



Justin Trudeau's Resignation: A Turning Point for Canada

Center Forward Basics

January 2025

Overview

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's decision to step down as leader of the Liberal Party marks a significant turning point in the country's political landscape. After nearly a decade in power, Trudeau's tenure has been characterized by remarkable achievements and notable controversies. His leadership has weathered scandals, political challenges, and shifting public sentiment, but rising costs of living, inflation, and interest rates ultimately eroded his support. Trudeau's resignation comes amidst increasing pressure from his party, a fracturing coalition with the New Democratic Party (NDP), and escalating opposition momentum. As Canada prepares for a new chapter, the implications of Trudeau's departure for the Liberal Party, Parliament, and the nation's political trajectory loom.

Why Did Justin Trudeau Resign?

Like many incumbents globally, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau faced a mounting popularity crisis over the rising cost of living. Interest rates and inflation played a significant role in public anger. Trudeau acknowledged these struggles in his resignation speech and said Canadian voters deserved "a real choice," recognizing his party would likely not be as competitive in upcoming elections with him as the Liberal Party leader.

Trudeau held the title of prime minister since November 2015 and the position of leader of the Canadian Liberal Party for almost 12 years. He survived numerous personal and political scandals, including breaking conflict of interest rules in 2017 and the emergence of a photo in 2019 of a younger Trudeau in blackface. Despite these, Trudeau and the Liberal Party retained power in 2019 and 2021 before the pressure became too much at the end of last year.

In September 2024, the progressive New Democratic Party (NDP) dissolved a governing deal. As public support for the Liberals decreased, the NDP attempted to distance itself from its coalition partner before ultimately ending the supply and confidence agreement. Together, the Liberals and NDP held 178 seats. Without their partners, the Liberals held only 153 seats, 17 short of the 170 majority needed in the House of Commons. Now in a minority, Trudeau's Liberal Party could not pass key pieces of legislation without ad hoc coalitions.

The decisive blow to Trudeau's hold on the government came via the recent resignation of the Prime Minister's longtime Finance Minister and deputy, Chrystia Freeland. Freeland stepped down in December 2024, citing leadership disagreements with Trudeau, including her belief the Prime Minister was not taking tariff threats from President-elect Trump seriously enough.

After Freeland resigned, calls from the Liberal Party for Trudeau to step down as their leader increased in frequency and volume, along with calls for a no-confidence vote. The Conservative Party has tried for months to trigger federal elections via a

Center Forward Basics

Center Forward brings together members of Congress, not-for-profits, academic experts, trade associations, corporations and unions to find common ground. Our mission: to give centrist allies the information they need to craft common sense solutions, and provide those allies the support they need to turn those ideas into results.

In order to meet our challenges we need to put aside the partisan bickering that has gridlocked Washington and come together to find common sense solutions.

For more information, please visit www.center-forward.org

vote of no confidence in the current government but could not reach the 170 votes needed to pass. With the Liberals' loss of support from the NDP, these votes now seem within reach.

What's Next?

Trudeau will officially step down once the Liberal Party chooses a replacement. The party plans to convene the week of January 6th to select a new leader. Initial contenders for party leader include current and former members of Trudeau's cabinet.

The governor general, the representative of King Charles III in Canada, granted Trudeau's request to shut down the Parliament until March 24. This suspension, or prorogation as it's known in Canada, ends the current parliamentary session and stops legislation and committee business in its tracks. Business will resume when the House of Commons reconvenes and sets a new legislative agenda. Trudeau avoids triggering a general election by choosing prorogation instead of dissolving Parliament.

A federal election must take place on or before October 20, 2025. The new Liberal leader will have to call said federal elections and face off against the Conservative Party led by Pierre Poilievre. Jagmeet Singh, the leader of the NDP, declared that the Liberal Party did not deserve another chance but called the Conservatives a "[serious threat to the middle class.](#)" Singh also stated the NDP will support a motion of no confidence once the new prime minister forms a government. A successful no-confidence vote would trigger a general election. Current polling indicates the Conservative Party would win a plurality of seats in the House of Commons, if not a majority, and Poilievre would likely become prime minister.

Justin Trudeau's resignation signals the end of an era for Canada's Liberal Party and the beginning of a turbulent political transition. The challenges his successor will face are formidable. The political stakes are higher than ever, with the NDP withdrawing support and opposition parties poised for a potential election. As Canada braces for what could be a pivotal election, the question of leadership and policy direction will shape the country's future. The coming months will set the stage for a new chapter in Canadian governance.

Links to Other Resources

- AP – [Canada's NDP leader says end of agreement with Liberals makes election timing uncertain](#)
- BBC – [Trudeau to step down, telling Canadians they deserve a 'real choice'](#)
- CBC – [Canadian Parliament is prorogued. Here's what that means](#)
- House of Commons – [Party Standings in the House of Commons](#)
- Politico – [Here's who could replace Justin Trudeau](#)
- Politico – [Justin Trudeau to resign — the latest global leader to fall](#)