

# GLOSSARY

## A

**absentee voting** — Voting at advance voting outside your electoral district, or voting on General Voting Day not at your assigned voting place.

**absolute monarchy** — A form of government where a monarch (or dictator) retains full political power over a state and its people.

**accepted ballot** — A ballot that is properly marked for only one candidate.

**advance voting** — Advance voting locations are open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (local time) between Thursday, October 15 to Wednesday, October 21.

**analyze** — To examine methodically and in detail for the purpose of explanation and interpretation.

**apathy** — A state of indifference, or a lack of feeling or emotion towards someone or something.

**authoritarian** — Authoritarian governments exercise forceful control over the population, with no particular concern for its preferences or for public opinion.

**autocracy** — A type of government where political power is concentrated in the hands of one person who rules without restriction. An autocracy can be a dictatorship or an absolute monarchy.

## B

**ballot** — A document used by voters to indicate their preference in an election, electoral event or referendum.

**ballot box** — A container for marked ballots.

**bias** — A preconceived opinion, a one-sided view or a prejudice against something or someone without evidence or adequate reasoning.

**bill** — See *legislation*.

**by-election** — An election held in a particular electoral district to fill a vacancy in the parliament or legislative assembly at any time other than during a general election. More than one by-election can be held on the same day.

## C

**cabinet** — The governing body made up of the ministers of government ministries. Cabinet ministers advise the premier. The ministers are appointed by the lieutenant governor on the recommendation of the premier and are usually chosen

from the group of elected members of the party that forms the government.

**cabinet minister** — A member of the cabinet or executive council. Cabinet ministers introduce and debate bills. They also administer specific government ministries and formulate government policy while advising the premier.

**campaign period** — The period commencing with the issue of a writ for an election and the close of voting on General Voting Day.

**Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms** — A bill of rights enacted in 1982 as part of Canada's Constitution. The Charter guarantees certain political rights to Canadian citizens and civil rights of everyone in Canada. The Charter guarantees broad equality rights as well as fundamental freedoms, democratic rights, mobility rights, legal rights and language rights.

**candidate** — An individual who seeks election to public office. A candidate running in a provincial election or by-election is trying to become a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA).

**caucus** — A group composed of elected representatives who belong to a given party.

**centre (spectrum)** — A political party or individual holding moderate views or middle-of-the-road opinions. A person with these views can be referred to as a centrist.

**Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)** — Appointed by the Lieutenant Governor on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly. An all-party recommendation is responsible for making a unanimous recommendation to the Legislative Assembly on who should be appointed. The Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for the administration of the provincial electoral process.

**colonization** — The action or process of forcibly settling among and dispossessing Indigenous people from their lands and power.

**communism** — A political ideology that promotes the establishment of an egalitarian and classless society based on common ownership and control of the means of production and property.

**concurrency** — When federal, provincial/territorial and/or local governments overlap in jurisdictional responsibilities.

**consensus democracy** — A form of democracy that uses a consensus decision-making model in the process of developing legislation. Consensus democracies aim to be more collaborative and inclusive by taking into account as broad a range of opinions as opposed to decisions made by majority rule.

**consensus government** — A form of government where political power is shared by a group of individuals without party affiliation used to develop legislation. Consensus government is practiced in Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

**conservatism** — A political ideology advocating the preservation of society and opposing radical changes.

## GLOSSARY

**constituency** — See *electoral district*.

**constituent** — An individual who lives in an electoral district.

**constituency association** — An organization formed for an electoral district as the local organization of a political party or as the local organization to support an independent Member of the Legislative Assembly for that electoral district.

**constitution** — A set of fundamental principles or established laws which include the basic principles and laws of a nation or state that define the powers and duties of the government and guarantee certain rights to the people living within it.

**constitutional monarchy** — A form of government where the authority of the monarch is limited by a constitution. There is a democratically elected government with a leader, while the monarch remains the head of state and performs ceremonial duties. Canada is a constitutional monarchy as the Queen is the official head of state and is represented by the governor general at the federal level and a lieutenant governor in each province at the provincial level.

**councillor** — An elected member of a municipal government, like a city or town council.

**the Crown** — Represents the legal embodiment of executive, legislative and judicial governance in the monarchy. In Canada, the monarch's powers are exercised either by the monarch personally or by his or her representative in each jurisdiction (governor general, lieutenant governors).

## D

**democracy** — A type of government where a majority of the people are included in political decision-making. Citizens elect political representatives to make decisions on their behalf and are also free to run for political office.

**democratic rights** — Democratic rights include the right of every Canadian citizen, 18 years of age or older, to vote in an election, to be a candidate in an election and the requirement that governments hold elections at least every five years and that elected representatives meet at least once per year.

**department** — A specialized division of the government which is responsible for a specific area of public policy, government function or service delivery. Term used at the federal level and within some provinces/territories across the country. British Columbia uses ministry.

**dictatorship** — A type of government where one person or ruling group has power. Power is maintained through the use of a party or military, without the consent of the people. Citizens have limited rights and freedoms. There is usually a heavy military presence and no independent media.

**District Electoral Officer (DEO)** — An individual appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer who is responsible for administering elections in their assigned electoral district.

## E

**earned media** — Media coverage or mentions reported by third parties such as news organizations or external social media channels, or spread through word of mouth.

**editorial** — A newspaper article written by or on behalf of a publisher, editor or editorial team that provides an opinion or analysis of a topical issue, event or situation.

**elder** — Individuals within Indigenous communities who are sources of cultural knowledge and are respected for their wisdom.

**election** — The process by which our elected representatives and government are chosen. Elections are usually held at regular intervals.

**Elections BC (EBC)** — Administers the electoral process in B.C. This includes provincial general elections and by-elections, provincial referendums, initiative and recall petitions and initiative votes.

**elector** — A person eligible to vote. Also known as a voter.

**electoral district (ED)** — A geographical area represented by an elected official. There are 87 electoral districts being contested in the 42nd British Columbia general election. Also known as a *constituency*.

**electoral system** — The process by which votes are translated into seats in a parliament or legislature. In B.C. and across Canada, we use the First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) or Single-Member Plurality system.

**electorate** — The whole body of electors.

**enfranchise** — The extension of the right to vote to a particular group of people.

**executive branch** — The branch of government that implements and enforces laws, rules and regulations with the support of the public service.

## F

**fact** — Something known to exist or to have happened.

**factual** — Concerning the truth rather than interpretations of something.

**fascism** — An authoritarian ideology, usually headed by highly nationalistic or militaristic one-party states.

**federal** — One of the levels of government in Canada; pertaining to the whole country.

**First Nations** — Indigenous people considered by the federal government as non-status Indians and status Indians.

## GLOSSARY

First Nations are located on lands called reserves and in communities across the country.

**First-Past-The-Post** — The electoral system in which the candidate who receives more votes than any other single candidate wins.

**fixed-date election** — A requirement that elections are held on pre-determined dates on a specific schedule. Since 2005, provincial general elections in B.C. have been held every fourth year on the second Tuesday in May.

**freedom** — The power or right to act, speak or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint.

## G

**general election** — An election usually held at regular intervals or fixed dates in which candidates are elected in the electoral districts of the nation or province/territory to represent citizens.

**General Voting Day (GVD)** — The day when an election is held in British Columbia. General Voting Day is the 28<sup>th</sup> day after the election is called.

**governance** — The system of practices and processes that an entity, community or group uses to organize themselves and make decisions.

**government** — Refers to the people and institutions put in place to lead a country, nation, province or community. The role of government is to create and enforce laws, provide services and make decisions for the benefit of the people living within its borders.

**governor general** — The federal representative of the Queen and the ceremonial head of state. This person is appointed by the Queen on the recommendation of the prime minister. The governor general opens, suspends and dissolves the Parliament, and gives or withholds royal assent to bills.

## H

**House of Commons** — Part of the legislative branch of the federal government and housed in the Parliament buildings in Ottawa. Located in Ottawa, the House of Commons consists of 338 Members of Parliament who create, implement and enforce laws, rules and regulations for the entire country.

## I

**ideal** — A person's conception of how things should be, or what should be aimed for.

**impartial** — Unbiased; not favouring one side or opinion

more than another.

**incumbent** — The existing holder of a political office. An electoral district without an incumbent candidate is known as an open seat.

**independent** — A candidate or elected representative who does not represent a political party.

**Indigenous peoples** — Comprises the First Nations, Inuit and Métis of Canada.

**Indigenous government** — The forms of government in some Indigenous communities or First Nations. Indigenous governments replace, overlap, or share certain responsibilities with the government of their province/territory or the federal government.

**internal poll** — Conducted by political parties to help them make strategic decisions, such as focusing on particular issues or concentrating on competitive ridings they want to win.

**Inuit** — An Indigenous individual (Inuk) or people who are native to the Arctic region.

**issue** — An important topic or problem for debate or discussion.

**issue poll** — Focus on assessing voters' attitudes on specific issues and proposed policies.

## J

**judicial branch** — The branch of government responsible for overseeing and administering the law. The judicial branch interprets the law and punishes those who violate established laws, rules and regulations.

## L

**left (spectrum)** — On the political spectrum, one who favours social services and government intervention in the economy, and policies that promote social equality, socialist or progressive views.

**legislation** — A proposed bill or law introduced to a parliament or legislature. It is enacted when passed by the parliament or legislative assembly and given royal assent.

**legislative assembly** — A legislative body composed of elected members at the provincial or territorial level. The role of the legislative assembly is to pass legislation, approve public finances and scrutinize government.

**Legislative Assembly of British Columbia** — The legislative body in British Columbia that is composed of 87 elected members (MLAs), who each represent a single electoral district.

## GLOSSARY

**legislative branch** — The branch of government responsible for debating, amending and passing laws.

**legislature** — Formally, the Lieutenant Governor acting by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly. Also the term commonly used to refer to the parliament buildings or the building where the legislative assembly gathers.

**liberalism** — A political ideology that favours individual liberty but acknowledges the need for some form of government intervention in the economy.

**libertarianism** — A political ideology that advocates for minimal state intervention in the lives of citizens.

**lieutenant governor** — The representative of the Queen and the ceremonial head of state at the provincial level. This person is appointed by the governor general on the recommendation of the prime minister. The lieutenant governor opens, suspends and dissolves the legislative assembly, and gives or withholds royal assent to bills passed by the legislature.

**local government** — Includes municipal governments, regional districts and improvement districts. They manage local matters such as water and sewage treatment, libraries, roads and bridges and local parks and recreation.

## M

**majority government** — A government formed by the party or the coalition of parties holding more than half of the seats in the parliament or legislature.

**margin of error** — A small amount calculated for most polls to allow for miscalculations or changes in opinion.

**mayor** — The highest-ranking officer in the municipal government.

**Member of Parliament (MP)** — An individual elected by the people in a particular federal riding or electoral district to represent them in the House of Commons. There are currently 338 MPs and each represents a different electoral district.

**Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA)** — An individual elected by the people in a particular electoral district to represent them in the Legislative Assembly. There will be 87 MLAs will be elected in the 42nd British Columbia general election.

**Métis** — A person of mixed First Nations and Euro-Canadian ancestry.

**minister** — See *cabinet minister*.

**ministry** — The public service in British Columbia is divided into ministries. Each ministry is responsible for a specific area of public policy, government function or service delivery.

**minority government** — A government that holds less than half of the seats in the parliament or legislature, but governs

because it holds more seats than any other party. It must maintain the confidence of the parliament or legislature to continue governing.

**monarchy** — A form of government where a monarch (king or queen) or royal family holds the political power. Political power is inherited and usually lasts until death. A monarchy can be an absolute monarchy or a constitutional monarchy.

**municipal** — Referring to the most local level of government in Canada. Municipal or local governments exist as a result of provincial or territorial legislation.

## N

**new media** — Refers to content that is accessible on devices via the Internet, such as online sources, newspaper websites and social media platforms. New media is typically interactive, user driven, borderless and functions in real-time.

**neutral** — An individual or opinion that is not aligned with or does not support any side on a given issue.

**non-partisan** — An individual or organization with no party affiliation or political bias.

## O

**official opposition** — The party that holds the second-largest number of seats in the parliament or legislature. It is accorded certain financial and procedural advantages over other parties in opposition.

**old media** — Refers to traditional media sources in broadcast and print format, such as television, newspaper, radio, magazines and pamphlets/flyers. Old media is typically one-way communication, and strives to maintain journalistic integrity and standards.

**oligarchy** — A government system in which power rests with a small number of privileged people.

**online sources** — Material you find on the Internet. It can include media websites, webpages, forums and blogs.

**opinion** — A personal view, attitude or judgement. Opinions are personal and highly subjective, and shaped by experiences, values, knowledge and attitudes.

**opinion poll** — A question or a series of questions designed to measure the public's views on a specific topic or series of topics.

**opposition party** — A political party that is neither the governing party nor part of a coalition of parties forming the government.

**owned media** — Internally managed promotional platforms, such as websites, blogs or social media channels.



## GLOSSARY

### P

**paid media** — Publicity that has been purchased to bring a message to an audience, such as print, broadcast or social media advertising, or a direct mail campaign.

**parliament** — The period between general elections, composed of a number of sessions that are made up of individual sittings. Also the term used for Canada's federal legislature.

**parliamentary democracy** — A type of representative democracy in which members are elected to a parliament or legislature. The political party with the greatest number of seats or elected representatives in the parliament or legislature forms government and determines the leader of the government. Canada is a parliamentary democracy.

**partisan** — Support of a political party, cause or person.

**party leader** — An individual chosen or elected to act as the head of a political party.

**party member** — An individual who belongs to a political party.

**perspective** — A particular attitude or opinion toward something; a point of view.

**plank** — Individual topics or issues in a party's platform.

**platform** — A series of declared principles and policies on jurisdictional issues concerning government and the public. Parties share their platforms through announcements, advertising and events.

**political ideology** — A political ideology is a set of shared ideals or beliefs about how politics and government should function. Ideologies include liberalism, conservatism, socialism, communism and fascism, among others.

**political party** — A group of people sharing a particular ideology and set of goals that puts forward candidates for election, whose intention is to achieve power and create meaningful political change.

**political spectrum** — The political spectrum is a means of characterizing beliefs, values and priorities, and provides a conceptual framework in which to view and evaluate political parties and public policies.

**poll** — A sampling or collection of opinions on a subject taken from either a selected or a random group of individuals for the purpose of analysis.

**popular vote percentage** — The percentage of all ballots cast for a particular party or candidate. A reflection of support across a jurisdiction.

**preference poll** — Report on which leader, party or candidate is favoured at the time by the general public. Also known as horse race polls.

**premier** — The leader of a provincial or territorial government. After a provincial election, the leader of the party with the greatest number of elected members usually becomes the premier.

**prime minister** — The leader of the federal government. After a federal election, the leader of the party with the greatest number of elected members usually becomes the prime minister.

**provincial** — Referring to one of the levels of government in Canada; pertaining to the province.

### R

**referendum** — A vote on a matter of public interest or concern. Registered voters indicate their opinion by marking a ballot in response to one or more questions asked of them by the provincial government.

**rejected ballot** — A ballot that cannot be counted because the voter's intention cannot be interpreted from the mark on the ballot. This can include marking the ballot for more than one candidate (even if different symbols are used), ranking the candidates, leaving the ballot blank or identifying the voter.

**republic** — A sovereign state, country or government without a monarch. The democratically elected government holds all political power, government leaders exercise power according to the rule of law, and there is often a constitution.

**representative democracy** — A system of government where representatives are selected through elections to make decisions on behalf of the public.

**responsibility** — A duty or obligation that binds you to respect, promote and maintain certain rights.

**restorative justice** — A system of criminal justice focusing on rehabilitation through reconciliation with victims and the community.

**right** — A protected freedom that legally entitles you to take certain actions.

**right (spectrum)** — On the political spectrum, one who favours conservative views and traditions. Individuals on the right believe that government should not interfere with people and businesses, and that taxes should be as low as possible.

### S

**scrutineer** — A person appointed in writing by a candidate or the candidate's official agent to observe the voting and counting proceedings in an election. Also called candidate representatives.

**seat count** — The number of seats that each political party has in the parliament or legislature. The party or coalition of parties with the highest seat count traditionally forms the government.

## GLOSSARY

**secret ballot** — Government elections use a secret ballot, which means no one except the elector knows the choice that was made.

**self-government** — An Indigenous group with control over its own affairs. Comprehensive land claims agreements (modern treaties) between Canadian governments and First Nations often result in Indigenous peoples having greater autonomy in choosing their own method(s) of representation and decision-making.

**Senate** — Part of the legislative branch of the federal government in Canada. Located in Ottawa, the Senate consists of 105 appointed Senators.

**Single-Member Plurality** — An electoral system based on single-member districts, where the successful candidate is elected if they win the most votes in their electoral district. Also known as First-Past-The-Post.

**slogan** — A catchy phrase created and repeated in advertising and politics.

**socialism** — A political ideology that favours a system in which the means of production, distribution and exchange are owned by the community collectively, usually through the state.

**special voting opportunity** — An opportunity to vote for eligible voters who cannot visit a regular voting place because they are in hospital, a mental health facility, a long-term care facility, a remote work site or a correctional centre.

**Speech from the Throne** — The speech delivered by the lieutenant governor for each new session of the legislature. This speech outlines the government's plans and initiatives for the session. Also known as the Throne Speech.

**spoiled ballot** — A ballot that has been kept separate and never placed in the ballot box because it was mistakenly marked or torn and exchanged for a new ballot.

**Status Indian** — First Nations individuals registered under the *Indian Act* who are entitled to various programs and services.

**subsidiarity** — The principle regarding the division of responsibilities among the different levels of government; where the government closest to the issue governs it.

**Supervisory Voting Officer (SVO)** — The election official responsible for overseeing a voting place or group of voting places.

## T

**tabulation** — The counting of ballots following an election. Ballots are counted and recounted to ensure an accurate election result is recorded.

**territorial** — Referring to one of the levels of government in Canada; pertaining to the territory.

**transparency** — The act of being easy to open, honest and accountable.

## U

**universal suffrage** — The extension of the right to vote to all adult citizens, including the removal of restrictions against women, Indigenous peoples and ethnic and religious minorities.

## V

**values** — An individual's principles or standards of behaviour and priorities in life.

**vote by mail** — See *absentee voting*.

**voters list** — Contains the names and addresses of registered voters in each electoral district.

**voter turnout** — The total number of people who voted expressed as a percentage of the total number of eligible voters or registered voters.

**voting area (VA)** — Each electoral district is divided into smaller geographic called voting areas, which are used to assign voters to voting places.

**voting clerk (VC)** — A person appointed by the District Electoral Officer to help the voting officer.

**voting day** — See *General Voting Day*.

**voting officer (VO)** — The election official appointed by the District Electoral Officer to conduct the vote at a particular voting station.

**voting place** — The building or facility where voters can vote.

**voting screen** — A screen in a voting place behind which voters go to mark their ballot in private.

**voting station** — Voters in a voting area are assigned to vote at a voting station within a voting place.

## W

**worldview** — How an individual sees the world and interprets events on a daily basis.

**writ of election** — A formal order signed by the Chief Electoral Officer and the Lieutenant Governor that directs a District Electoral Officer to conduct an election. An election is called when the writ of election has been issued. In a general election, a writ is issued for every electoral district in the province.