote's Andrea Crump was selected to speak at this event about becoming passionate about voting and democracy, and why Be the Vote's mission is vital.

## InForum Conference 2015 Exhibitor

May 2015

Be the Vote was a community sponsor and exhibitor at inForum conference in Toronto - a new venture aimed at empowering youth to take action and become change-makers. Be the Vote's booth was extremely popular during breakout sessions; the team ran a contest asking attendees how they would get more youth to vote, and recruited volunteers. The following quotes are from conference attendees participating in the contest:

**"In order to get more youth engaged in voting, I think we need to really focus on meeting young people where they are (e.g. if they are already interested in basketball - go there and educate, find a way!) and then educating on the real facts, and on the importance of sharing your voice and how easy it is to vote and have a voice. Youth want to be heard."** - A.F.

**"Create political engagement campaigns as visually appealing as Nike's shoe campaign advertising"** - T.Q.

Be the Vote's Andrea Crump speaks to a crowd at TedX Youth Jamesville in Hamilton.



**Dundas West Fest**  
June 2015

Be the Vote was an exhibitor at the 2nd annual Dundas West Fest in Toronto on June 6, 2015. Seven volunteers engaged over 300 attendees at the festival by handing out flyers about voting, Be the Vote swag, and talking to attendees about the cause. The team even brought sidewalk chalk to help engage future voters.



Be the Vote volunteers inspiring future voters at Dundas West Fest.

**Pride Toronto Exhibitor**  
June 2015

While Pride Toronto landed on a stormy weekend this year, the Be the Vote team headed to the festival with high spirits, hoping to spread information about the cause. Attendance was low due to the weather, however the team handed out plenty of Be the Vote pins and t-shirts to people seeking shelter under the group's tent.

**Seven volunteers engaged over 300 attendees at Dundas West Festival.**

**Over 70 youth under 18 were engaged in workshops in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area**

Be the Vote volunteers facilitated workshops for youth under 18 at four social service agencies in the GTHA during the election period, including the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton, two Access Alliance locations, and Malvern Family Resource Centre. The workshops were focussed on empowering youth to vote, learning about democracy, and discovering political issues.

Be the Vote incorporated a mock poll station created by Samara, "Vote PopUp", in the workshops.



Future voters cast their ballot in a mock election set up by Be the Vote.

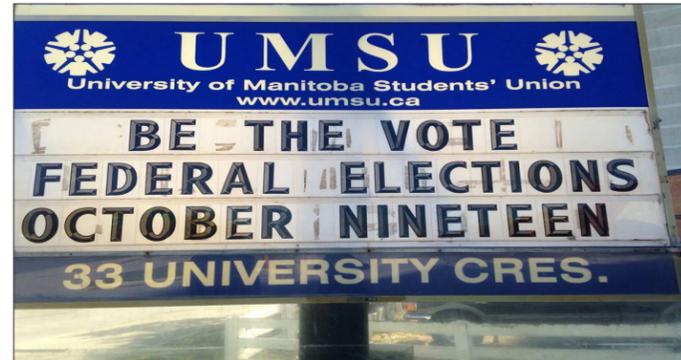


Students at the University of Manitoba launching their 2015 Be the Vote campaign.

### University of Manitoba

Be the Vote created the University of Manitoba Students' Union's (UMSU's) #BetheVote campaign to increase youth voter turnout on campus. Be the Vote created advertising messages for UMSU and consulted on their election outreach activities.

UMSU drew attention to their GOTV efforts during campus voting days when they used golf carts to transport voters across campus to the poll location.



**“Be the Vote played a crucial role in increasing voter turnout at the University of Manitoba. Campaigns like these instill a sense of social responsibility among youth to cast their ballot and make their voice heard. We need more campaigns like these to fight voter apathy.”**

- Astitwa Thapa, Vice President External, UMSU

Media Coverage: [October 8, 2014 - CBC News: U of M uses golf cart to get students to vote in pop-up station](#)

Be the Vote was an official partner of the University of Manitoba Students' Union and Ryerson Students' Union, to help provide effective get out the vote (GOTV) campaigns.

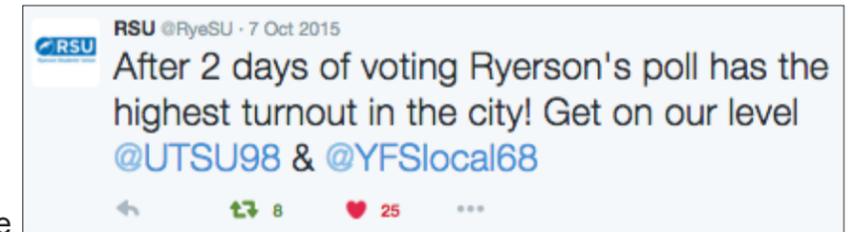
Elections Canada set up polling stations on 42 campuses October 5-8, 2015.

### Ryerson University

Be the Vote created Ryerson Students' Union's (RSU's) election campaign, Vote and Eat Pie, which had the highest voter turnout among Toronto universities. The act of voting was celebrated by serving pie, which helped keep students content while they waited in line.

Be the Vote was also on campus during RSU's Welcome Week in September. Students were given information about how to vote in the upcoming election, and 160 Pledge Plus 1 signatures were collected.

Media Coverage: [October 16, 2015 - Toronto Star: Too apathetic to vote? How about some ice cream?](#)



Tweets from RSU during campus voting days

**“The Ryerson Students' Union partnered with Be the Vote because we were tired of the traditional ‘get out the vote’ campaigns and wanted to be a part of an innovative movement. Their collaborative working style made politics fun and engaging for our students.”**

- Cormac McGee, Vice President External Affairs, Ryerson Students' Union

# PLEDGE PLUS 1

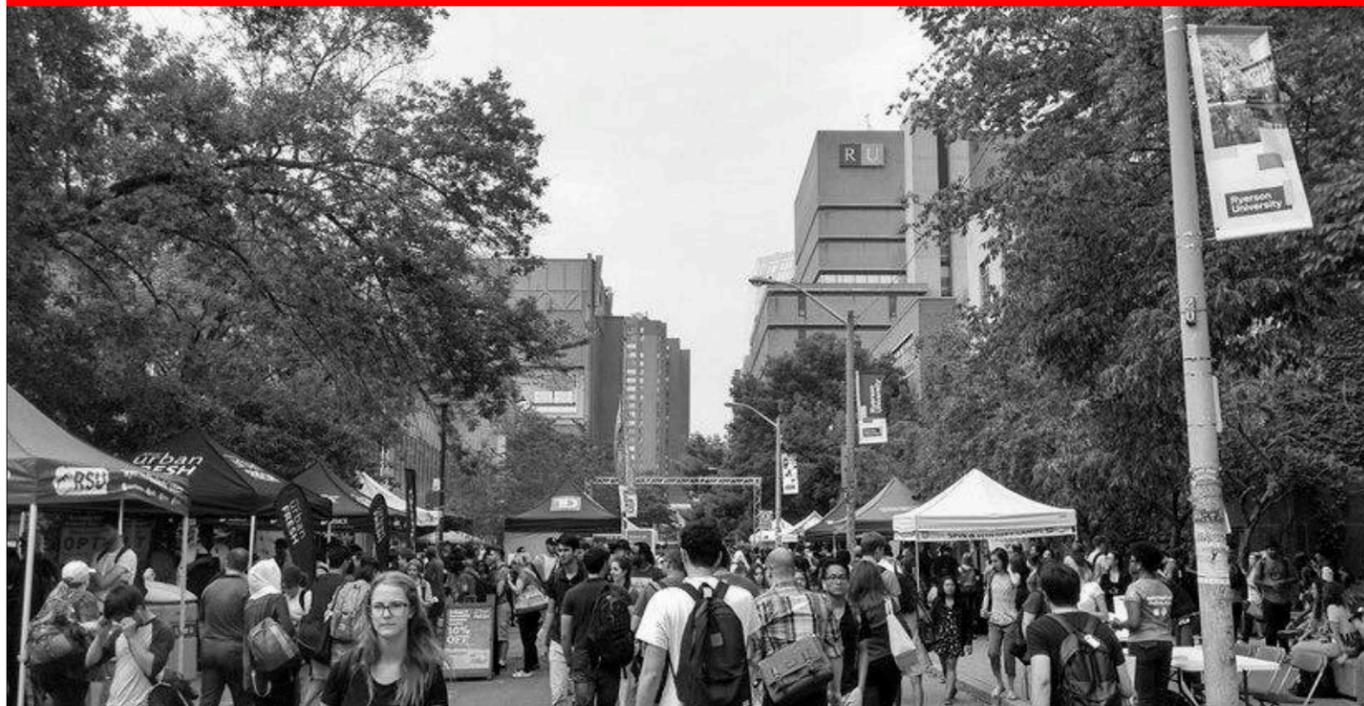
“I’m voting, and I pledge to get one young Canadian who hasn’t voted before, or did not vote in the last election, to the federal election on October 19, 2015.”

## Pledge Plus 1

Pledge Plus 1 was a pledge aimed at young voters who would commit to encouraging one new young voter to head to the polls.

Pledges were collected at Ryerson University, Carleton University, University of Ottawa, University of Toronto, and McMaster University. The pledge could also be signed online at [bethevote.ca](http://bethevote.ca). In total, 682 pledges were collected.

Be the Vote collected pledge signatures during Ryerson’s welcome week in September 2015.



## Summary of social media results during the official 2015 federal election

### Facebook

Total impressions (any content associated with page): **1,758,567**  
 Total page engagements: **17,788**  
 Total reach: **894,739**  
 Total impression of posts: **584,196**  
 Total page consumptions (i.e. content clicks): **22,781**  
 Total video views (plus auto-play) : **443,446**



### Twitter

Impressions: **383,134**  
 Engagements: **7,721**  
 Engagement rate: **15.21**  
 Retweets: **1,685**

### YouTube

Total view count: **153,430**  
 Future of Education: **134,339 views**  
 Future of Economy: **14,328 views**  
 Future of Arts: **3,365 views**  
 Future of Environment: **1,398 views**  
 Future of Healthcare: **1,341 views**

Be the Vote advocated for voters on two important issues during the 2015 election period:

### Awareness of campus voting stations affecting over 1 million students

For the 2015 federal election, Elections Canada piloted campus poll stations in advance of election day. However, the day before the poll stations were set to open, Be the Vote noticed a lack of public awareness surrounding the existence of these accessible voting locations. Historically, voting while away at university has been a barrier to students voting. The campus poll locations enabled anyone to vote at them, regardless of where they were registered.



To help spread the word about the campus polls, Be the Vote and Vote Savvy sent out a news release on the morning of the first campus voting day. The press picked up the story, as Be the Vote's website traffic increased substantially that day, and Be the Vote was interviewed by CBC News Manitoba, CBC Radio Toronto, Yahoo Canada News, Vancouver's CKNW AM 980, and was mentioned by the Winnipeg Free Press.

**Be the Vote's online news release received over 639 views between October 5-8 and the website received 1,345 visits over the same period.**

**In an effort to spread the word on social media, Be the Vote created posts on Facebook and Twitter which were shared/retweeted 4202 times and reached almost 270,000 people.**

Media coverage:

[October 5, 2015 - CBC News: Canada Election 2015 Special campus and youth centre polling station open](#)

[October 5, 2015 - Winnipeg Free Press: Voting easier for university students](#)

[October 6, 2015 - Yahoo News: "Pop-up" voting stations target students, Aboriginals](#)

[October 6, 2015 - Be the Vote's Katie Amodeo discusses the youth vote on CKNW AM 980](#)

[October 7, 2015 - The Manitoban: Get out the youth vote](#)

[October 8, 2014 - CBC News: U of M uses golf cart to get students to vote in pop-up station](#)

### Encouraging Elections Canada to change their message about voter registration

The Be the Vote team noticed that Elections Canada was not communicating a very clear message to voters about their options for registering to vote, or updating registration. The option for voters to register or update registration at the polls on election day was missing from the majority of their communications.

After contacting Elections Canada about this concern on multiple occasions, and witnessing misinformation being spread to voters about how they could register, Be the Vote and Vote Savvy released a statement with the facts.

CBC's As it Happens took interest in the issue, in light of several reported errors with Voter Information Cards and confusing information coming from Elections Canada spokespeople. Be the Vote's Grace Kennedy was interviewed on As it Happens on October 15, in an effort to spread the message that voters would be able to register or update their registration in-person on election day.

**On the same day, Elections Canada's Outreach Director contacted Be the Vote with news that they would be changing their communications to include the important information the organization had advocated for.**

Media coverage:

[October 8, 2015 - CBC's As it Happens: Be the Vote's Grace Kennedy discusses voter registration](#)

[October 12, 2015 - CTV News: Be the Vote's Katie Amodeo interviewed on the youth vote](#)



## Media coverage of Be the Vote in 2015

[October 20, 2015 - CTV News - Be the Vote's Grace Kennedy interviewed on the election results](#)

[October 19, 2015 - German News Source Die Welt: Wie Kanadas Politik die Jugendlichen verlor](#)

[October 16, 2015 - Toronto Star: Too apathetic to vote? How about some ice cream?](#)

[October 12, 2015 - CTV News: Be the Vote's Katie Amodeo interviewed on the youth vote](#)

[October 10, 2015 - Winnipeg Free Press: Countdown to voting day](#)

[October 8, 2015 - CBC's As it Happens: Be the Vote's Grace Kennedy discusses voter registration](#)

[October 8, 2014 - CBC News: U of M uses golf cart to get students to vote in pop-up station](#)

[October 7, 2015 - The Manitoban: Get out the youth vote](#)

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[October 6, 2015 - Yahoo News: "Pop-up" voting stations target students, Aboriginals](#)

[October 5, 2015 - Winnipeg Free Press: Voting easier for university students](#)

[October 5, 2015 - CBC News: Canada Election 2015 Special campus and youth centre polling stations open](#)

[September 23, 2015 - CBC Winnipeg: Be the Vote's Jacqueline Keena talks to CBC about GOTV efforts with the University of Manitoba Students' Union](#)

[September 23, 2015 - CBC News: Winnipeg student unions want to boost young voter numbers in the federal election](#)

[September 1, 2015 - Rabble Radio: Be the Vote interview on Episode 168: Get out and vote!](#)

[August 28, 2015 - Toronto Star: Why isn't Ottawa helping to get out the youth vote? by Be the Vote's Grace Kennedy](#)

[July 25, 2015 - The Public Record: Be the Vote talks youth voter engagement at Hamilton Electoral Reform Town Hall](#)

[March 28, 2015 - AM900 CHML: Interview with Be the Vote's Grace Kennedy](#)

As of February 23, 2016, Elections Canada had not released data on voter turnout by age in the 2015 federal election. Statistics Canada, however, had estimated from a labour force survey, that more than one million additional young Canadians voted in 2015 compared to 2011. Be the Vote is immensely encouraged by this outcome, and will continue to work to ensure voter participation among youth remains strong in the future.

The following is a summary of Be the Vote's recommendations to policy makers, at the federal level, and at Elections Canada, to ensure long-term improvement of youth voter turnout. Detailed recommendations will be communicated to Elections Canada and the Minister of Democratic Institutions, and will be made publicly available online.

- Repeal parts of the Fair Elections Act to ensure Elections Canada is allowed to actively encourage citizens to vote, and to allow vouching and use of Voter Information Cards for identification purposes.
- Diversify Elections Canada's communications online and offline; advertising spends should reflect the variance in communications usage, and access, among Canadians of all ages.
- Increase the capacity of Elections Canada to maintain stronger relationships with diverse groups for communications, outreach, and advertisement purposes, further in advance of election time, in comparison to current arrangements.
- Simplify identification requirements for voting

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Be the Vote is in the process of re-evaluating objectives and priorities for 2016-2017, with consideration of the aforementioned recommendations.

Be the Vote welcomes [feedback and suggestions](#) from supporters and community members who are concerned with strengthening democratic participation in Canada, at all levels of government.

For more information, please contact [info@bethevote.ca](mailto:info@bethevote.ca).

