



Our file: 2024-106523

October 3, 2024

Senator Claude Carignan  
Chair, Standing Senate Committee on National Finance  
The Senate of Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Canada, K1A 0A4

Dear Senator Carignan:

I am pleased to provide you with the information requested during my appearance on September 17, 2024, regarding Elections Canada's (EC) 2024-2025 Main Estimates 2024–2025.

### **Voting by incarcerated electors**

During our discussion, Senator Pate referred to the decline of the participation rate of incarcerated electors since 2015. According to a review of EC's data on the participation rate of incarcerated electors since 2004, the turnout rate of 50.5% in 2015 remains an exception compared to the turnout rates of 2019 (39.7%) and 2021 (41.2%), which are more in line with the trend observed since 2004.

Senator Pate also referred to allegations of methods used to prevent prisoners from voting, including lockdowns and continued pandemic measures. As I mentioned during my appearance, EC works with Correctional Services staff to administer the vote in institutions. Between elections, EC relies on its ongoing network of 18 Coordinating Officers (COs), appointed by federal, provincial and territorial departments responsible for correctional facilities. During an election event, COs are responsible for communicating with liaison officers (LOs) at institutions under their jurisdiction and acting as an intermediary between EC and COs. Returning officers also remain in contact with the LOs in their electoral districts throughout the election.

EC is not aware of any of the alleged measures referred to by Senator Pate. However, during the 2021 election, EC issued instructions under Part 11, Division 5 of the *Canada Elections Act* to allow additional voting days at the Edmonton, Alberta Detention Centre and the Établissement de détention de Sorel-Tracy Québec, due to security and COVID-19 constraints in these facilities on the day of the vote. More details for these instructions are available on our [website](#).

## **Costs related to the implementation of federal electoral boundaries redistribution**

Senator Ross inquired about the cost of implementing changes resulting from the recent electoral boundaries redistribution exercise. As I told the committee when I appeared, the overall cost of the commission's work was \$14.8 million, but implementation costs are being disbursed through various activities carried out by EC.

To implement the new redistribution, EC incurred additional costs of approximately \$3.9 million. The largest expenditure, \$3.6 million, was to update approximately 50 IT applications to reflect the new electoral districts. EC also invested \$160,000 in production and printing costs for detailed maps for each district. The five new electoral districts require the recruitment and appointment of five additional returning officers, at an estimated cost of \$175,000.

Some activities related to the redistribution are included in the organization's ongoing preparation activities (e.g. training of election administrators, validating polling sites and planning office staff and election workers) and therefore do not represent an incremental cost to implement the new limits.

## **Long ballots in recent by-elections**

Senators Forest and Gignac raised the issue of long ballots in recent by-elections, and asked what means Elections Canada had to address this situation. I would like to inform the Committee that I recently wrote to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs urging the government to consider a legislative amendment under Bill C-65 to ensure that voters who support the nomination of a candidate are limited to signing in support of only one candidate. I also intend to put forward this recommendation if I am invited to appear before the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs during its study of the bill.

Sincerely,



Stéphane Perrault  
Chief Electoral Officer

c.c. Andrea Mugny, Clerk