

What is the Senate?

The Parliament of Canada consists of three elements: The Queen, the House of Commons and the Senate. The Senate is the upper house of Parliament and is constituted by appointed Senators.

What is the composition of the Senate?

The Canadian Constitution provides that the Senate has 105 appointed members divided among the provinces and territories as follows:

- Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan: 6 seats each
- Ontario: 24 seats
- Quebec: 24 seats (Quebec's seats are allocated by electoral division)
- New Brunswick and Nova Scotia: 10 seats each
- Prince Edward Island: 4 seats
- Newfoundland and Labrador: 6 seats
- Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut: 1 seat each.

What does the job of a Senator involve?

There is a lot of variety in the interesting and demanding duties of a Senator's job. Typically, a Senator participates in sessions in the Senate Chamber, works on committees, holds business meetings, manages an office and travels regularly to the specific region of Canada the Senator represents.

In Alberta, we hold Senate votes to create a list of "Senators in Waiting", so that when an Alberta vacancy is created in the Senate of Canada, the Governor General, on advice of the Prime Minister, can appoint from this list of elected senators-to-be. The Senate of Canada otherwise is an important part of the check-and-balance system in our Parliamentary Democracy. They are there to provide "sober second thought" on what laws may be applied to the state. They also have the means to create their own bills to be sent down to the House of Commons as well. It becomes part of the reciprocal nature of how our Westminster Democracy works at the federal level.

There have been four previous senate elections in Alberta; 1989, 1998, 2004 and 2012. In each election, electors voted for the senate candidates that they wished to put forward to the Queen's Privy Council for Canada for filling future vacancies related to Alberta in the Senate of Canada. These names are put forward by the Government of Alberta for consideration by the federal government. The *Alberta Senate Election Act* is provincial legislation and the candidates selected are not binding on the Queen's Privy Council for Canada.

How do you become a Senator?

You need to be a Canadian citizen, prove you are over the age of 30 but under 75, that you have \$4,000 in assets, reside in the division of appointment, that you are non-partisan, knowledgeable in the constitution, and that you demonstrate outstanding personal qualities in life, ethics, and integrity. The Governor General and the Prime Minister also want to see a history of public service, community engagement, and leadership in an applicant's chosen field of study or career, while also considering if they will maintain the gender balance of the Senate, while also considering the indigenous/ethnic, linguistic, and minority balance of the assembly.

Of course, as a Federal role, French is an asset too. Senators have a mandatory retirement at age 75.

It is unknown at this time how many senate nominees may be selected for this election.

Referendum Question:

Governments may put forward questions to the electorate to determine policy direction. Based on certain thresholds of the vote, these results can be turned into bills for similar processing through the democratic state – if supported by the people. For example, in Alberta, previous referendums determined whether Alberta should build an electrical grid to supply the province with power or to institute Daylight Savings Time.

As per the *Referendum Act*, these questions may include constitutional or non-constitutional questions.