



# THE PERSON IN CHARGE

As Canada's Chief Electoral Officer, Stéphane Perrault has a very important job. He explained it to *Kayak*.

## **Q:** HOW DO OUR FEDERAL ELECTIONS COMPARE TO THOSE IN OTHER COUNTRIES?

**A:** We enjoy a high level of trust here in Canada, and that's something that we care a lot about and we work hard to maintain. Of course, the size and diversity of the country makes it extraordinary. Things are very different in a fly-in Indigenous community and the downtown of a big city. Other countries with presidential systems know when their elections are happening years in advance. We don't have that, so when an election is called, we first set up 500 offices, and then we have literally a few days to find 16,000 polling locations. Also, very, very few countries vote on Monday.

## **Q:** WHAT DOES ELECTIONS CANADA DO TO ENSURE OUR ELECTIONS ARE SAFE AND TRUSTWORTHY?

**A:** We were the first truly independent body to manage elections in the world, and we still have complete independence from the government and political parties. It's a public, transparent process with a lot of safeguards. We make sure people can only vote once. And when the votes are in, everybody can see how the ballots are counted. If anyone has a complaint, there are ways they can challenge the results. If people hear rumours about a concern with elections, it's important that they check their sources and make sure they have the right information.

## **Q: WHAT MAKES ELECTION DAY SPECIAL?**

**A:** When you're in a lineup at a Canadian election, there's a sense of calm in the room. Because of the number of parties and candidates, you know that most people in your polling location likely will not vote your way. But it's a peaceful process. That's very Canadian.

## **Q: WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO VOTE?**

**A:** Our democracy is something we can't take for granted, and it only works if people use it. During an election, we have this ability to have our voice heard about what we want, but also to hear other ideas and get an understanding of other people. And again, it only works if people participate.

## **Q: WHY SHOULD KIDS CARE ABOUT ELECTIONS?**

**A:** One day soon, they'll have this important role to play in our society. They can get their names on the Register of Future Electors when they're 14 so they'll be ready to go when they're 18. We know that if young Canadians vote in the first few elections as adults, the research shows they will vote for the rest of their lives.

## **Q: IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT CANADIAN KIDS TO KNOW ABOUT OUR ELECTIONS OR OUR VOTING SYSTEM?**

**A:** The way we run our elections, it's really a system of Canadians serving their neighbours. People don't realize that. But this huge workforce that we have is all members of your community coming together as workers and voters to make those decisions.

Stéphane Perrault signs the writs for the 2019 federal election.



**The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) must be fair and neutral to all political parties. That's why the CEO is the only Canadian citizen over 18 who's not allowed to vote.**

