



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION NO.: **421-02446**

BY: **MR. STETSKI (KOOTENAY-COLUMBIA)**

DATE: **JUNE 11, 2018**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **BERNADETTE JORDAN**

Response by the Minister of Democratic Institutions

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

PARLIAMENT OF CANADA

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

The Government of Canada is pleased to respond to this petition.

At the federal level, there is no process for recall of Members of Parliament. Our democratic system is designed so that Members of Parliament will be accountable for their actions and choices by their constituents each election cycle.

Our democratic system is strong and, rightly, admired around the world. The Government is committed to working hard to strengthen and protect it for Canadians.

In the Spring of 2018, the Minister of Democratic Institutions introduced Bill C-76: *The Election Modernization Act*. Which if passed, will result in a generational overhaul of the *Canada Elections Act*, allowing it to better address the realities facing our democratic institutions in the 21st century.

If passed, the changes will:

Ensure a fair and level playing field by putting in place measures to guarantee transparency and fairness in the electoral process;

Make the electoral process more accessible by reducing barriers for persons with disabilities and Canadian Armed Forces members so they can vote and participate more fully in the electoral process;

Establish a pre-election period with transparency requirements and spending limits for political parties and third parties;

Set privacy standards for political parties to ensure the protection and security of Canadians' personal information; and

Modernize the administration of elections to make it easier for Canadians to vote and more difficult for elections law-breakers to evade punishment.

When it comes to accessibility, there are barriers currently in place that have made it more difficult for some Canadians to take part in the democratic process. This includes persons with disabilities, members of the Canadian Armed Forces and Canadians living abroad. This legislation will make the electoral process more accessible.

However, Canadians know that participation in the democratic system goes beyond casting votes; it includes removing obstacles in place that may have prevented some Canadians from running for office. That is why Bill C-76 will make it easier for disabled Canadians and Canadians caring for a young, sick, or disabled family member to run for federal office.

The Government must ensure that our democratic system is efficient, effective, and keeps pace with our changing society. This Bill will modernize the administration of elections to make it easier for Canadians to vote and more difficult for elections law-breakers to evade punishment. To ensure compliance with the law, this legislation is proposing new powers for the Commissioner of Canada Elections. This means real change in the way elections laws are enforced. The Commissioner of Canada Elections will also be moving back to Elections Canada to ensure greater independence from political actors in government.

The integrity and fairness of Canada's electoral process is of paramount importance to the Government. All democracies around the world are facing these challenges, and Canada is not immune to threats from foreign influence and online disruption. Bill C-76 proposes changes related to foreign influence and online disruption that the Government can address within the *Canada Elections Act*.

These legislative changes will also enhance transparency and ensure that there is a fair and level playing field by defining a pre-election period with reporting requirements and spending limits. The pre-election period would begin on June 30 in a fixed-date election year, and would extend until the writ is issued.

As more and more information is available online, Canadians are concerned about their private and personal information. The Government believes that Canadians deserve to have this information protected. Bill C-76 will ensure political parties are doing their part to protect Canadians' personal information, resulting in greater transparency about the ways political parties collect, secure and use data.

The Government will continue to work to strengthen and protect our democratic institutions and ensuring they are more accessible to all Canadians.

Thank you for sharing your thoughts on this issue.