



February 28, 2018

ATTN: Attorney General David Eby
Ministry of Attorney General
citizenengagement@gov.bc.ca

Dear Attorney General David Eby,

Thank you for the opportunity to consult on British Columbia's 2018 referendum on electoral reform.

This is an historic opportunity to transform BC's electoral process and select a new way to vote. One that's fairer for everyone and puts power back into the hands of regular people, not just the wealthy and well-connected.

We believe the referendum process should be based on three core elements to make it as fair, simple and swift as possible. They are:

1. Big money should be banned.

- a. There should be strict, low spending limits for both the "pro" and "con" sides of the referendum. Both sides should be fully transparent about their donors, and the changes enacted in Bill 3 should be applied to this referendum -- corporations and unions should be banned from donating money or services - with limits to take effect from the moment of the Attorney General's report to the public and cabinet.
- b. If third party spending on advertising is permitted, it should be set at a low limit and counted toward the spending limits that apply to the "pro" and "con" sides. Any advertising done by political parties should also be included in these limits.
- c. The Government of British Columbia should encourage participation in the referendum by creating a website portal with information for voters.

2. The Ballot Question should be simple.

- a. To ensure as many people in BC can participate in the referendum regardless of the language they speak or read, there should be a single ballot question that is:
 - i. Easily translatable into multiple languages,
 - ii. Contains no abbreviations or slang,
 - iii. Does not mention specific systems of proportional representation.

3. Ballot return should not be confused with the conduct of municipal elections:

- a. Changing our electoral system is a huge decision and should leave no room for confusion. The referendum campaign and ballot return should be timed to avoid the municipal election window, which includes nominations, campaigns and vote.

Reforming our electoral system is among the most important processes our government will undertake this year. We commend you for taking the time to initiate this consultation process and hope our recommendations are useful and included in the final guidelines.

Thank you again,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Keating', with a stylized flourish extending from the bottom.

Craig Keating
President
BC New Democrats