

# PARTICIPATING IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS

Voting is not the only way to participate in the political process. Democracy relies on participation by informed citizens. Here are just a few ways to raise awareness and get involved. And remember, you don't just need to participate if you oppose something. When government does something right, don't hesitate to show your support.

## INTEREST GROUPS

Interest groups form civil society: the non-governmental, non-business organisations that influence and shape our world. They include such things as local heritage societies, advocacy groups for minority rights, and environmental groups. Supporting civil society helps focus the government's attention on community issues.

## POLITICAL PARTIES

Joining a political party can help us learn more about political and law-making processes. Party members influence party policies and candidate selection, thus helping shape the laws that govern us. Most parties have youth chapters, allowing young people to vote on internal party matters.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Online platforms such as Facebook or Reddit create digital spaces to voice our thoughts on issues of the day. By posting on social media and engaging in productive discussion and debate, we can influence fellow citizens, politicians, and the media.

## POLITICAL RALLY OR PROTEST

All Canadians have the right to peaceful assembly. Rallies and protests help raise awareness about particular issues. Even if we do not believe in a cause, attending a rally or protest as an observer help us understand the multiple viewpoints that exist in a diverse society.

## POSTERING

Many communities have public spaces dedicated to displaying posters. We can make use of these spaces for posting information about issues, concerns, and causes relevant to the community.

## CONTACT MLAS

Writing letters and emails, signing petitions, and visiting government representatives are effective ways to express opinions. MLAs—like all elected representatives—are there to represent their constituents, so it is important that we let them know our thoughts.

## CREATING PETITIONS

Petitions can be used to share an opinion. Collecting signatures for a petition can also create awareness about the issue. If a proper process is followed, a petition may be read by and entered into the record of the provincial legislature. Find these rules at <https://www.legassembly.sk.ca/media/1308/practicalpetitionsguide2020.pdf>

## PLEBISCITES

A plebiscite is a province-wide vote on an issue of public interest. If at least 15% of voters sign a petition that requests a plebiscite, and the issue is within the provincial government's jurisdiction, then a province-wide vote on the issue must happen.

