



Dear Teacher,

Thank you once again for bringing Student Vote into your school in previous federal and provincial elections. It has been our privilege to work with you and we hope to work with you again in future elections.

Student Vote has been in the news recently because of the 'Fair Elections Act', a new bill (C-23) proposed by the federal government.

I write to you today to explain the implications of the 'Fair Elections Act' on the Student Vote program. The 'Fair Elections Act' – as currently written – would disempower Elections Canada from supporting the Student Vote program in federal elections.

That means that they would not be allowed to provide us with the official Elections Canada ballot boxes, voting screens and electoral district maps that we offer free to schools as part of the Student Vote program. It also means that they would not be able to financially support the Student Vote program which includes the development and delivery of materials and activities in schools across the country.

Your effort, combined with Elections Canada's support, inspired more than 563,000 elementary and high school students to cast a Student Vote ballot in the 2011 federal election. Students elected a Conservative minority government with the NDP as Official Opposition.

Although the loss of Elections Canada's support will not necessarily destroy our charitable organization, it does present a surprising and incredibly serious challenge to our ongoing work, and could mean that we will not be able to coordinate a Student Vote program during the 2015 federal election.

Elections Canada provides an irreplaceable credibility that has helped Student Vote continue to grow into more and more schools across Canada. We fear that the loss of the non-partisan badge provided by Elections Canada, and the loss of their official election materials, would cause Student Vote to lose the authenticity that educators have come to cherish.

And although we carry hope that we could find alternative sources of funds to pay for the Student Vote program in the next federal election, we do know that there is no better source of funds than from Canada's official and independent election agency.

We feel it is important to make you aware of this situation.

The Bill was introduced in parliament for first reading on February 4th. It passed second reading and was referred to committee on February 10th. It is expected to reach final reading on May 1st – 29 days from today. The Senate has now begun a process of 'early-reading' so that if the Bill arrives at the Senate in May, it may be passed immediately.

I went to the House of Commons to appear at the Procedure and House Affairs Committee last Thursday on behalf of our charitable organization – CIVIX - to seek a solution to the challenges we face by this bill. My statement and submitted documents can be found on our website here: <http://civix.ca/fair-elections-act/>

Our position is that the impact on Student Vote caused by the Fair Elections Act must be accidental.



It is hard to believe that the Government of Canada or any Member of Parliament would purposely attempt to stop children from learning about their democracy.

We continue to speak with government officials reasonably and respectfully to find a solution to this issue.

I appreciate any concern you have for this situation. We founded this organization 10 years ago to help you and your fellow educators put democracy on the curriculum in a fun and interesting way. I believe that we have made significant progress together, and we would like that to continue.

If you wish to ask me any questions or be in touch, just reply to this email and it will go straight to my personal inbox.

I hope that Members of Parliament will change this bill so that we can work with you again in the 2015 federal election.

Sincerely,

Taylor Gunn

President and CEO
CIVIX Canada & Student Vote
www.civix.ca www.studentvote.ca
[1 866 488 8775](tel:18664888775)