

## A

**absentee ballot** — Any qualified voter who is unable to vote on election day or during advance voting can apply for an absentee ballot. An absentee ballot differs from a regular ballot because it does not include candidate names. The absentee voter is required to indicate their preference by writing the name or political affiliation of the candidate in the space provided.

**acclamation** — A candidate is elected by acclamation if they have no opponents. No vote is held.

**advance voting** — An opportunity to vote before election day. Advance voting is held for five days at various locations the week before election day.

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

**authoritarian** — Authoritarian governments exercise forceful control over the population, with no particular concern for their preferences or for public opinion. The term authoritarianism is sometimes used to describe a dictatorship.

**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, when a monarch has full political power over a state and its people.

## B

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

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

**bill** — Proposed legislation or law introduced to a parliament or legislature. It becomes an act when passed by the parliament or legislative assembly and given royal assent.

**by-election** — An election held in a particular constituency to fill a vacancy in the House of Commons or legislature at any time other than during a general election. Several by-elections may be held on the same day.

## C

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

**candidate** — A person 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).

**candidate representatives** — Individuals representing a candidate at the voting place to observe the voting process and the counting of the ballots. Only two candidate representatives per candidate

are permitted to remain in the voting place at any one time. Also known as scrutineers.

**caucus** — A group composed of elected representatives or Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) who belong to a given party.

**centre (spectrum)** — A political party or individual holding moderate views or middle-of-the-road opinions.

**Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)** — An independent officer of the legislature appointed by the lieutenant governor on the recommendation of the legislative assembly. The CEO is responsible for the neutral administration of provincial electoral legislation and provincial elections and by-elections.

**coalition government** — When two or more political parties join together to form a government, neither of which would be able to form a majority government on their own.

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

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

**constituency** — A geographical area represented by an elected official. There are 61 constituencies being contested in the current Saskatchewan provincial election. Also known as a riding, electoral district or electoral division.

**constituency association** — An organization formed in support of a political party or candidate in a constituency. Also known as a riding association.

**constituent** — An individual who lives in a constituency (geographically and politically defined area with an elected representative).

**constitutional monarchy** — A government headed by royalty. Canada is a constitutional monarchy as the Queen is the official head of state. The Queen is represented by the governor general at the federal level and lieutenant governors at the provincial level.

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

## D

**declined ballot** — A ballot handed back to the deputy returning officer by an elector who declines to vote due to dissatisfaction with the options.

**democracy** — A type of government where power is held by all the people and citizens are meant to participate equally in making decisions.

**deputy returning officer (DRO)** — The election official who supervises a voting place. The deputy returning officer's tasks include making decisions about a person's eligibility, counting the ballots and certifying the results.

**dictatorship** — A type of government where one person has total control. Power is maintained through the use of a party or military, without the consent of the people. Citizens have limited rights and freedoms.

## E

**earned media** — Publicity or awareness gained through efforts other than advertising, such as news coverage or external blogs/websites.

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

**election** — The process where citizens vote for a person to act as their representative at the federal, provincial/territorial or municipal level. Elections are usually held at regular intervals.

**election official** — An individual who staffs a voting place.

**Elections Saskatchewan** — The province's election management body and is responsible for organizing, managing and overseeing provincial elections. In order to ensure a fair election process, Elections Saskatchewan remains impartial and independent. They are not responsible for federal or municipal elections.

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

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

**electoral system** — The process by which votes are translated into seats in a parliament or legislature. In Canada, we use 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.

**enumeration** — An enumeration is a house-to-house survey to prepare a voters list for an election. The current provincial election will be last to use enumeration and a permanent register will be in place for future elections.

**executive branch** — The branch of government that implements and enforces laws, rules and regulations.

## F

**federal** — Referring to one of the three levels of government in Canada; pertaining to the whole country.

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

**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 in which candidates are elected in the constituencies of the nation or province/territory.

**government** — Refers to the governing body of a country, nation, province/territory, city or town, which makes and administers laws.

**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** — The federal body that creates, implements and enforces laws, rules and regulations for the entire country. Located in Ottawa, the House of Commons consists of 338 Members of Parliament.

## I

**impartial** — Unbiased; not favoring one side or opinion more than another.

**incumbent** — The existing holder of a political office. A constituency or riding without an incumbent candidate is known as an open seat.

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

**issue** — An important topic of debate and discussion.

## J

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

## L

**left (spectrum)** — On the political spectrum, one who favours policies that promote social equality, socialist or progressive views.

**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 branch** — The branch of government that has the power to create, change and repeal proposed and existing bills.

**legislature** — The building in which 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.

**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 legislative assembly.

## M

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

**mayor** — The highest-ranking officer in the municipal government of a town or large urban city. The term reeve is used in smaller municipalities.

**Member of Parliament (MP)** — An individual elected by the people in a particular federal riding or constituency to represent them in the House of Commons.

**Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA)** — An individual elected by the people in a particular constituency to represent them in the provincial legislature.

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

**ministry** — A specialized department of the government with a specific area of responsibility (e.g., health-care, education, environment).

**minority government** — A government that does not hold a majority of seats in the parliament or legislature, but governs because it usually holds more seats than any other party. It must maintain the confidence of the parliament or legislature to continue governing.

**municipal** — Referring to one of the three levels of government in Canada. Municipalities are the most local level of government, existing as a result of provincial or territorial legislation.

## N

**new media** — Refers to media content that is easily accessible, such as online sources and social media platforms. New media is typically interactive, user driven, borderless, functions in real-time and does not always adhere to journalistic standards and ethics.

**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, delivered at a specific time, has limited

jurisdictional reach and strives to maintain journalistic integrity and standards.

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

**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 a website, blog, Twitter feed, Facebook page and YouTube channel.

## P

**paid media** — Publicity or awareness gained through paid advertising.

**parliament** — The term used for Canada's federal legislature. It is also the period from the opening of the first session immediately following a general election to the end of a government's term and the calling of another election at the federal and provincial/territorial levels. Each parliament consists of one or more sessions.

**parliamentary democracy** — A type of representative democracy in which members are elected to parliament. 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.

**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.

**party platform** — A series of declared principles and policies on jurisdictional issues concerning government and the public. Parties announce their platforms and share their ideas in order to attract support from the electorate and, ultimately, secure votes.

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

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

**political party** — A political party is a group of like-minded individuals with a shared vision and similar political ideals whose intention is to achieve power through an election, form government 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 policies.

**poll clerk** — The official who assists the deputy returning officer at a voting place by checking to see if a person's name is on the voters list and dealing with the paperwork.

**polling division** — Each constituency is divided into defined geographic areas called polling divisions. Eligible voters residing within each polling division vote at the voting place designated for their area.

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

**premier** — The leader of a provincial or territorial government. After a provincial or territorial 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 three levels of government in Canada; pertaining to the province.

## R

**reeve** — See *mayor*.

**rejected ballot** — A ballot that has been placed in the ballot box, but declared unacceptable for counting by the deputy returning officer. A ballot that has not been marked properly.

**representative democracy** — Representatives are selected by the people through elections to make decisions on their behalf.

**responsibility** — A responsibility is a social force that binds you to your obligations and courses of action demanded by that force.

**returning officer (RO)** — The election official responsible by law for the administration of the electoral process within a single constituency. Returning officers are appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer.

**riding** — See *constituency*.

**right** — A right is a protected freedom. It legally entitles you to take certain actions.

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

## S

**scrutineer** — See *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.

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

**self-government** — Comprehensive land claims agreements (modern treaties) between Canadian governments and Aboriginal nations often result in Aboriginal peoples having the autonomy to choose their own method(s) of representation and decision-making. The term that describes an Aboriginal community possessing greater control over its own affairs is self-government.

**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 constituency. 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.

**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.

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

## T

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

## U

**universal suffrage** — The extension of the right to vote to all adult citizens, including the removal of restrictions against women, various ethnic and religious groups and property ownership requirements.

## V

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

**voter turnout** — The total number of people accepting ballots in an election or participating in the electoral process. Usually expressed as a percentage of the total number of qualified voters.

**voters list** — The list of names and addresses of all eligible electors, which is used at the voting place.

**voting place** — A location to which electors are assigned for the purposes of voting.

**voting screen** — The area at the voting place where electors go to mark their ballot in private.

**vouching** — If you do not have sufficient identification, you can sign a declaration, and a registered voter from your constituency, such as a neighbour or roommate, may vouch for you. Each person can only vouch for one person.

## W

**writ of election** — The document signed by the Chief Electoral Officer that instructs the returning officer in each constituency to conduct an election on a specific date. After the election, the returning officer signs the writ containing the voting result and returns it to the Chief Electoral Officer.