

New and smaller parties seek third Canadian election Leaders' Debate

Chief Electoral Officer and Commissioner of Canada Elections asked to order third Leaders' debate for 15 plus new and smaller parties.

MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO, CANADA, September 6, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The None of the Above Direct Democracy Party leader Greg Vezina sent a letter today to the Chief Electoral Officer and Commissioner of Canada Elections asking them to ensure that the Federal Debate Commission facilitate fund a debate for party leaders not allowed in main leaders debates October 7 and 10, 2019.

The NOTA Party leader requested that the Debate Commission obey the Supreme Court of Canada ordered Charter of Rights S. 2 and S. 3 rights of all accredited party leaders and candidates to the use of public property for partisan purposes, and that the rights of voters to cast an informed vote also be protected.

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Democracy Eh? In Canada new and smaller party leaders are kept out of debates and local candidates are threatened with arrest for daring to ask to be heard at public candidate debates.”

Greg Vezina, leader, None of the Above Direct Democracy Party

The request asks that the debate take place at the same venue as the main debates, the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau, Quebec on one of the available dates of October 8, 9 or 11. The Museum has not yet replied to numerous requests to confirm rental of the facilities on any specific date.

This All Party Leaders Debate will be co-produced by Gordon Henderson of 90th Parallel Productions and Keith Holding of Media Tribe Interactive, producers of the 1993 and 2000 All Party Leaders Debate broadcast by CPAC and CBC News Channel, and will be available on the [Democracy Channel® website](https://www.democracychannel.net) along with the archived 2000 debate at [DemocracyChannel.net](https://www.democracychannel.net)



The Chief Electoral Officer of Canada (CEO) Stéphane Perrault testified before the Parliamentary Committee reviewing the proposed Leaders Debate Commission, warning that the exclusion of smaller parties might run afoul of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, saying “Debates are an important element of the campaign and often contribute to defining the ballot-box issues”

Some small parties have in the past gone to court to challenge their exclusion from the debates. But those cases failed because the debates were considered "essentially private events" that were not subject to scrutiny under the charter, Perrault said. "This would likely no longer be the case if the state, or an entity created by the state, were to play a role in organizing the debates."

The Creation of an Independent Commissioner Responsible for Leaders' Debates majority Report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs warning that government involvement in leaders' debates without accommodating smaller party Charter rights would be unconstitutional was also ignored by the government.

"Leaders' debates already have a history of being litigated in Canadian courts. The Liberal majority's proposal is a prescription for paralysis because it will ensure that this pattern of court challenges will continue, increase and, now, succeed.



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None of the Above Direct Democracy Party

Figuroa v. Canada (Attorney General), means that leaders' debates will not only become subject to judicial oversight, by virtue of the Liberal majority's recommendations, but they will be challenged from an ever-growing number of angles."

It is of note than rather than pass a bill to establish the Debate Commission the government tried to escape Charter scrutiny by establishing it by order of the Minister of Democratic Institutions pursuant to her mandate letter from the Prime Minister which directed her to "bring forward options to create an independent commissioner to organize political party leaders' debates during future federal election campaigns, with a mandate to improve Canadians' knowledge of the parties, their leaders, and their policy positions."

In addition to Leaders Debates Vezina questioned the 2015 reversal of the position by the previous Chief Electoral Officer regarding candidate debates, that changed from all candidates must be accommodated to allowing debates with only two or more candidates and the exclusion of all others.

The smaller parties contend the that holding public debates without accommodating all registered parties, leaders and candidates should also be considered an illegal corporate, union or third party contribution of a good and service, and that winning candidates participating in such may lose their seats as a result of a prosecution for this corrupt practice and irregularity.

The Chief Electoral Officer and the Commissioner of Canada Elections were asked to:

To intervene to make sure voters get to see and hear the 15 plus new and smaller parties and independent candidates during October 21, 2019 election, especially where the use of public

property is involved.

To advise the Debate Commission that unless they assist with the production and dissemination of a third "All Party Leaders' Debate" to be held at the same public property venue as the two main debates, the main debates will become an illegal contribution of a good and service that promotes or opposes some but not all candidates, and that participants who win election may face a prosecution and loss of their seats.

To advise the public, all political parties and candidates, the media, and candidate debate organizers that all registered and accredited candidates must be accommodated, even if requires two or more debates, otherwise it will become an illegal contribution of a good and service that promotes or opposes some but not all candidates, and that participants who win election may face a prosecution and loss of their seats.

To advise all media organizations and polling organizations that all election polls must include specific mention of all accredited political parties and nominated candidates, otherwise it will become an illegal contribution of a good and service that promotes or opposes some but not all candidates, and they will face a potential prosecution.

The CEO and CCE were advised if the request was not met by Wednesday, September 9, 2019, the NOTA party and several others would seek a legal remedy to these issues on an urgent basis in accordance with the applicable Rules in a court of competent jurisdiction.

A copy of the letter to the CEO and CCE can be found here:

<https://nota.ca/letter-to-chief-electoral-officer-and-commissioner-of-canada-elections/>

None of the Above Direct Democracy Party web site: <https://nota.ca>

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