



Elections Ontario

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For Immediate Release

Chief Electoral Officer Recommends Using Technology In Voting Locations For The 2018 General Election

TORONTO - Ontario's Chief Electoral Officer, Greg Essensa, recommends implementing a technology-enabled staffing model in the 2018 General Election. This model was successfully piloted in the Whitby-Oshawa by-election on February 11, 2016.

The pilot program introduced technology in voting locations on Election Day. Reactions to the technology were very positive; survey results demonstrated that 91 percent of electors and 89 percent of poll officials supported the roll-out of a similar model for the 2018 General Election.

Elections Ontario delivered improved customer service for electors while also addressing the staffing challenge the agency is facing. In the 2014 General Election, 76,000 poll officials were hired. Elections Ontario expects that if changes are not made, then 100,000 poll officials will be needed for 2018, in order to accommodate 15 new electoral districts and a growing population. However, the new model reduces staffing needs by 41 percent while simultaneously improving customer service.

"The current staffing model is unsustainable in the long term," said Essensa. "The number one concern I hear from Returning Officers across the province is that they are unable to find the staff required for polling day. In Whitby-Oshawa, we delivered a new model that allowed us to significantly reduce the number of staff required while improving services for electors and protecting the integrity of the process."

The reduction in staff had no negative impacts on the process for electors or poll officials. Ninety-six percent of electors and 87 percent of poll officials surveyed found the technology was simple and easy to use. The pilot introduced two pieces of technology: electronic poll books (e-Poll Books) and vote tabulators.

E-Poll Books make it easier and faster for an elector to get a ballot. The technology also replaces paper-based process where poll officials have to

manually search through hundreds of names. Electors are then able to be served by any available polling official in their voting location.

"This improved process meant that electors waited, on average, less than a minute to get their ballot if they arrived with their notice of registration card and identification," Essensa remarked. "Vote tabulators also made results reporting much faster than in the past. The pilot showed we could potentially get 90 per cent of the results reported in about 30 minutes if we used tabulators in all election day voting locations and advance polls."

The Chief Electoral Officer's report states: "A proposal for a technology-enabled staffing model for Ontario provincial elections" was tabled today in the Legislature and can be read on the [Elections Ontario's website](#).

For more information, visit elections.on.ca or call 1-888-668-8683 (TTY: 1-888-292-2312).

Elections Ontario is the non-partisan agency responsible for administering provincial elections, by-elections and referenda.

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