

## Elections 2015. Voter Suppression in Canada

: Conversations with Lesley Hughes and Michael Keefer. Global Research News Hour Episode 117

By [Michael Welch](#) and [Prof Michael Keefer](#)

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Region: [Canada](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [GLOBAL RESEARCH NEWS HOUR](#)

*"If for eight years this group has flouted other equally precious rules of the democratic game, aren't we rash to assume that this same group will see a transparent, fair election as sacrosanct?...History and current events around the world - Nigeria, Turkey, Ukraine, the Phillipines - show many examples of leaders in weak or weakening democracies who were able to "coordinate" the civil bureaucracy with their cronies; they then tamper with the vote, and sully the outcome of elections." -Naomi Wolf, from *The End of America: Letter of Warning to a Young Patriot* [1]*

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As this entry is being written, Canadians are on their way to the polls to register their choice to lead their country.

The current standing in the polls suggests that the Opposition Liberal Party under fledgling leader Justin Trudeau is poised to take power. [2]

However, polls have been known to be inaccurate. More to the point, polls do not account for the possibility of voters not making it to the polling station. Or other forms of electoral interference.

On the morning of October 19, Canada's Election Day, reports are coming in of pre-marked ballots, delays and some confusion. [3]

During the advance polling period two weekends previous, several pre-marked ballots appeared with marks appearing next to the names of Conservative and Green Party candidates. When brought to the attention of Elections Canada, the ballots were listed as 'spoiled' and discarded.

If Canadians had chosen to vote with these ballots, would their vote have been discarded?

Elections Canada is on record as saying these marked ballots were a result of 'printing errors' and that no malfeasance was intended. But should Canadians receiving these ballots use them to vote with, will their ballots be discarded as 'spoiled'?

Could these flawed ballots turn out to be the '[hanging chads](#)' of the 2015 Canadian election campaign?

This is all supposition at this point, but notable in light of documented electoral interference in previous election campaigns.

**Michael Keefer** is an Emeritus Professor of Literary Studies from the University of Guelph. He has been researching and analyzing electoral interference in the 2011 Canadian Federal election and in a [multi-part essay](#) posted at [Rabble.ca](#), he establishes that between telephone fraud and under-investigation by Elections Canada and the RCMP, a State Crime Against Democracy may well have taken place. Professor Keefer joined us in the second half hour to elaborate on what he has uncovered and implications for the state of democracy in Canada.

A further concern with regard to the integrity of Canadian elections is the phenomenon of candidate ejection. A [number of candidates have been ejected](#) on the heels of problematic past statements emerging at late stages of the campaign. This is what happened to journalist, and columnist **Lesley Hughes** when she ran as a candidate in the 2008 election. She is the author of an upcoming memoir, *The Naked Canadian: A Dead Candidate's Report*. In the first half hour of the program, Lesley Hughes shares her thoughts about how these candidate dismissals, in conjunction with the amplifying power of social media can ultimately serve to subvert democracy.

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**Notes:**

1. Naomi Wolf, 2007; p. 143, *The End of America:Letter of Warning to a Young Patriot*; Chelsea Green Publishing Company
2. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-election-2015-grenier-polls-oct18-1.3276755?cmp=rss>
3. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/problems-at-the-polls-make-some-winnipeggers-walk-away-1.3277874>

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