

 **Election**

 **Districts**

 **Voting**

Getting Electoral Reform Right – How We Vote

Recommendations from Election Districts Voting on the 2018 Referendum in BC

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Introduction

Election Districts Voting (www.electiondistrictsvoting.com) focuses on improving the way politics works through nonpartisan education, advocacy and modern electoral reform.

Here are Election Districts Voting recommendations on the electoral reform referendum process.

Recommendation 1: The Question

Voters should not be forced to choose between our current electoral system (known as first past the post or as FPTP) and the fuzzy concept of proportional representation (PR). To be fair, voters should be informed about the pros and cons of different PR electoral systems, not just the pros and cons of FPTP.

Election Districts Voting recommends offering voters a choice between FPTP and alternative PR electoral systems. The top two choices should then proceed to a second mandatory referendum, which may or may not include FPTP.

Recommendation 2: A Level Playing Field

Election Districts Voting recommends the government recognize one official proponent group for each electoral system choice placed on the referendum ballot. Each group should receive an equal amount of public funding.

Recommendation 3: PR Options on the Ballot

In the government's questionnaire, the following PR options are listed:

- Party List Proportional Representation
- Single Transferable Vote (STV)
- Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)
- Mixed Member Majoritarian

The above models were invented in previous centuries to solve the democratic problems of past centuries, not the democratic problems of our modern world. We can do better with a made in BC solution that stands out above all other models.

Election Districts Voting recommends replacing the above options with the following modern options:

- First Past The Post Proportional Representation (FPTP PR) – Overlapping Districts
- Alternative Vote Proportional Representation (AV PR) – Overlapping Districts
- Single Transferable Vote Proportional Representation (STV PR) – Overlapping Districts

Annex 1: Three Made In BC Models For The Modern World

FPTP PR

FPTP PR is the natural alternative for the people of BC. The people are familiar with the simple FPTP voting method and the single-member district system of representation. What's more, the FPTP PR electoral system gives the people what referendums and polls have respectively said they want – FPTP and PR.

FPTP PR is also a good compromise for FPTP and PR advocates. Each advocacy group gets a part of what they want. FPTP advocates get to keep the very simple FPTP election method and PR advocates get very effective PR.

FPTP PR is a Single-Member District PR electoral system. Its single-member districts:

1. Give PR to parties, which can be close to perfect.
2. Strengthen the right to effective representation. Close to 100% of voters can directly elect preferred candidates.
3. Keep voting quick and simple. Voters just put a mark beside a candidate in separate single-member election districts on the voter ballot. Also, they vote in as many or as few districts on the ballot as they want.
4. Make representation clear. Only one elected candidate represents each district.

5. Make personal election results clear. Candidates are elected by the most votes. This means voters have no difficulty in knowing how their personal votes are used to elect candidates.
6. Are so simple to construct, the BC Electoral Boundaries Commission can use BC's current election districts to build the same number (or any other number) of new election districts for the next election in 2021. So, if desired, election district construction can be quick and easy.

FPTP PR is more representative of the people than PR options in the government's questionnaire. For example, consider the following. On Election Day:

1. Each FPTP PR voter puts a mark beside just one candidate in three separate overlapping single-member districts on the ballot. This three overlapping single-member districts FPTP PR electoral system gives about **88%** or more of the voters the voting power to directly elect preferred candidates.
2. Each FPTP PR voter puts a mark beside just one candidate in four separate overlapping single-member districts on the ballot. This four overlapping single-member districts FPTP PR electoral system ensures about **94%** or more voters directly elect preferred candidates.

Now, compare the above overlapping FPTP PR single-member district election results to the following election results from the STV questionnaire option that has no overlapping districts. On Election Day:

1. Each STV voter ranks candidates on a three-member district ballot in order of preference. This three-member districts STV electoral system ensures about **75%** or more of the votes directly elect preferred candidates.
2. Each STV voter ranks candidates on a five-member district ballot. This five-member districts STV electoral system ensures about **83%** or more of the votes directly elect preferred candidates.

Election result comparisons show FPTP PR single-member districts ensure larger proportions of voters directly elect preferred representatives and that fewer votes are wasted. This means FPTP PR single-member districts produce better PR and do a better job at representing the people than STV multiple-member districts. Besides this, the FPTP election method is the simplest of all election methods on record and the STV election method is amongst the most complex.

Additional information on the FPTP PR electoral system is available at <http://electiondistrictsvoting.com/> and at <http://electiondistrictsvoting.com/fptp-pr/>.

AV PR

AV PR is another Single-Member District PR electoral system. Its single-member districts:

1. Give PR to parties, which can be close to perfect.
2. Strengthen the right to effective representation. Close to 100% of voters can directly elect preferred candidates.
3. Keep voting reasonably quick and simple. Voters rank order as many or as few candidates as they want in separate single-member election districts on the voter ballot. Also, they vote in as many or as few districts on the ballot as they want.
4. Make representation clear. Only one elected candidate represents each district.
5. Make personal election results clear. Candidates are elected by an absolute majority of votes. This means voters have little or no difficulty in knowing how their votes are used to elect candidates.
6. Are so simple to construct, the BC Electoral Boundaries Commission can use BC's current election districts to build the same number (or any other number) of new election districts for the next election in 2021. So, if desired, election district construction can be quick and easy.

AV PR is more representative of the people than PR options in the government's questionnaire. For example, consider the following. On Election Day:

1. AV PR voters rank as many or as few candidates as they want in three separate overlapping single-member districts on the ballot. This three overlapping single-member districts AV PR electoral system gives about **90%** or more of the voters the voting power to directly elect preferred candidates.
2. AV PR voters rank as many or as few candidates as they want in four separate overlapping single-member districts on the ballot. This four overlapping single-member districts AV PR electoral system ensures about **96%** or more voters directly elect preferred candidates.

Now, compare the above overlapping AV PR single-member district election results to the following election results from the MMP questionnaire option. This questionnaire option has two votes, one for a FPTP single-member district representative and one for a Party List.

On Election Day:

1. Each MMP voter casts one vote for a single-member district candidate on the ballot. This FPTP electoral system component of MMP gives about **50%** or more of the voters the voting power to directly elect preferred candidates.

2. Each MMP voter also casts one vote for a Party List on the ballot. This Party List electoral system component of MMP gives **0%** of the voters the voting power to directly elect preferred candidates.

Election result comparisons show AV PR voters exert far more direct control over representatives they elect than MMP voters. The FPTP electoral system component of MMP only ensures about 50% or more voters directly elect preferred representatives. Also, the Party List electoral system component of MMP ensures 100% of the voters fail to directly elect candidates of choice. This means the Party List dilutes and reduces the total proportion of legislative assembly members that are directly elected as representatives of choice. To be more representative; the MMP electoral system should enable large majorities of voters to directly elect candidates of choice, not just parties of choice.

In summary, election result comparisons show AV PR single-member districts ensure much larger proportions of voters directly elect preferred representatives. This means AV PR single-member districts produce better PR and do a better job at representing the people than MMP single-member districts and party lists. Besides this, the AV PR electoral system is simpler than the MMP electoral system. That is, the MMP electoral system is a complex combination of electoral systems that can be difficult to easily and fully understand.

Additional information on the AV PR electoral system is available at <http://electiondistrictsvoting.com/av-pr/> and at <http://electiondistrictsvoting.com/>.

STV PR

STV PR is a Multiple-Member District PR electoral system. Its multiple-member districts:

1. Give PR to parties, which can be close to perfect.
2. Strengthen the right to effective representation. Close to 100% of voters can directly elect preferred candidates.
3. Keep voting reasonably quick and simple. Voters rank order as many or as few candidates as they want in separate single-member election districts on the voter ballot. Also, they vote in as many or as few districts on the ballot as they want.
4. Make representation reasonably clear. Only two or three elected candidates represent each district.
5. Make personal election results somewhat clear. Candidates are elected by a quota of votes with an election formula that makes the tracking of how personal votes are used to elect candidates difficult for voters. However, voters have considerably less difficulty tracking personal votes in small multiple-member districts (few representatives per district) than they do in large multiple-member districts (many representatives per district).

6. Are simple to construct. The BC Electoral Boundaries Commission can use BC's current election districts to build new election districts for the 2021 election. So, if desired, election district construction can be quick and easy.

STV PR is more representative of the people than PR options in the government's questionnaire. For example, consider the following. On Election Day:

1. Each STV PR voter ranks candidates in two separate overlapping two-member districts on the ballot. This two overlapping two-member districts STV PR electoral system ensures about **89%** or more of the votes directly elect preferred candidates.
2. Each STV PR voter ranks candidates in two separate overlapping three-member districts on the ballot. This two overlapping three-member districts STV PR electoral system ensures about **94%** or more of the votes directly elect preferred candidates.

Now, compare the above overlapping STV PR multiple-member district election results to the following election results from the STV questionnaire option that has no overlapping districts. On Election Day:

1. Each STV voter ranks candidates on a three-member district ballot in order of preference. This three-member districts STV electoral system ensures about **75%** or more of the votes directly elect preferred candidates.
2. Each STV voter ranks candidates on a five-member district ballot. This five-member districts STV electoral system ensures about **83%** or more of the votes directly elect preferred candidates.
3. Each STV voter ranks candidates on an eight-member district ballot. This eight-member districts STV electoral system ensures about **89%** or more of the votes directly elect preferred candidates.
4. Each STV voter ranks candidates on a fifteen-member district ballot. This fifteen-member districts STV electoral system ensures about **94%** or more of the votes directly elect preferred candidates.

Election result comparisons show STV PR representatives are directly elected to small multiple-member districts by larger proportions of the votes and that fewer votes are wasted. For example, about 94% or more of the votes directly elect STV PR candidates to three-member districts. By contrast, about 75% or more of the votes directly elect STV candidates to three-member districts. So, about 25% or less of the votes are wasted by STV three-member districts and about 6% or less of the votes are wasted by STV PR three-member districts. This latter figure is much better.

What's more, highly proportional STV PR electoral systems deliver better multiple-member district links to voters. For example, about 94% or more of the votes directly elect candidates

to STV PR three-member districts and to STV fifteen-member districts. As a result, STV PR three-member district voters obtain simpler, clearer and stronger multiple-member district links than STV fifteen-member district voters.

In summary, STV PR multiple-member districts produce better PR and do a better job at representing the people than STV multiple-member districts. Besides this, personal STV PR election results can be somewhat less difficult for voters to interpret than personal STV election results.

Additional information on the STV PR electoral system is available at <http://electiondistrictsvoting.com/reformed-stv/> and at <http://electiondistrictsvoting.com/>.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute recommendations on the electoral reform referendum process.