



February 28, 2018

## Fair Voting BC's Submission on BC's Electoral Reform Referendum

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### Who We Are

Fair Voting BC (FVBC) is a registered BC non-profit society that is committed to the principle of the fundamental equality of all voters, as guaranteed by Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We seek to reform how elections are conducted at all levels of government within BC in order to ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, each voter has effective representation, as guaranteed by Section 3 of the Charter.

FVBC was founded in 1997, and was active in both the 2005 and 2009 referendums, serving as the official proponent in 2009. We have over 3300 supporters across BC.

### Purpose of Submission

Fair Voting BC worked closely with Fair Vote Canada-BC and over 20 other organizations to identify a range of recommendations on which there was substantial consensus. We submitted these recommendations in the name of the Make Every Voter Count society, and we fully endorse those recommendations. Briefly, these are as follows:

1. **Ballot Question:** The ballot should include a specific question requesting a public mandate to adopt proportional voting that is linked to a transparent public process to choose a specific proportional system.
2. **Timing of Referendum:** The referendum campaign should not overlap with the fall municipal election campaigns.
3. **Campaign Finance and Third-Party Advertising Regulations:** The referendum should be subject to regulations that limit the influence of big money.

Furthermore, we worked closely with Fair Vote Canada-BC as they prepared their submission, and we substantially endorse their additional recommendations as well.

The purpose of this submission is principally to add some additional emphasis and introduce some additional considerations that are not contained in these two prior submissions. In particular, we wish to address some issues related to process, ballot design and packaging, campaign finance regulations, the role of Elections BC and system design.

## Summary of Additional Recommendations

### On Process

We recommend that:

- the process for ultimately selecting a voting system be done at arm's length from the government
- the government, as soon as possible, take undesirable reform options off the table and identify specific options that will be seriously considered
- the government adopt a process that offers several opportunities for citizens to guide and determine which system is ultimately adopted; we particularly recommend using both a Citizens' Review panel prior to the referendum and a Citizens' Jury following the referendum to guide selection of a specific system
- should the government feel that it is desirable to offer a second ballot question in a first referendum that asks voters to choose between systems, that the responses be considered advisory to a more deliberative post-referendum process

### On Ballot Design and Package

We recommend that:

- the ballot package sent to all voters include a voter pamphlet detailing the proposal on the ballot, as well as arguments from proponents and opponents and an assessment by a Citizens' Review panel
- the ballot itself contain a preamble outlining the specific commitments the government is making should the measure pass
- the question offer voters a clear opportunity to endorse the principle of proportional representation, that it be framed as a choice between options so as to encourage reflective public debate, and that it be framed neutrally

### On Campaign Financing

We recommend that:

- "big money" be prohibited
- the appropriateness of the concept of "third parties" be intentionally reconsidered in the context of this referendum campaign
- the role of political parties be explicitly considered, and potentially limited so as to allow proponents and opponents to be at the heart of the public discussion
- donations to proponents and opponents be limited to donations from individuals, and that these donations be limited to no more than the amounts currently permitted under provincial election campaign rules
- coalition-building be encouraged on the proponent and opponent sides

### On Role of Elections BC

We recommend that Elections BC:

- have principal responsibility for communicating with the public about the referendum and for overseeing preparation of materials to be distributed to the public (eg, in the voter pamphlet described above)
- be responsible for setting up any arm's-length bodies needed in the overall process (eg, a Commission, a Citizens' Review panel, a Citizens' Jury, etc)
- not be responsible for making any decisions about which voting system to adopt

- not be responsible for communicating about systems to the public (aside from designing the voter pamphlet mentioned above); its focus should otherwise be on preparing reference materials to support any deliberative processes that are used

## On Systems

We recommend that:

- it be the role of any deliberative body formed by the government to determine which systems would fit within the constraints laid out by the government
- any such deliberative body seriously consider at least the four systems described in Fair Vote Canada-BC's submission, all of which have been proposed and tailored for use in Canada and considered seriously by the federal Electoral Reform committee (Single Transferable Vote, Mixed Member Proportional, Local Proportional Representation, and Rural-Urban Proportional Representation (aka Flexible District Proportional Representation)). In addition, the Dual Member Proportional model that was on the 2016 ballot in Prince Edward Island should be considered because of its formal recognition there

## Process Recommendations

We congratulate the government on carrying through on its promise to engage British Columbians in a public deliberation aimed at improving our voting system by bringing in some form of proportional voting - that is, a way of voting in which the makeup of the legislature more accurately reflects how voters cast their votes.

In order to successfully achieve this goal, the government must design a referendum process that leads to selecting a new voting system and having the public endorse the change.

**Importance of Arms-Length System Selection Process:** We know from studies of previous referenda around the world that the public will be willing to endorse a change if they understand the motivation for making it and are confident that the process that leads to the final system choice is trustworthy. This primarily means that the system should be chosen through a process that is widely recognized as being at arms-length from the politicians and parties, though these players will certainly have an important role to play.

**Need to Avoid Granting *Carte Blanche* to Government:** Some have argued that we need to complete the system selection process prior to the referendum so that voters will be able to know the details of what they are voting on, but we do not agree that this is necessary - we believe that it is possible (and even desirable) to design a referendum that principally asks a mandate question without having the details of one or more proposed voting systems worked out in detail at that point.

Of course, voters will want and are fully entitled to clear answers about what is and is not on the table, and they would be highly reluctant to give the government *carte blanche* following a successful referendum to implement whatever voting system it wished to (consider the strong reaction against the Prime Minister's recent suggestion that he would only be interested in implementing a voting system that is widely regarded as one that would principally benefit his own party), so the process must be designed to assure voters that the government will not be able to use a successful referendum result to select a voting system that serves its own partisan interests rather the broader public interest.

**Features/Systems to Exclude:** How can we avoid this situation? We know that there are several features associated with some voting systems used elsewhere that British Columbians would likely reject and that few, if any, electoral reform advocates are proposing. These include:

- **Closed party lists** - British Columbians have expressed no interest in voting systems in which political parties have the power to place candidates in favoured positions on a list such that those closest to the top are highly likely to be elected regardless of whether or not voters specifically select them.
- **Province-wide lists** - British Columbians are likewise concerned about a loss of representation in the more outlying areas of the province, and would likely roundly reject any system that saw MLAs elected in the Lower Mainland based on votes cast in the province's interior or northern regions. We recommend that only voting systems that preserve the current regional balance of MLAs be considered.
- **Significant increase in the number of MLAs** - it has sometimes been proposed that we could achieve a more proportional result by adding more MLAs, but since all proportional voting systems could be implemented without changing the number of MLAs, we strongly recommend that only such systems be considered.
- **Low thresholds for election** - the two nations most commonly held up for ridicule in BC on the basis of their voting system are Israel and Italy. Both have used or currently use nationwide closed party list systems with effectively no thresholds, which encourages the proliferation of numerous minor parties. We recommend that systems be designed with moderate thresholds to discourage excessive fragmentation.

We strongly recommend that the government explicitly exclude these features or systems from consideration well prior to the referendum period regardless of what process or question it selects for the referendum. In particular, we urge the government to take off the table the *Mixed Member Majoritarian* and *Party List* systems currently portrayed on the How We Vote website; these systems are not popular with British Columbians and are not, to our knowledge, being recommended by any advocacy groups, so should be immediately eliminated from consideration.

**Systems That Will Be Considered:** Almost as important as specifying what systems or features are not on the table is identifying some key examples of systems that will be considered. We know that voters will be more inclined to support a change to a new voting system if they have a clearer idea of what is being envisioned and feel appropriately informed. In the last section of this submission, we discuss five systems that merit particular consideration because they have all been widely discussed in Canada (three have appeared as options on referenda held in Canada, and two were discussed or solicited during the 2015 federal Electoral Reform process). All these options satisfy the following important positive criteria:

- Votes would be cast for individual candidates, not lists
- All regions of the province would retain the same number of MLAs they currently have and each region would have locally responsive MLAs from different parties to provide regional representation that reflects the local diversity of political perspectives
- Independent candidates would have a reasonable opportunity to be elected
- There would be a strong correspondence between how voters cast their votes and the resulting makeup of the legislature

We strongly recommend that the government make an explicit commitment prior to the referendum that any system selected must meet these criteria and identify any of the five systems proposed in the final section of this submission that they will guarantee will be considered in the system selection phase.

**Plausible Post-Referendum System Selection Processes:** Presuming that the government is willing to exclude the features and systems described above as quickly as possible and make a commitment to some of the systems described in more detail below, we feel that voters will be willing to trust an arms-length process that is guaranteed to select a voting system that satisfies these criteria (similar criteria are described in Fair Vote Canada-BC's submission).

A plausible post-referendum selection process should satisfy the following criteria:

1. Voters should be able to make a clear choice on the principle of proportional voting
2. The final system selection should be done at arms-length from the government
3. Voters should have a way to express a determinative opinion on the system ultimately selected

We therefore suggest the following three options as examples of what we would consider to be plausible post-referendum system selection processes. The commonalities amongst the three options are shown in the following figure, followed by a more detailed description of the individual elements within the various options. All options involve two referenda to maximize voter influence and control over the process - an initial one to decide whether to move to proportional voting, and a second one either to confirm the choice (option 1) or to select the particular proportional voting system to be used (option 2). Option 3 simply adds a question to the first referendum to give voters the ability to decide between option 1 or option 2.

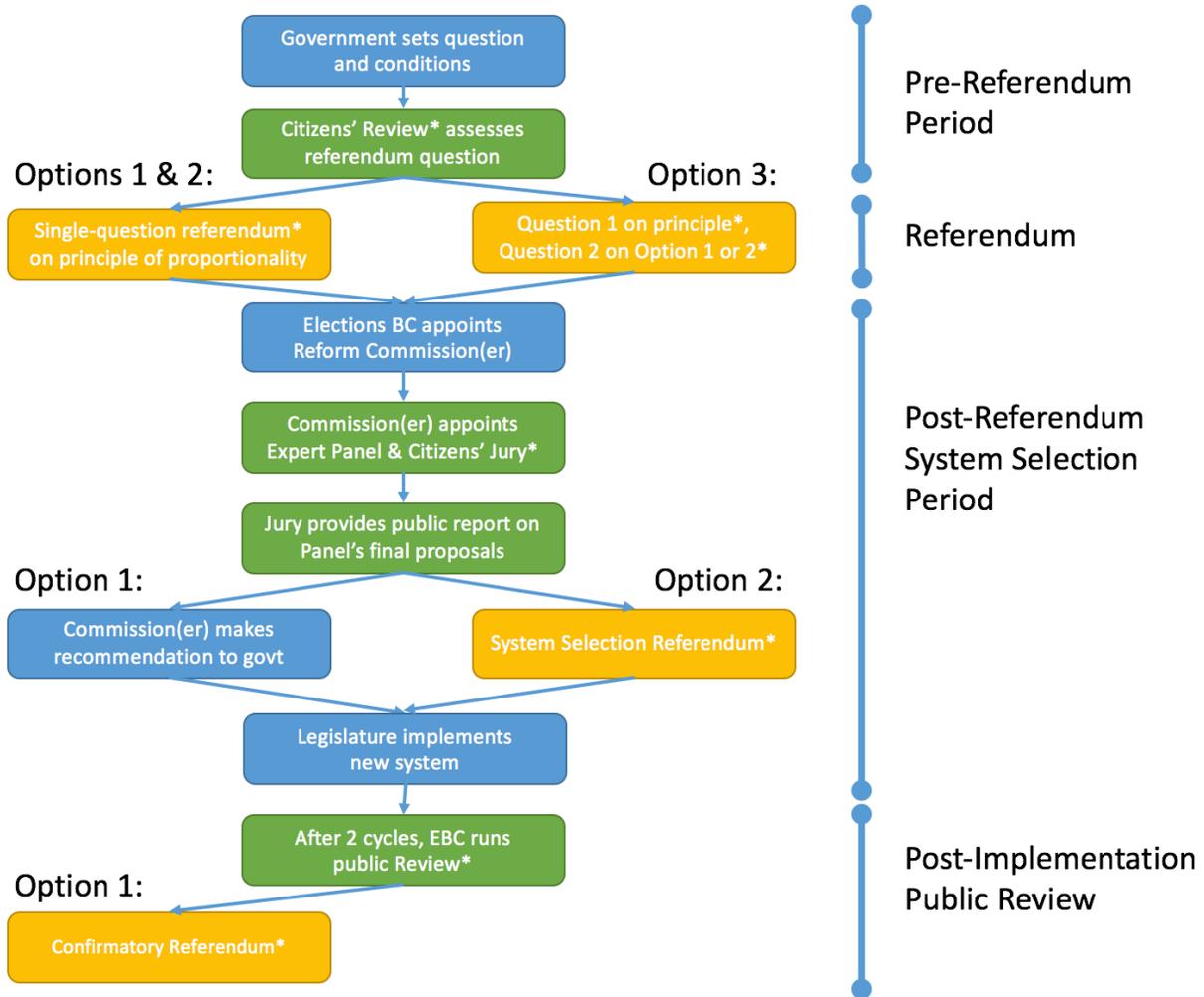


Figure 1. Proposed process options. Blue boxes show steps to be carried out by the government, Elections BC or an appointed Commission(er), yellow boxes show referenda, and green boxes show citizen-focused processes. Asterisks indicate the key points where the public is directly involved in the process.

**Option 1. Citizens' Review, Referendum, Commission and Citizens' Jury, Implementation, Review, Referendum**

Phase	Purpose and Approach
Lead-up to Referendum on Principle of Proportional Voting	<p>To allow voters to provide government with a clear mandate to implement a proportional voting system, the government should pose a referendum question focused on the principle of proportional voting.</p> <p>To allow the referendum debate to focus on this principle and not be overwhelmed by concerns about not having sufficient information about what is being considered, the government should explicitly rule out in advance certain voting systems and undesired features as described above.</p>

	<p>To provide greater certainty about the government’s intentions, it should also consider defining in advance a set of voting systems that would be explicitly considered in the selection process described below.</p> <p>We strongly recommend use of a deliberative polling process similar to the Oregon Citizens’ Initiative Review process prior to the referendum. A <b>Citizens’ Review</b> is a short (typically two week-long) process that would be led by a neutral third party such as Elections BC (or perhaps a university-based centre such as the UBC Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions) in which randomly-selected citizens would review the referendum question and the arguments of the proponents and opponents, supported by access to experts. It would be conducted prior to the mailout of the ballot, and a report on their findings communicated to the public with the ballot package.</p>
<p>Post-Referendum System Selection Process: Deliberative Dialogue Between Experts and Citizens’ Jury</p>	<p>To assure voters that the system to be selected following the referendum will not simply be chosen by government to serve their own partisan interests, the government should commit itself to handing over responsibility to a respected third party such as Elections BC to strike a <b>Commission</b> to select a voting system. For clarity, we are not recommending that Elections BC itself play any direct role in making decisions or recommendations about changing the voting system; its role should be limited to running processes at arm’s length from the government.</p> <p>This selection process should ideally be based on a dialogue between an <b>Expert Panel</b> on one hand and a representative citizens’ body on the other (a <b>Citizens’ Jury</b> of some sort).</p> <p>The role of the experts would be to work out the details of various system options and present them to the public, to other stakeholders (eg, politicians and elections officials) and to the Citizens’ Jury.</p> <p>The role of the Citizens’ Jury would be to reflect on the different options and provide feedback to the experts. This would be similar to the task of the Citizens’ Review described above, but of somewhat longer duration and with more authority to engage in dialogue with the experts.</p> <p>At the end of this process, the Citizens’ Jury should assess the refined options, and the Commission would take the Citizens’ Jury’s assessment into account in formulating and forwarding a final recommendation to government for ratification in the Legislature.</p>

System Selection, Post-Implementation Review and Referendum	Following a minimum of two elections using the new system, <b>Elections BC</b> should appoint a Commissioner to conduct a public review and recommend changes to the voting system. Citizens would then have an opportunity in a referendum to either continue with the new system (including any recommended changes) or to revert to our current system.
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The above process has the merit of including citizens’ voices at four key junctures (shown in asterisks in the figure above):

1. the **Citizens’ Review** would serve as an independent source of information for the public regarding the merits of the referendum question,
2. the public itself would decide through a first referendum on whether to adopt a more proportional voting system or not,
3. a **Citizens’ Jury** would provide a non-partisan assessment to the **Commission** regarding the various proposed systems, and
4. the public would have a second opportunity to ultimately confirm the new system or revert to our current system in a second confirmatory referendum.

**Option 2. Citizens’ Review, Referendum, Commission and Citizens’ Jury, Selection Referendum, Implementation, Review**

Some have suggested that voters might prefer to have a direct say in which system is adopted, rather than leaving this decision to a dialogue between experts and a Citizens’ Jury, which, though it would be designed to be broadly representative of BC’s population, is not envisioned to be directly elected. One possibility, therefore, might be to follow the process above right through the deliberative dialogue phase involving the Citizens’ Jury, but then to put the resulting proportional voting system designs evaluated and rated by the Citizens’ Jury back to the public for a second selection referendum, in which the public would be asked solely to choose between the most recommended proportional voting systems, ideally using a ranked ballot if there are three or more options at this stage. In this case, to avoid a third referendum, we would recommend that the post-implementation process be limited to an Elections BC-led public review, rather than a third referendum.

**Option 3. Citizens’ Review, Modified First Referendum (Includes Second Question Allowing Voters to Choose Option 1 or 2)**

Alternatively, if the government does not wish to directly choose either of these two options, they could be put to the voters at the same time as the first referendum in the form of a second question. I.e., voters would be asked if they would prefer to have a Citizens’ Jury recommend the new voting system, followed after two elections under the new system by a confirmatory referendum (Option 1), or if they would prefer to vote on the Citizens’ Jury’s recommendations and then have only an Elections BC-led review after two elections with the new system (Option 2).

In our view, any of these three options would satisfy the requirement for giving the voting public a determinative say in the selection of our new voting system and providing assurance that the system selection process would be done in a suitably arm’s-length manner.

**Second Question on Systems Not Necessary in First Referendum:** Finally, some have suggested that there be a second question in the first referendum in which voters are asked to choose between (perhaps rank) two or more possible voting systems. We do not believe that this would be necessary, given that the alternatives described above provide ample opportunity for public input into the decision as to which voting system to adopt. Moreover, experience from previous referenda has demonstrated that there are very significant challenges in developing public awareness and understanding of the details of even one proposed voting system, let alone three or four. We would therefore anticipate that most voters participating in the first referendum might have a strong opinion about the first question on the principle of proportional voting, but would feel much less qualified to answer the second question. Since we also know that self-perception of knowledge about a referendum question affects willingness to participate, we believe that adding a second question asking voters to rank two or more system alternatives could decrease turnout and so recommend against it. Nonetheless, should government decide to pursue this path, we endorse Fair Vote Canada-BC's recommendation that this second question be advisory rather than binding in nature and that the responsibility for recommending a system be given to a Citizens' Jury and/or an Electoral Reform Commission, as described above, following the referendum.

## Ballot Design and Package

The decision to use a mail-in ballot for this referendum offers us a unique opportunity to inform voters about the issue at stake, since Elections BC will presumably be assigned to send a ballot package to every household in the province.

**Send Voter Pamphlet With Ballot Package:** We strongly recommend that the government take full advantage of the opportunity to transmit to voters a detailed voter information pamphlet, as is routinely done in the state of Oregon (see <http://sos.oregon.gov/elections/Documents/pamphlet/2018/2018-special-election.pdf> for a recent example). Such a pamphlet could lay out the following (inspired by what is done in Oregon):

- The ballot title
- A summary of the ballot proposition (a form of preamble)
- A copy of the ballot, including the question and the spaces for the voter's response
- A description of the consequences of voting for each of the options on the ballot
- An explanation from the government outlining the background of the measure
- Arguments from proponents and opponents (ideally vetted for accuracy by a neutral third party such as Elections BC)
- The assessment of the Citizens' Review panel, to provide an informed and non-partisan public perspective

By preparing such a pamphlet, the government would ensure that voters would have immediately at hand all the information necessary to form an opinion as to how they wish to vote. This would obviate the need for a voter to invest time searching for information after receiving a bare ballot, and would ensure, in particular, that they could base their vote on reliable information. This approach would also improve access to common information for those without access to the internet.

**Ballot Form:** We also strongly recommend that the ballot contain both a self-contained summary of the ballot proposition, including any commitments the government is making regarding the form of the voting system that will subsequently be chosen, along with the question itself. We endorse the example preamble presented by Fair Vote Canada-BC in their submission.

**Question Form:** With regard to the question, we recommend that it have the following characteristics:

1. Offers the voter a clear opportunity to endorse the principle of proportional voting
2. Encourages reflective public debate by not being posed as a yes/no question but as a choice between two options
3. Expresses the choice simply and neutrally

As one example of a question that would fit the above guidelines, we would suggest:

*Which electoral system should BC use to elect members to the provincial legislature?*

- A Proportional Voting system
- The First Past the Post system

A second example would be:

*To elect members of the legislative assembly in future, BC should:*

- Move to a Proportional Voting system
- Retain the First Past the Post system

Both of these recommendations are similar to (and inspired by) the first question used in the 1992 New Zealand referendum campaign and the question posed in the 2007 Ontario referendum campaign. In both cases, it should be made clear that a successful vote for proportional voting would commit the government to choose a system using the process and satisfying the criteria outlined in the preamble. That is, voters should clearly understand the procedural consequences of a vote in favour of proportional voting.

## Campaign Finance Rules

**Limit Influence of Big Money:** As mentioned above, we endorse the general principle laid out in the Make Every Voter Count submission to limit the influence of big money in this referendum campaign. Fundamentally, this campaign is principally for the benefit of the people of British Columbia and the government should take active steps to prevent moneyed players from playing a disproportionate role in the campaign.

**Ban Corporate and Union Donations:** For this reason, we most strongly endorse the general principle that corporate and union donations should be banned, particularly in regard to referendum advertising during the campaign period.

**Standard Third Party Rules Not Appropriate:** It is tempting from the perspective of administrative simplicity to suggest simply applying standard third party election advertising rules during a referendum campaign (and we endorse these as a minimum approach), but we would suggest that there are some relevant distinctions that are important to pay attention to in the context of this referendum.

In a standard election campaign, the parties and candidates are considered the principal actors, and third parties are restricted so as to not overwhelm the parties' activities. In addition, there are anti-collusion rules designed to prevent different third parties (which can be either individuals or organizations) from sharing resources to exceed spending limits and exercise outsized influence.

In contrast, in a referendum campaign, the principal actors are proponents and opponents of the options on the referendum ballot, and there is no particular notion of electoral ridings - the entire province is in play. Proponents and opponents can come in the form of individuals or organizations, and political parties themselves have an interest in the outcome of the referendum. In some sense, there are no 'third parties' in a referendum campaign - everyone is entitled to a direct interest in the campaign.

This is important because, under standard third party rules, *each* third party is entitled to spend up to \$150,000 across the province (and no more than \$3000 in any one riding), and organizations are not allowed to collaborate with one another if the net effect would be for their combined forces to spend more than \$150,000 on the campaign.

**Need for Proponent/Opponent Groups to be Exempt from Current Third Party Spending Limits:** However, in the 2009 referendum campaign, the proponent and opponent groups were each given a grant of \$500,000, and were free to raise additional funds as they could. We recognize the strategic and public communicative value in having clearly identified proponents and opponents, so it must be clear that if a single such entity is formally recognized by the government, it must have the ability to spend more than the current third party limit on the campaign.

Furthermore, these proponent and opponent entities are likely to function as coalition builders, as happened in the recent transit referendum. Such coalition-building is an important mechanism to build public awareness of the referendum campaign and the primary issues at stake, and the government should ensure that there are no significant impediments to organizations exercising their charter right to freedom of association to campaign together.

**Questions:** However, this clearly poses a challenge if one wishes to impose campaign contribution or spending limits. More specifically, it raises the following questions:

1. Who may spend money in a campaign? Only the principal proponent/opponent entity? Their coalition partners? Any entity that seeks to be recognized or registered as a 'referendum advertiser'? An individual?
2. Who may contribute money in a campaign? Only individuals? Organizations (businesses, unions, political parties)?
3. Must an entity spending money have received it in some particular form, or can it come from existing reserves?

**Issues:** We will not presume to try to define the set of regulations the government should implement for this referendum campaign, but we would strongly recommend that any such regulations address the following issues:

1. How will the regulations prevent corporations and unions from spending money on election advertising (in line with recent changes to the Elections Act)?
2. How large a role should the political parties themselves play in this referendum? If they take a stand on the question, should they be treated as officially recognized proponents or opponents? If so, should they be entitled to use previously-accumulated reserves of funds to support their referendum-related activities, or should they be limited to funds that they can explicitly raise from their party members and donors specifically for this purpose? I.e., how should the resources of parties be balanced against the resources available to proponent/opponent entities? We raise this question because one party, in particular, has publicly suggested that they wish to use their upcoming party subsidy payment to fund their activities in this referendum. Should this be allowed?

3. Should spending limits apply equally to any registered proponent/opponent entity, regardless of size? To us, it does not seem reasonable that a wealthy individual might be permitted to spend \$150,000 (if treated as equivalent to a third party in an election campaign), while a large NGO with a membership list of 100,000 people would also be subject to the same limit.

**Principles:** We do recommend that any regulations the government chooses to enact embody as much as possible the following principles:

1. **Individual Donation Limits:** Individual donors should be limited to contributing (in toto, to all proponent or opponent organizations that they support) an amount of no more than what they are allowed to contribute to a regular political party (currently \$1200). Since a lower limit encourages proponents and opponents to reach out to a broader range of supporters, we would support an even lower limit (we note that Quebec has an individual donation limit of \$100).
2. **Proponents Limited to Spending Donations Sourced from Individuals:** Proponent/opponent entities (including parties) should be limited (most particularly in their spending on election/referendum advertising) to amounts they either receive from government for this purpose or from individuals, and that they not be permitted to draw on reserves as these may have been accumulated from 'big money' sources. We recommend that a donation reporting process be required of proponents and opponents and that anonymous donations be banned.
3. **Cooperation/Coalition-Building Be Explicitly Supported:** Proponents and opponents should be permitted to work closely with like-minded organizations to pool resources and share campaign data, materials and responsibilities.

## Role of Elections BC in Public Outreach

**Elections BC's Focus Should Be on Outreach and Process:** An important lesson from previous referendums is that it is unreasonable to expect a proponent coalition to be able to directly educate the public on an issue. We concur with Fair Vote Canada-BC's recommendation that Elections BC be given responsibility for communicating with the public about the existence of the referendum and the associated materials that would be included in the voter pamphlet described above.

In particular, Elections BC should be empowered to produce outreach materials explaining what process would be followed should the referendum succeed.

EBC would also be responsible for setting up the Citizens' Review and Citizens' Jury and for distributing the voter pamphlet along with the ballot package, but should not be responsible for making any recommendations to the government. Any such recommendations arising from these processes should be made by an independently appointed Commissioner or Commission recruited by EBC for this purpose.

EBC could also take responsibility for preparing reference materials describing any systems the government chooses to ask the Commission to explicitly consider, though these reference materials should be developed through an open process facilitated by respected experts such as the Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions at the University of British Columbia. Electoral reform advocates should be invited to participate in these discussions.

**Elections BC Should Not Make Recommendations on Systems:** We reiterate that EBC should not be responsible for making any system recommendations arising from these processes that they are facilitating. EBC's role is neutral and non-partisan, and they should not have any hand in making what is fundamentally a political rather than an administrative decision.

**Elections BC Should Not Be Responsible for Communicating on Systems:** In addition, beyond their role in preparing materials describing any systems being considered, we recommend that Elections BC not be responsible for engaging in any other activities aimed at explaining these systems to the public. The principle purpose of developing these reference materials is to assure voters that there are plausible, expert-reviewed models at hand that will be pursued in the event that the referendum is successful. The scope of Elections BC's involvement in the campaign proper should be restricted, as described above, to issues directly related to the first referendum question.

## Systems to Include in the Selection Process

Following a successful referendum result, we are proposing that a system selection process take place, led by a Commission formed under the auspices of Elections BC. At this stage, specific system models will be developed and refined through a deliberative dialogue between experts and a Citizens' Jury, as described above.

This Commission should be free to consider any system that it feels would satisfy the requirements articulated by the government and included on the ballot in the referendum. However, to give some direction to the public in advance of the referendum, it would be helpful if the government specified several example systems that the Commission would be specifically asked to consider so that the public could have some realistic sense of what would be considered at that stage.

**Five Key Models:** We recommend that the Commission explicitly consider five voting systems that have been seriously proposed for use in Canada. Four of these are described in some detail in Fair Vote Canada-BC's submission, so we will not describe them in any detail here. These are:

- **Single Transferable Vote:** Originally recommended by BC's Citizens' Assembly and approved by a vote of nearly 58% in favour in 2005, STV deserves to be reviewed, if only to understand why the Citizens' Assembly supported it so strongly.
- **Local Proportional Representation:** LPR emerged from the 2015 federal Electoral Reform Commission process. It is similar in many ways to STV in terms of how it provides for increased voter choice, but it uses a much simplified ballot counting process and has a mechanism that can ensure that every rural riding elects a single MLA while using the existing riding boundaries, while voters in such ridings still participate in the benefits of proportionality at the regional level.
- **Rural Urban Proportional Representation (also called Flexible District Proportional Representation):** This system is similar to LPR, except that it explicitly uses smallish multimember ridings in the more urban areas and has a small number (~10%) of topup MLAs at a regional level.
- **Mixed Member Proportional:** MMP has been recommended by a number of electoral reform commissions and was recently ranked first in a plebiscite in Prince Edward Island. Both the NDP and the Green Party have expressed support for an MMP model, so the Commission should be certain to review this model as well.

A fifth model that we recommend be considered is the **Dual Member Proportional** model that also appeared on the PEI ballot in 2016. DMP is a variant of the MMP model, but has the unique feature that it elects two MLAs in each existing pair of ridings, both of whom must have appeared on the local ballot there.

These five models represent the set of options that have either been on a ballot in Canada (STV, MMP, DMP), have been used at some point in Canada's history (STV), or have been seriously discussed in the context of the federal electoral reform process (LPR, RUPR/FDPR).

**Other Possibilities:** The Commission and associated Expert Panel and Citizens' Jury may, of course, investigate other models that have been proposed in Canada. Two examples of other systems that these bodies may find worthy of consideration include (1) the Single Member District Proportional Representation system (SMDPR), in which candidates are elected in single member districts in such a way that reflects the diversity of political perspectives within each region, and (2) the Proxy (or Weighted) Voting system, one version of which was proposed by former Liberal leader Stephane Dion; with Proxy Voting, MLAs would be elected just as they are now, except that MLAs' voting weight would be adjusted to reflect the vote shares each party wins - an MLA from an under-represented party would therefore cast more proxy votes than an MLA from an over-represented party, and the totality of votes in the legislature would accurately reflect the partisan mix of how British Columbians cast their votes.