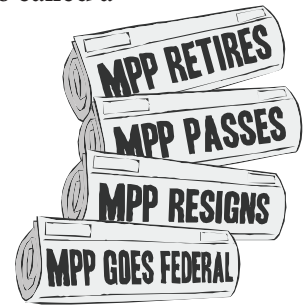


What's a By-Election?

Usually, elections in Ontario are held on a set date every 4 years. But sometimes a seat in the legislature becomes open and must be filled before the next general election. The process of electing a new Member of Provincial Parliament between general elections is called a by-election.

Seats become vacant for a number of reasons. An MPP could choose to retire. There have also been instances where MPPs have died, or been forced to step down due to a scandal. Some members chose to run federally or municipally.



When a seat becomes vacant, the Premier of Ontario has 6 months in which to call a by-election. The Premier decides how long the campaign period will be and on what date the by-election will be held. The campaign could last anywhere from 28 to 56 days.



Once the by-election is called and sometimes before, each party picks a candidate to run in that riding. The candidates campaign the same way they would in a general election. For example, they knock on doors, put up signs, and participate in all-candidates debates.

On the day of the by-election, voters arrive at their polling stations and vote for the candidate of their choice.



The winner of the by-election takes his or her place among the other members of their party in the Ontario legislature and serves as an MPP until the next general election is called.