

## NEWS

# Trudeau to call remaining byelections in January, to take place in February: feds

By EMILY HAWS NOV. 21, [✎ EDIT STORY (HTTPS://WWW.HILLTIMES.COM/WP-ADMIN/POST.PHP?POST=177203&ACTION=EDIT)] 2018

That includes Burnaby South, B.C, where NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh is running.



After banding together with other opposition leaders to push the prime minister to hold a byelection in Burnaby South, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, who's running for his party in the riding, will get his wish in February, according to a government source. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

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Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is set to call three byelections—including a highly anticipated contest in Burnaby South, B.C.—in early January for the following month, *The Hill Times* has learned.

“We will be calling all three byelections, all three remaining ones, in January—early, early new year—for them to all take place in February,” said a senior government source today who asked not to be named because the announcement hasn’t been made officially.

The three ridings are: Burnaby South, B.C., which was vacated by former NDP MP Kennedy Stewart when he left to run and eventually win Vancouver’s mayoral race, which took place in October; Outremont, Que., which former NDP leader Tom Mulcair left; and York-Simcoe, Ont., which was vacated by retiring Conservative MP Peter Van Loan on Sept. 30.

NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh is running in Burnaby with hopes of winning a seat in the House of Commons ahead of the 2019 general election.

When Mr. Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) called a byelection for only one of four open House seats on Oct. 28, Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Ont., opposition party leaders wrote to him asking him to call the other three too.

“Your decision to delay the other three byelections denies hundreds of thousands of Canadians their simple democratic right to be represented in Parliament and have their voices heard,” said the letter signed by the leaders of the NDP, Conservatives, Bloc Québécois, and Green Party.

Some commentators have suggested the Liberals have delayed the Burnaby contest to help themselves. It’s in the Liberals’ best interest to put off the Burnaby South byelection as long as possible, they suggested, as a weak NDP is good news for the Liberals, who may draw upon the

same well of voters. Having Mr. Singh in the House of Commons would likely boost the NDP's morale and mean it has clips of Mr. Singh showing leadership in Question Period, for example. By putting off the election, he stays occupied locally in B.C., instead of nationally.

Mr. Singh was elected the NDP leader in October 2017 and has spent the last year touring the country, trying to build up name recognition.

The government source didn't have exact dates, and didn't indicate whether the contests would be in early or late February. January would signal a fresh start to the new year, they said, and it doesn't make sense to have campaigns knocking on doors during the holiday season. They suggested a February byelection could help to increase voter turnout, which tends to be low during byelections.

"We don't want a low turnout and people to be knocking on doors bothering people during the holidays," the source said.

That timing would also help the new People's Party of Canada, led by former Conservative cabinet minister and MP Maxime Bernier (Beauce, Que.). A Nov. 20 party press release said Elections Canada had accepted its application and recognized the party as "eligible for registration" a few days earlier. But for the party to finally be registered, it must run a candidate in one of the upcoming byelections.

"This must take place 60 days after our application was made, which means after December 10," said the release. "We are of course planning to run candidates in the three byelections that must be called in the coming months."

After some speculation (<https://www.macleans.ca/opinion/is-trudeau-really-showing-courtesy-to-singh/>) in the summer about parties not running a candidate against Mr. Singh as a courtesy to him as a party leader trying to gain a seat, the government source said the Liberals plan to run candidates in all ridings. The grassroots level of the party feels it should be running candidates in all of the ridings up for grabs, including in Burnaby South, said the source.

As of Nov. 16, the Liberals have 39.4 per cent of the vote nationally, while the Conservatives have 28.75 and the NDP are at 17.24 per cent, according to polling by Nanos Research. The Greens are at 7.25, and the People's Party has 1.1 per cent. The results reflect the latest four weeks of a rolling weekly telephone poll, representing a total of 1,000 respondents, and are considered accurate within 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The CBC Poll Tracker (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/poll-tracker-federal-poll-averages-and-seat-projections-1.4171977>), which is an aggregate of public opinion polls, has the Liberals at 37.8 per cent support, while the Conservatives are at 32.2 per cent and the NDP is at 15.8 per cent. The Greens are at 7.5 per cent, while the People's Party is at 1.5 per cent.

Corporate lawyer Jay Shin is the Conservative candidate for Burnaby South, while Green Party Leader Elizabeth May (Saanich-Gulf Islands, B.C.) said in August she wouldn't run a candidate in the byelection as a "leader's courtesy" to Mr. Singh. The courtesy is a tradition in the House of Commons to help a newly elected leader's entry.

In Outremont, the NDP has nominated Julia Sanchez, the former head of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation in Ottawa, while the Liberals have yet to hold a nomination meeting though there are several interested candidates, and the Conservatives are putting forward Jasmine Louras.

Businessman Scot Davidson is the Conservative candidate for York-Simcoe. Jessa McLean is the only candidate approved to run for the NDP, though a nomination meeting date has yet to be set. The Liberals don't appear to have nominated a candidate yet.

The prime minister has six months from the time a seat is vacated to call a byelection, according to election rules. The byelection for Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Island and Rideau Lakes, Ont., which was held by the late Conservative MP Gord Brown, will take place on Dec. 3. Mr. Brown died of a heart attack in May.

[ehaws@hilltimes.com](mailto:ehaws@hilltimes.com) (mailto:ehaws@hilltimes.com)

*The Hill Times*

*Correction: This story has been changed to reflect that Rachel Bendayan is not the nominated Liberal candidate for Outremont, Que. She is running for nomination, but a nomination meeting has not yet taken place.*

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