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# VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

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## DAMAGING DEMOCRACY

I have many concerns about the changes proposed by the Conservative government's Bill C-23, but am disgusted by the removal of initiatives having positive impacts on voter turnout.

Ending the vouching system will remove an important helping hand to thousands of people who are uncomfortable, for whatever reasons — disability, low literacy, poverty, to name a few — with walking into a polling station and casting a ballot.

Voter ID is not a slam-dunk for everyone. As a volunteer with the Dartmouth Literary Network, I know many learners find the idea of paying \$25 to get provincial photo ID outside the realm of possibility.

Ending the Elections Canada Student Vote Program will cause another impediment. This program has been an integral part of Dartmouth Learning Network's teaching curriculum to help learners understand democracy and their role/engagement as citizens of this country.

During the provincial elections, several learners voted for the first time after DLN used the Student Vote Program and invited all parties in to speak with the learners. By eliminating such education and outreach initiatives, Bill C-23 will have the effect of further disenfranchising Canada's most vulnerable citizens. And for that, I say shame on you, Mr. Harper.

**Wendy Lill, Dartmouth**

the basis for the authority and legitimacy of government."

Any government elected by means of deliberate suppression of the electorate can expect to have its legitimacy questioned.

**Gillian Thomas, Ellershouse**