

- Definitions:
 - Astroturfing:
 - Astroturfing is when groups or individuals fake public support to influence opinions or decisions, pretending to represent real people. Examples include:
 - Creating fake organizations that claim to speak for citizens.
 - Using bots or fake social media accounts to make ideas seem popular.
 - Paying influencers to spread false or misleading messages.
 - Using AI to create fake videos, photos, or content.
 - Foreign Interference:
 - Foreign interference happens when foreign governments or groups try to weaken democracy in other countries for their own benefit. Their goals often include:
 - Creating distrust in democracy and its institutions.
 - Spreading chaos and dividing the public.
 - Manipulating public opinion and elections.
 - Influencing foreign policies and decisions.
 - Harassing dissidents living abroad.
 - They use tactics like:
 - Spreading false information on social media.
 - Secretly funding political parties or candidates.
 - Cyberattacks on election systems.
 - Pressuring or intimidating diaspora communities.
 - Influencing key decision-makers.
 - These actions distort public opinion, harm trust in democracy, and affect elections and policies.
- What is the policy being proposed?
 - On November 1, 2024, the Chief Electoral Officer recommended changes to protect Canada's elections from foreign interference. Foreign actors try to influence election results or weaken trust in democracy.
 - To stop this, the CEO suggests strengthening the Canada Elections Act to:
 - Apply existing rules against foreign influence all the time, not just during elections.
 - Cover efforts to influence votes for or against candidates in leadership or nomination races.
- How does this relate to Democracy in Canada?
 - Deceptive campaigns by foreign governments harm democracy by bypassing legitimate processes and serving narrow interests at the expense of the public good. Legislative action is essential to protect the integrity of our democratic discourse.

- Currently, foreign actors can influence Canadians up until the day an election is called, which gives them a huge window of opportunity to influence public opinion.
- Why is this important?
 - Astroturfing is harmful because it exploits trust. When actors lack credibility or popular support, they manipulate trusted channels to amplify their perspective. This bypasses the democratic process and subverts the public interest in favor of narrow agendas.
- How does this policy impact me?
 - Canadians continue to encounter propaganda online, and the responsibility for safeguarding our elections remains the tech platforms' responsibility through their own moderation, trust and safety policies. Protecting and securing democracy is a core responsibility of public institutions and should never be privatized or outsourced to unaccountable third parties.
- Who would it impact directly? How?
 - This action would give the Commissioner of Elections Canada the power to investigate complaints about foreign interference. They could also investigate Canadians who work with foreign groups to influence voters in federal elections.
 - It would also make it illegal for foreign money to fund these campaigns at any time, not just during elections. Right now, the law allows Canadian groups to get foreign money before an election and use it during the election, which this change would stop.