In societies that pride themselves on diversity and multiculturalism, such as Canada, group representation should be fundamental to these values. Over the last few decades, young Canadians have become increasingly educated and involved in social processes, discourses, advocacy, and structures, especially amidst the 21st century (Ramey et al., 2019). Indeed, youth are both interested in taking political affirmative action and are cardinal to providing progressive social change in societies that would otherwise conserve obsolete ideals. Nonetheless, there is an apparent dearth of youth representation in the Canadian House of Commons. Considering the current parliament, members of parliament aged 40 and under during the day of the formation of the 2019 parliament made up less than 20 percent of all members of parliament, whereas the share of the population aged 40 and under was nearly 50 percent. This lack of youth representation follows an international trend (Sundstrom & Stockemer, 2018; Krook & Nugent, 2018). For example, Stockemer and Sundstrom (2018) display that only 2.2% of parliamentarians across the globe are under the age of 30 and 15.5% are under the age of 40. Although the lack of youth representation in politics is evident when analyzing statistics, there are few studies that investigate the reasons behind youth’s lack of representation. In this study, we shed some light into youth’s underrepresentation in parliament.

Our study aims to tap into the perspectives, experiences, and values of Canadian politicians about youth representation in the House of Commons. We have two research questions: (1) We aim to evaluate if politicians perceive the current age representation in parliament and cabinet to be problematic, and (2) if they find the current age distribution to be problematic what remedies do they suggest or support. To answer our two research questions, we will use an original survey and send it to all candidates to the 2021 general elections.

The students involved in this research project will engage in the following tasks:

1. Administering a survey
2. Building an original dataset on youths representation
3. Reviewing and succinctly summarising existing literature on youth representation
4. Contributing in the write up of an article and possible co-authorship
• Learning about an emerging topic in political science
• Synthesizing the literature
• Learning about data collection and building a novel dataset
• Learning about accessing government records
• Conducting some simple statistical tests
• Learning how to work independently
• Make sound judgement about the quality of prior research