



## Youth Voter Turnout Expected to Drop But Much Can Be Done to Improve Participation

**Toronto – October 1, 2008** – A Dominion Institute survey conducted by Innovative Research Group found that the number of young voters (aged 18-25) who said they were definitely going to vote in this election is down 7% from the last election. The drop is noted despite that three quarters of young Canadians report being concerned about the low young voter turnout and only 10% feel that their vote does not matter.

“Less than 44% of voters under 24 actually cast a ballot in the last federal election and that number will probably go down, rather than up, on October 14. This is extremely troubling,” said Marc Chalifoux, Executive Director of the Dominion Institute. “However, this trend is not irreversible, provided that we take action.”

The key reason among those who are not likely to vote is that they feel they do not know enough (30%). The decline in voting does not appear to be driven by apathy or alienation, as relatively few young Canadians reported that will not be voting because they are uninterested or do not care (11%).

The survey also suggests a series of measures that can be taken to increase youth voter turnout.

1. Most importantly, parents and families should be talking to kids at home about politics. Young Canadians that discuss politics frequently at home are almost three times as likely to vote as those that never discuss politics at home.
2. When talking about politics, it is important to emphasize that voting is a duty, not a choice. Young Canadians who feel that voting is their duty are twice as likely to vote than those that feel like voting is a choice.
3. High schools should offer a mandatory course in civics. Young Canadians who took a course in high school that explained how the Canadian political system works are ten percent more likely to vote than those that didn't.
4. Political parties need to reach out to young voters, notably by using new media. Fewer than one in ten young Canadians reported having been contacted by a political party using new media. Yet, young voters who have been engaged online by a political party are twenty percent more likely to vote than those that have not

***See attached deck for more information.***

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