

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 15, 2018 8:39 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Technical Inquiry from gov.bc.ca

Hello

The feedback below was sent to the general Webmanager mailbox.
Please forward to the appropriate person(s) for response.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 15, 2018 8:28 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Technical Inquiry from gov.bc.ca

The following was submitted through gov.bc.ca's 'Contact Us' form, regarding technical difficulties or feedback about this website.

Submission from [REDACTED] on 02/15/2018.

My question is about

Technical difficulties or feedback about this website

Message

Leave your voting system the way it is , you will wreck your province if it is changed , change is not always the best thing.

Email

[REDACTED]

Consent

- I consent

Date

02/15/2018

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2018 9:03 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Technical Inquiry from gov.bc.ca

Hello

The feedback below was sent to the general Webmanager mailbox.
Please forward to the appropriate person(s) for response.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2018 3:55 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Technical Inquiry from gov.bc.ca

The following was submitted through gov.bc.ca's 'Contact Us' form, regarding technical difficulties or feedback about this website.

Submission from [REDACTED] on 02/19/2018.

My question is about

Technical difficulties or feedback about this website

Message

I was into part 2 of the questionnaire and wanted to review the descriptions of the possible systems and was unable to do so and continue the questionnaire (Kicked out).

After reviewing the possibilities I don't like any of the choices.

I want a Govt that can make decisions and minority govt tend to be wishy washy and spend too much time consulting, doing studies, and not getting anything done. Look at our situation now with the NDP AND GReens, are either one of them looking at what is best for the prov or what is just best for them personally and best for the party to stay in power. Eliminate the parties, Elect people who have the Prov and their area interests at the forefront.

Email

Consent

- I consent

Date

02/19/2018

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 10:04 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: voting choices

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 13, 2018 6:31 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: voting choices

The two voting choices are very inadequate and problematic. First past the post can leave almost 50% of voters not represented at all, Which happened in BCs last election. Proportional Representation can create an unworkable situation with the votes being so fractured and disbursed it will almost impossible to get anything clearly decided. That is unless the proportional representation is limited to no more than perhaps the 5 parties who collect the most votes. Personally, I would like to see a system where the two parties who receive the most votes have a runoff vote to see who is the overall winner of the election. this I believe is the most equitable and fair way to provide a stable functional and reliable result. It may be slightly more costly but far more constructive and practical in the long run.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 5, 2018 8:34 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Voting systems

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, February 4, 2018 12:15 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Voting systems

I suggest online blockchain voting

Sent from my iPad

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2018 9:19 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Voting

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, January 27, 2018 4:29 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Voting

Most dishonest thing ever putout. Every question designed to change the system.

Sent from my iPad

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 5, 2018 8:36 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Why are we having another referendum on PR

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, February 3, 2018 2:52 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Why are we having another referendum on PR

Hello,

British Columbians have had two referendums on proportional representation - one in 2005 and the other in 2009. Both times the voters of BC voted no to proportional representation.

Why are those referendums not being respected? Could it be that British Columbians have not provided the results that you are looking for and you keep having referendums until they vote properly?

Please be mindful that this referendum on a question that has already been answered twice just makes citizens and voters all the more cynical of politicians and their motives.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 1, 2018 10:55 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Your questionnaire

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 1, 2018 3:20 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Your questionnaire

Feb. 1, 2018

I only got as far as the 2d or 3d question. Then I was blocked.
Please fix this. Let me know you did so and I'll try again:

- I clicked "I vote in every election"
- Then I was asked what stopped me from voting.
 - Since none of the options applied I could not continue.
 - I suggest you either add a space for me to "comment" OR...
 - have the option of "none of the above"

Sincerely
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 13, 2018 12:31 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: electoral reform:addendum

An additional benefit to implementing the suggested Parliamentary reform is that the same philosophy could be used to balance the unequal weighting of different constituencies, which in the current system gives individual votes in less populous constituencies more weight than votes in more populous ones. This is easily accomplished by adding a weighting factor proportional to the number of either votes cast, or number of eligible voters, in a constituency as a fraction of the total electorate. Very easy solutions to two of Canada's most vexing problems with representation in government.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 13, 2018 10:01:49 AM
Subject: electoral reform

Thank you for writing to MLA David Eby's Vancouver-Point Grey Constituency Office where we address issues related to the Vancouver-Point Grey community and the residents who live here.

Since your inquiry relates to the electoral reform process please email your comments to:

citizenengagement@gov.bc.ca

For more information about the engagement and feedback process please go to the How We Vote webpage:

<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/howwewote/get-involved/>

The collection of feedback on this topic from the public will continue until February 28, 2018.



[REDACTED] | Constituency Assistant
MLA David Eby | Vancouver Point Grey

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED]
<http://davidebymla.ca/> | [Facebook](#) | [Newsletter](#)

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, February 10, 2018 8:42 PM
To: Eby.MLA, David
Cc: Weaver.MLA, Andrew ; sunletters@vancouver.sun.com; letters@timescolonist.com
Subject: An Open Letter to David Eby on Electoral Reform - a more effective solution

Dear Mr. Eby,

You have been asking for comments and suggestions for electoral reform:

The debate concerning electoral reform has been confusing, and overly complex. As a result, previously tendered solutions do not address the problem. It makes more sense to clearly state the problem, then design solutions through rational analysis.

Problem: the current system of "first pass the post" (FPTP) voting for representatives results in the governing party being able to ignore minority concerns, especially rankling because governments, even "majorities", formed by the Parliamentary process of "one representative = one vote in the House", hardly ever, if at all,

represent the majority of ballots cast. This results in a dictatorship by the plurality (largest minority) between elections. The goal is to force "majority" governments to negotiate in good faith with representatives of other parties to reach a consensus.

The Parliamentary system is based to a large degree on the notion that good representatives are the basis of good government. The constituency electoral system, while not perfect, is the best system yet devised to result in good representatives. This system is without equal in at least three respects: the representatives are approachable and have to stand up for election before their own communities; the opportunity to run for the position of candidate is open to a wide segment of society; and the representative must take personal responsibility for his/her actions or risk being defeated at the next election. All of these factors increase accountability, which is the most important pillar of good governance. All would be diluted or lost by the party slate system inherent in any proportional electoral system, where the party, instead of the voters, controls who are the candidates. The voters are relegated to choosing between candidates chosen by the party brass behind closed doors. As well, in a proportional system, the party leaders are insulated from electoral loss, because candidates lower down the party list are the first to lose their seats while those higher up will always keep theirs.

Why has FPTP failed its role of representing the views of society? In the first place, it was designed in simpler times for a more homogeneous society. There are many more viewpoints that diverge to a greater degree now than ever before. But it is actually the system of party discipline, in which all members of a caucus are forced to vote for their party's policy, that has put the party's judgment ahead of the representative's. The compromises reached by Parliamentary debate are deemed to have been achieved within the party, disregarding the fact that the governing party in Canada includes the voices of less than 40% of the electorate, all of whom are ideologically aligned, while being able to ignore the other 60%. This is due to the fact that the weight of each representative's vote in Parliament is as if they had won 100% of the vote in their constituency, which is purely an artifact of the Parliamentary system as historically constructed.

So the issue is not an electoral one, it is a Parliamentary one. The current electoral system results in direct representation with optimal accountability. A new complex one is likely to be more opaque, less accountable, and significantly more expensive (run off or multi-level elections, greater numbers of representatives many of whom will be indirect (elected by the party, not the electorate), more complex ballots and vote counting, just to begin with). A simple change in the rules of Parliament could improve the problem while maintaining the accountability.

That change would be to make each MLA's vote in Parliament proportionate to their electoral tallies. For example, if an MLA receives 48% of the ballots cast, then his Parliamentary vote in favor of motions would only count as 0.48, the fraction of his constituency who voted for him. However, if other parties support the bill, then his/her fractional Parliamentary vote increases to include these additional voters. A bill will pass only if it garners the votes of MLAs whose aggregate electoral support equals a set threshold percentage of total electoral ballots cast (ideally 50%, but the threshold could be set lower or higher for specific types of bills). Conversely, if the electoral support of all those who vote in Parliament against the bill is greater than 50% of total electoral votes cast, then the bill does not pass. At a negotiating level, a minority party leader could throw the party's electoral votes behind the governing party to help them reach the Parliamentary threshold. But this support does not have to be on an all or nothing basis, as in the current coalition between the NDP and Green Party. It could allow room for issue to issue variation, and empowers groups of individual MLAs as well. But the goal is achieved, the governing party is forced to negotiate a consensus with a wider segment of Parliamentarians representing more of the electorate.

As a corollary, every vote cast in the election would have some meaning, the only sure cure for voter apathy in ridings that are strongholds for one party or another, or when the result of the election seems a foregone conclusion. So-called "wasted votes" that go to losers in an election under the present system will still carry proportionate power in Parliament under the new system.

This suggested Parliamentary change empowers voters, whereas proportional electoral systems empower the political parties. Lack of personal accountability, and political horse-trading behind closed doors, are the norms under any proportional electoral system, witness Germany last week, or Israel or Italy all of the time, and cannot be avoided. Instead of changing the electoral system, changing Parliamentary rules is easier, cheaper,

and retains maximum accountability by MLAs including party bigwigs. If the parties do not function for the common good, voters can vote the party leaders out of their constituency seats, something which could never happen under a proportional electoral system. Retention of accountability is the most important factor in any reform of governmental processes.

February 1, 2018

Subject: Democracy 2.0 – A proposal to improve our B.C. Voting System

Dear *Hon. Katrine Conroy*

Like most citizens in our province, I want our government's third attempt at providing British Columbians with an improved voting system to succeed.

I believe that when voters see an electoral system that delivers a government representing the majority of voters (not just the typical 40%), they will take more interest in elections and voter turnout will increase dramatically.

I was inspired when I read the article on electoral reform in the latest *Common Ground*: <http://commonground.ca/free-vote-2-0/> and a hard copy clipped from this magazine is attached for your convenience.

I ask you to read it in the hope that you will also see the merits of this proposed simple approach and agree to support it.

I like this model for the following reasons:

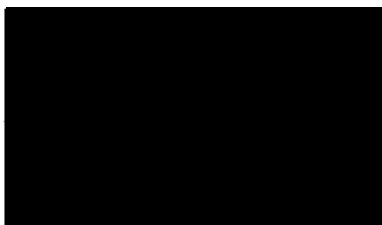
1. **It can keep the voting ballot EXACTLY the same as it is today.** Another option described in the above article is to add one additional choice asking voters to select which political party they prefer (in addition to voting for a specific candidate as they do today). I prefer keeping the ballot exactly the same as it is today as this keeps the voting ballot simple and familiar, which is crucial in reducing the fear of change for most BC voters who don't think about politics very much except at election time.
2. **It is a small incremental cost.** The above article recommends adding 15 additional seats to the legislature. To make the math easier in terms of calculating the percentage of seats each party would win based on their proportion of vote, I suggest modifying the proposal to add only 13 party-vote seats, to create a 100-seat legislature (this makes the math easier re: matching the proportion of votes to the proportion of seats). Adding 13 seats represents a very small percentage increase in government expenditures and is well worth the cost in order to achieve a result that more fairly represents voters values and preferences.
3. **The results are easy to understand.** First, it will deliver the same First-Past-The-Post 87 seat result as today. Then the 13 party-vote seats will be allocated to parties whose % share of 87 seats is less than their total party vote. These 13 seats are allocated to the top vote-getters by party who were not elected in the constituency-based FPTP vote (these 13 are NOT chosen from party lists). This approach delivers a legislature and government that more accurately represents the diversity of values from all voters across the province.

These additional 13 seats may not always be enough to guarantee results that are exactly proportional to the vote by party if the election is highly skewed, but when I tested it using several past election results, it was always very close.

Some ideas for the name of the above system are "BC Enhanced-FPTP" or "BC FPTP 2.0" or "BC FPTP+".

I am interested in your thoughts on this and am available to discuss further.

Thank you for your consideration and support.



[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 13, 2018 5:46 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How B.C. Votes

The Supervote: Proportional Representation of voters, not just parties!

I understand that the voters of British Columbia are currently debating whether to change their voting system from First-past-the-post to a system of proportional representation.

I run a website in the UK in aid of voting reform - [REDACTED] - and, while the site is UK-oriented, its unique approach to the pure mechanics of a public election might provide food for thought for those contemplating change over 4,000 miles away. Accordingly, I have sent this email to yourself for consideration, and to various stakeholders and their representatives, and to some of the B.C. newspapers, as a contribution to the debate.

Only 32% of the votes cast in last year's UK General Election using First-past-the-post were effective. No captain of industry would tolerate such waste in an industrial process, so voters should not tolerate it at the ballot box. There is now an increasing awareness that the First-past-the-post voting system is an outdated and wasteful relic of the Victorian age, but opinion seems divided over what should replace it. Debate on voting reform invariably turns to systems of proportional representation which award seats to parties in proportion to the votes cast for them. The problem is that there are many such systems and most of them are pre-occupied with proportionality for political parties, usually at the expense of independents, voter choice and representation of local communities. These systems can best be described as **"Party PR"**.

With democracy in retreat worldwide, it is vital that the few countries who enjoy free elections and individual liberty ensure that their democratic procedures are kept in constant repair and are as responsive as possible to the varied aspirations of 21st Century voters. If First-past-the-post can be discounted as an inefficient 19th Century museum piece, perhaps we should also reject Party PR as a prescriptive and inflexible product of the 20th Century.

The way forward, I believe, lies in proportional representation of voters or **"Voter PR"** and only one system delivers this – the Single Transferable Vote (STV), in which voters express preferences across a range of candidates standing in local constituencies each returning between 4 and 6 elected representatives. The expression of preferences allows for the recycling of unspent voting power, both from candidates eliminated in the count for lack of support and from winning candidates with more votes than they need for election. Single Transferable Votes cascade from one candidate to another according to individual preferences so that the final result reflects the political will of the constituents, whether this is expressed in a party political context or not. It is a system equally at home in a 2-party, multi-party or no-party political environment, a system that future-proofs democracies against a time when perhaps political parties as we know them are replaced by something a little more sophisticated.

STV is the most powerful and sophisticated ballot you can bequeath to an electorate. It has been described as the Supervote and the reasons why are to be found in a press comment in the Sligo Champion, reporting on the first use of STV in Ireland in January 1919:

“The system has justified its adoption. We saw it work; we saw its simplicity; we saw its unerring honesty to the voter all through; we saw the result in the final count; and we join in the general expression of those who followed it with an intelligent interest - it is as easy as the old way; it is a big improvement and it is absolutely fair.”

STV was subsequently introduced for all elections in the Irish Republic and is now used in Malta, Tasmania, for elections to the Australian Senate and to some Australian local councils, for indirect elections to the Indian Upper House and for certain local elections in New Zealand. One or two places in the USA use it and even here in the UK, we are getting there; STV has been widely used in Northern Ireland since the 1970s, it was successfully introduced in Scotland for their local elections in 2007 and the Welsh are now considering it for their local elections. I look forward to seeing British Columbia added to this growing list in the near future.

I wish you all well in your deliberations.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

February 1, 2018

Ministry of Attorney General
PO Box 9044 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, B.C., V8W 9E2

Dear Honourable David Eby, Attorney General:

Re: Electoral Reform – How We Vote

Thank you for the opportunity to make a written submission concerning this subject.

Based on the rhetoric from the media and from some politicians, it appears British Columbians are in favour of a change to the first-past-the-post electoral system. However, when offered alternatives to the existing voting system in the past, these alternatives, flawed as they were, have been rejected.

The premise to the desired change is the British Columbian voter is frustrated when his/her party does not “win” the election, and his/her personal undesirable party comes to power and rules with impunity. More recently of course, a prospective minority government has been overthrown by a calculated vote of “non-confidence” with edict granting a collaboration of second and third place finishers the right to “form government.”

It is my observation the problem isn’t so much the first-past-the-post electoral system is not working, but the outcome of the first-past-the-post system is not giving each and every voter the outcome he/she desires.

I have reviewed the Stakeholder submissions available on the web-site today, from the Broadbent Institute, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Fair Vote Canada (BC Steering Commission) and YES PR BC. Well-written and considering the various alternatives thoroughly, these submissions address many concerns and flaws inherent to some of the proposed systems and stress the importance of engaging the B.C. voter in the process, all of which I appreciate. It is my view the submissions and the overall offering of alternatives miss a key point, which is this:

- *regardless of the voting system to be implemented, not everyone is going to be happy with the outcome of any given election, and this begs the question, for whom are we proposing to change the voting system?*

If we are proposing to change the voting system to empower the parties to get their fair share of governance in some sort of proportion to the voter’s diverse desires, to somehow give the voter the feeling of empowerment, this is doomed to fail. The reason for this is the party system by nature embodies power struggle and conflict, with its winners and losers.

If we are proposing to change the voting system to be more representative of the desires of the voter, I suggest there is only one solution to make everyone happy. It has been used in the past in some western societies at senior government levels and is oft-used today in Canada at municipal levels; it was condemned for being inefficient and requiring too much effort on the part of the voter to understand

the prospective candidates' platforms, and it also has in the past and will in the future run the risk of being undermined by some politicians seeking a power grab.

My proposal is there are only independent candidates running under no party platform in each riding. Each independent candidate must garner 50% of the vote to be elected, thus each ballot would have the required number of choices (first, second, third, etc.) to ensure the successful candidate is the one favoured in his/her constituency.

Every MLA is in government, with each MLA working with his/her fellow MLA to govern. While every voter may not get their first choice elected, they will have THEIR MLA elected, the one that represents them, not the party platform.

The election of the leader is a different matter. I suggest the MLA's select a leader from their own however others suggest the electorate select a leader Province-wide from a host of potential candidates, with again, each ballot having the required number of choices to ensure the winning candidate garners the highest total exceeding 50% of the vote.

It would be important each and every voter have his/her first choice counted first, then his/her second choice counted second etc. Past suggestion has been the voter whose first choice was leading would have the second choice counted, thus giving unequal weight to each voter, a sort of reflective popularity contest, totally flawed.

It is my view this suggestion would engage and empower the citizenry and eliminate the abhorrent Party politics with its duplicity, treachery and incessant conflict. With each and every MLA in government representing their constituents, everyone would have their voice heard.

Moreover, the B.C. voter is already familiar and comfortable with this system at the municipal level.

There is this oft-asked question of whether government is "... of the people, by the people and for the people." Somehow we Canadians wish to lay claim to partnership in U.S. President Lincoln's famous words in his Gettysburg Address in our own democracy however such ideal is not instituted in the Canadian Constitution nor in the rules of Parliamentary sovereignty. Canadian law does not dictate the need for party politics, but that governance is by Parliament. Included in this is the requirement for each Province to choose how it will govern itself under Parliamentary law.

I am not suggesting we want the failed U.S. congressional system of governance, but I suggest if we wish to incorporate the already culturally assimilated Lincoln's paraphrase of the U.S. Constitution into our voting process, the elected MLA's listening to their constituents instead of having to keep one eye on their controlling Party leaders would be a good place to start.

I understand this will be dismissed out of hand, but rest assured, I have said my piece and I am not the only B.C. voter thinking this way and we are not part of the lunatic fringe. ***I would ask this concept be thrown it into the mix, for in my opinion, it is far superior to some of the other ideas being considered.***

By the way, we have had a wonderful MLA for many years and we are blessed to have him, however, I know many people voted against him solely because of his party alignment and it would be a shame for us to lose him as MLA on this account. I believe he and others like him would be permanent fixtures as MLA's if not for party politics – isn't that what we really want?

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, December 16, 2017 5:32 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Should be Voting

Yes, I filled out the questionnaire.

I'm not a political savant so forgive any misunderstandings of the political system that I might reveal ... this is a layman's understanding, similar to the majority of the electorate.

Your list of Different Voting Systems did the same thing that the Federal one did, leave out the most obvious and easiest one to implement ... WHY do we always look for the most complicated and think that that is a good idea? The method that I propose below is one suitable for BC.

The overlooked component of all the alternatives (to FPTP) that I've seen is 'earthling level transparency' If a computer program is doing this magical computation and spitting out an answer that a regular person will never have the data to duplicate, **it isn't transparent and it isn't proportional** if you throw out votes or play the first choice, second choice game. That's just a shell game to persuade the electorate that it was them who decided; it has to be fully obvious, truly proportional and SIMPLE to understand. We don't need multiple representatives from a single riding nor to expand the legislature to accommodate more voices to argue amongst themselves and an unnecessary, I'm sure ridiculous cost to go along with them.

[I give as example the 13 municipal jurisdictions for an area 20km by 45km containing about 350,000 electorate (you know where I'm speaking of) ... quite a ridiculous bunch of thiefdoms that refuse to consolidate, simplify nor save needless bureaucratic expense.]

If we will be calling it "Proportional Representation" then every single vote in the legislature needs to reflect every single vote cast in the election. The most precise name to call the method I propose is **Proportional Legislative Voting Power "PLVP"** ... this is extremely easy to do with no real changes to the present system, yet it satisfies all the requirements.

Here's the method forward: continue with FPTP **BUT prorate** each MLA's **voting power** to reflect the provincial vote percentage of that party. Explained differently, if the MLA's party gets 47% of the seats but 42% of the actual votes, then the MLA has the **Proportional Legislative Voting Power** of 0.89 ... not 1.0 ... an electorate's vote always, in some way is being counted, just not necessarily by their elected representative ... the only ones who won't be represented will be those who voted for an MLA whose party won no seats, a far cry from up to half of the electorate not being represented now.

Advantages: Almost **no changes to the present system** are required (actually, visibly none whatsoever) so it's easy to understand ... **anyone can do the calculation** as the numbers are already available, so **it's transparent** ... both **MLAs and Parties are proportionally represented** at the same time ... **KISS.**

Disadvantages: Well, you'll have to wire each MLA's seat with a button ... but find me a real one.

This system (**PLVP**) could be declared by referendum and **implemented the next day** ... even before the next election, it's that easy !

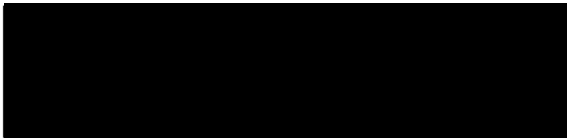
Yes, each MLA will have to be at their seat in the Legislature to push the button for every vote ... and this will be data instantaneously digitally available to the public (who was there, who was not, how they voted and what was voted on) - after all we are moving forward, right? ... I for one will trust that the computer will add up the votes properly and I trust the electorate to keep the MLAs honest (OMG).

Two more things that need to be implemented:

- **NO CROSSING THE FLOOR MIDTERM** ... should this be attempted, an MLA has obviously stepped down by default - not serving the remainder as an independent - in fairness to the electorate, this should trigger a by-election at the very least.
 - you can't get the CEO job at Shell and expect to one day decide that you'd rather be CEO at Esso and expect that this can be done with a few strokes of a pen.
- **MLAs HAVE TO BE ABLE TO GET FIRED** ... should an MLA show incompetence or inability to perform regular duties, the electorate needs to be able to run them off.
 - this is a job like any other, job security at the cost of the electorate should not be expected, condoned nor allowed ... no (party) union protection.

If you are actually going to do this, do it right and completely ... keep it simple ... take my counsel.

Sincerely,



[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 5, 2018 12:13 PM
To: Citizen Engagement GCPE:EX
Subject: How We Vote - Proportional Representation, Computerized Results and Redistricting

Ministry of Attorney General
Please find my input to the "How We Vote " below.

Method

I would prefer proportional representation over first past the post. This I believe will make everyone's vote count. It seems however that because of the complexity of counting that some sort of computerized counting would eventually be required.

Computer Voting Process

For a computerized system to be such that it can be validated it would require the ability for every voter to be able to check their vote after the election. Imagine the following scenario...

A voter goes to the poll where his name is checked to be a voter. The voter is then allowed to reach into a box of codes from which the voter selects one. He is then allowed into a voting booth and inputs the code into the computer screen. The voter is taken to a window where the voter can vote for the candidates. Once the result is submitted the machine spits out a receipt that contains the code used to vote with and the results of the voters choices.

At anytime after the election the voter should be able to go online using the voters voting code and receive the same results as he input in the voting poll. This way everyone could check and validate their results.

A random group of volunteer voters could work with the election staff to verify their votes and have the staff check that against the actual database.

Redistrict

It is also important that the district divisions be fairly drawn. I have noticed over the years that those in power redistrict...I suspect in their favour. I would like this to be revisited and fixed by a bipartisan committee

All the best,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 16, 2018 10:44 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc:
Subject: How We Vote

[REDACTED]

Submission to:

Ministry of Attorney General
Citizen Engagement/How We Vote Project
PO Box 9044 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC
V8W 9E2

Among my issues around voting systems in BC, I rank proportional representation (PR) (giving equal weight and effect given to all votes registered voters) as my chief concern.

It seems incongruous that all of BC's current major parties, NDP, Liberal and Green use a variation of Single Transferable Vote (STV) to elect their leaders, while the general elections use the use the First Past The Post (FPTP) system to elect their provincial government. The FTPT is, in its tendencies, both unnecessary and very inequitable. It should be changed to a PR system.

All of the survey options addressing PR in the survey questionnaire and try to balance multiple values: simplicity, local vs. regional representation, proportionality and so on. Since the STV system seems to place highest priority on PR, I see it as the best match for my values, and a reasonable, acceptable match with other values I hold.

Also, after seeing myself and friends attempt to respond to the survey's questions, I see the difference that the time and concentration devoted to boosting our knowledge of voting systems can make in our responses. Presenting all of the PR options in a referendum might leave many voters confused, reduce referendum turnout and cast doubt on the validity of the referendum. For this reason, I favour a referendum with only the FPTP and the STV options.

Thanks for your consideration and your efforts,

[REDACTED]

Dear: Ministry of Attorney General,

Why are all the options so complicated, and costly with an increase in MLAs? What I think would be simple and work much better than FPP, I guess I would call it simplified single transferable vote (SSTV).

It is really simple:

- 1) Keep the current number and set up of ridings
- 2) Each person ranks their choices 1,2, 3...
- 3) The #1s are counted if someone has 50% or more they get the seat
- 4) If no one gets 50% you take the votes for the person who had the least and count their #2 votes, if some one now has 50% they are elected if not continue with the next fewest votes and keep going until someone has 50% of the vote.

Much simpler no calculating value of votes in the 2nd round, every vote counts the same.

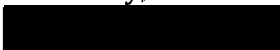
No increased cost of reorganizing ridings.

No increased cost of having more MLAs

Larger ridings do NOT work well for the sparsely populated northern ¾ of the province.

If the options on the web site are the only ones on the table I will be voting to keep the FPP system that we have.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 6, 2018 2:46 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote

The survey's description of Single Transferable Vote is incorrect. Multiple MLAs are not elected.

Sent from my iPhone

Tapiador, Almira AG:EX

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 6, 2018 11:53 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote

Dear people,

I'm a great believer in the KISS (keep it simple stupid) system. It would have been advantageous if with each "Voting System" you describe in "How We Vote" you would have also included a sample ballot as to what we would expect to see presented for each system.

thank you,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, February 4, 2018 3:03 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote

My main concern is with how the results of a vote on our system will be tabulated. Will it be by default a FPTP system? It seems to me that if this is the case, the incumbent system has an unfair advantage over alternatives simply due to the fact that it is better understood by many voters. The more alternative systems proposed, the less likely we are to have a change. Why not have our system be chosen by a clearly more representative method like ranked ballot! If chosen by a vote for one system only method, I envision a result where the majority would want a change (to a more proportional system) but their votes would be "split" and the result would be no change since no one system would be preferred by as many as FPTP. If a ranked ballot were used in changing the system, a more representative result would be ensured.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, February 3, 2018 5:21 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote

My opinion and thoughts on electoral reform are as follows,

The only system that would be better than the present first past the post system (if a new system is needed) is a system where voters can rank the candidates in the order of their own personal preference (i.e. 1st choice, 2nd choice, etc.). Then if there is no outright winner (i.e. 50% + 1 vote) then the candidate with the least number of votes is dropped and all of his/her 2nd choice votes are counted and given their 2nd choice candidate. Any other system is too complicated and does not properly represent the will of the people. As an example, giving a percentage of seats to a party based on the overall percentage of votes in the whole of the province will not be a true representation of the voter's wishes. How do you decide what seats go to what parties and who loses their seat that they have won.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, February 3, 2018 8:31 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote

Dear Sir or Madam.

As I see Proportional voting on the Federal Level, and every fourth year, the decision is made by the greater population in the East; I have the dissatisfaction of knowing that my vote does **nothing**.

I would prefer to **NOT** have a system in BC where by Vancouver voters make the decision, and again my Vote does nothing!

Thank you.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 2, 2018 11:09 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote

Importance: High

I do not like any of the options in this latest questionnaire! Keep individual seats in the same ridings but with 1st,2nd,3rd etc choice selections transferred if your first etc choice is dropped from the bottom until one candidate gets a majority of the votes from first, second, etc vote choices. This ensures that a majority support a candidate in some way. Will take longer to count and assign votes unless it is done electronically but causes no increase in seats, cost or complication, maintains local representation and eliminates chance of vote rigging. STV is close but not wanted.

Yours
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 2, 2018 9:10 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote

I know there are several types of Proportional Representation and I have experience of only one, which is [REDACTED], where I grew up.

I had always thought PR was a good idea but the implementation has turned out to be a DISASTER in South Africa, for a few reasons.

- The first is that you do not vote for a person, you vote for a Party. Then the Party selects who the person will be. This means that the only way to get voted in is to be in the good books of the Party.
- The next consequence of this is that there is no way to get rid of someone in the Legislature. Only the Party can do that.
- The third problem is that it is a strong disincentive for anyone to express a dissenting opinion. If you do not toe the Party line, your name can suddenly not be on the List any more.

I know some of the other PR systems attempt to address these problems, but then you are venturing into even more complicated systems, which only a small percentage of the population will understand. Even the South African system is far more complicated than our current system and a considerable percentage of the population will not even understand it. Which is de facto disenfranchisement.

We have seen what happens when complex issues are put to Referendums as they did with the Brexit vote. Let's not fall into that trap.

Respectfully

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPad

[REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

[REDACTED]
Thursday, February 1, 2018 4:50 PM

To:

Subject:

[REDACTED]
HOW WE VOTE

I am opposed to any changes in the current voting system. To make it even more easily understood, I am in favour of the First Past the Post system with no proportional representation of any kind. I am [REDACTED] years old and have lived in B.C. all my life.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 1, 2018 1:20 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote

Ballot Initiatives (citizen's Referendums)

The now ruling NDP party, with the help of the Greens are trying to figure out their priorities for changing things for the better in BC. Part of this is a future referendum on changing the voting system in BC. Please consider changing the ballot initiative process for the province, and also for local governments, so citizens can have more control of their governments. Please read through my thoughts here and consider having me, someone else, or a group of interested citizens, research changing the ballot initiative process in BC. Changing this could have long term positive effects, even if the NDP and Greens do not remain in power. Imagine if the citizens of BC, or those in a local area like that of the site C dam, could have voted to end the Grizzly hunt, or site C dam or end the Kinder Morgan pipeline even though the BC Liberals were still in power. We need to make that possible but we need to do it in a way that the corporations and the rich and powerful cannot take advantage of. That is why the research needs to be done on how to change ballot initiative laws, so the laws are not changed in a way that could allow the majority of citizens to be taken advantage of by corporations and the ultra rich. Ballot Initiatives (Referendums) work very well in several other places, like in Switzerland and to some extent in California and Oregon.

When I started working at [REDACTED] in [REDACTED], very few people used computers. When I left [REDACTED] in [REDACTED], everyone was using computers. That was a PARADIGM SHIFT! If the planet is to be saved from climate change, we need a Paradigm Shift for Democracy in North America and around the world! Ballot Initiatives, if the process is done properly, could allow that Paradigm Shift.

Definition of Paradigm Shift:

- “an important change that happens when the usual way of thinking about or doing something is replaced by a new and different way”, or “a time when the usual and accepted way of doing or thinking about something changes completely”.

1. Things many BC citizens are frustrated about:

- a. Healthcare quality, funding and pay for healthcare workers
- b. Lack of Public School funding and the government funding private schools
- c. The minimum wage in the province
- d. The privatization of BC Ferries, BC Hydro and the increases in costs of both
- e. No local (municipal or regional district) control over water rights and logging of forests used by local citizens. The current system in BC, with the province making arbitrary decisions about local forest cutbacks and water systems, reminds me of what the colonists did controlling first nations people's land many years ago. The government keeps talking about reconciliation and yet they do similar things to their current citizens.
- f. Uncontrolled clearcut logging of BC's old-growth forests
- g. Shipping of raw logs from BC & loss of various BC timber improvement jobs
- h. Site C Dam (again, the local people and First Nations there have had no say)
- i. Kinder Morgan Pipeline Expansion (more economic and environmental risk to BC than benefits to BC)
- j. Many Issues where local governments don't do what the local majority of their citizens want

Citizens should be able to force a vote to change these or any other government policies in BC, regardless of what government is currently in power. For the citizens in BC to force a vote that will change the law, petitions have to be signed, within 90 days, by 10% of all the voters in ALL THE RIDINGS IN BC. This is so impossible to do, it has only ever been done once to get rid of the HST. All other efforts to put an initiative on the ballot in BC have failed. It needs to be easier for a group of citizens to put an issue on the provincial, regional or municipal ballot!

2. Places where Ballot Initiatives are commonly used and links with information:

Please read how ballot initiatives (referendums) work in these other locations and you'll see that in all these cases it's easier for citizens to get an initiative on a provincial or local ballot.

a. Switzerland:

<https://www.ch.ch/en/political-rights/>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/1435383/How-direct-democracy-makes-Switzerland-a-better-place.html>

b. California:

<https://oag.ca.gov/initiatives>

c. Oregon: (click on Initiative and Referendum, Chapter 250)

<http://sos.oregon.gov/elections/Pages/laws-rules.aspx>

3. Common Problems with Ballot Initiatives and a proposal to fix these problems:

a. It's too difficult to get an initiative on the ballot. To fix this I propose:

Take a look at the requirement in Switzerland, California and Oregon to get initiatives on the ballot in those places. Talk to Governments, organizations and citizens who've done that in those places and try to come up with something that will work for BC so it's easier to get an initiative on the ballot but not so easy that it becomes an irritation or problem. Oregon has a similar population to BC so their system might be closer to what would work for us.

b. Arguments for and against a ballot initiative are misleading and not truthful:

Oregon seems to have a reasonable way to come up with truthful pro and con arguments (download pdf files 250.pdf and 251.pdf from the Oregon link above and read sections:

"250.139 Citizen panels; composition; compensation; selection and review of certain state measures; moderators; rules" and "STATE INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM PAMPHLET 251.185 Measures, estimates, statements and arguments included in voters' pamphlet; county and metropolitan service district measures"
among others, to see how Oregon does this)

c. Advertising for and against ballot initiatives:

Any add for or against a ballot initiative should legally be required to remind voters that they will have to read the information that comes on the ballot, when they vote, and remind voters that the ballot information has been legally processed to remove untruthful and misleading information.

d. People vote on ballot initiatives without reading and understanding the arguments for or against those initiatives:

To actually vote on a ballot initiative, all voters should be required to read the information that comes with the ballot and take a quiz to show that they have read and understand that information. That will help stop people voting based on just their emotions and/or what their friends, employers, unions, family, etc. tell them to do. The pro and con arguments, reading of those and competence to vote tests should be done ahead of the vote. (Most people laugh when I suggest requiring people to show they understand the real issues before they vote. For most paradigm shifts, this rejection of the potential new paradigm happens initially. People don't want to believe that something could happen in a totally different way. Then the change happens and a few years later, people just see it as the new norm. During the [redacted] years I worked there in the [redacted] even when introducing new technology at [redacted] many employee's reacted this way. Most people have a hard time "thinking differently", thinking out of the box.

I believe that Oregon's ballot by mail system works pretty well and gives voters lots of time to make their decisions. The final ballot, that the voter mails back is enclosed in a secrecy envelope that does not have the voter's name on it but that envelope is enclosed in an outside envelope that the voter has to sign. I believe this is safer, and less hackable, than electronic voting over the internet or on a voting machine at the voting booth. The paper ballots, and the signature envelopes, can be saved in-case a recount is required.

4. The commitment, by both the NDP and Greens, should be that the ballot initiative process will become easier and better within the first two years of the new BC NDP/Green coalition government.

Citizens in BC are fed up with politicians promising things then selling out to Corporations and those who pay for what they want. Politicians and Government employees are supposed to be working for the citizens, not the corporations. If the Greens and NDP commit to working together to enact a better ballot initiative process, that process will still be in place even if the BC Liberals or Conservatives regain power one day and that will give power to the citizens of BC on a variety of issues.

Ballot Initiatives is a great way to empower citizens to enact change no matter what party is in power. I'd like the NDP and Greens to discuss and work on a better ballot initiative process so CITIZENS can vote on issues like the ones on page 2 of this discussion. Please let me know how I can help make this a reality.

Thanks!

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 1, 2018 1:42 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote

I would like to make a suggestion.. that persons should be prompted to read the definitions prior to completing the survey

[REDACTED]

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 1, 2018 9:56 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: "How We Vote"

Thank you for the opportunity to make a written submission as part of the *How We Vote* public engagement process, which I do below as a private individual and resident of BC.

There are many serious problems with any party-political electoral system. For example, party politics wastes enormous amounts of time and money; candidates are selected by the party machine based on their probability of being elected, rather than for any useful qualifications; the candidates are elected by an electorate that is either largely disinterested, uninformed, or deliberately misinformed; and once elected the candidates represent their party's wishes (and often their personal interests) instead of the electorate's.

When BC convened its Citizens' Assembly to consider the question of proportional representation, the unelected members appeared to do an excellent job of examining the choices and making their final recommendation, but politics and a misinformed electorate doomed the exercise to failure. Today we are proposing to ask a similar electorate to choose a new system. If they couldn't make an informed decision when the hard work had already been done for them, how do you think they are going to fare this time?

We would do far better to abandon political parties and elections entirely, and to follow the example of that Citizens' Assembly. We could construct a government drawn at random from "qualified" citizens who agree to their candidacy by indicating thus on their tax returns (for example). A "qualified" citizen might be someone who: is a citizen of Canada, is over a certain age, does not have a criminal record, has been a resident of BC for some minimum period of time, and has achieved some minimum level of education.

Citizens might volunteer for a fixed term of between, say, one and five years and would be granted paid leave from their employers (much like maternity leave). Differing terms would create a steady turnover of representatives, thus avoiding abrupt discontinuities. Because they would be chosen at random, there would be no politically-correct distortions caused by a perceived need to ensure equal representation based on age, gender, geographical region, ethnicity, first language, and so on.

The Assembly could follow an agenda that is set, or at least directly influenced, by the electorate. Representatives would work in committees from which they would excuse themselves in the event of a personal conflict of interest. They would work together following briefings from subject-matter experts and supported by a strong public service, which would ultimately lead to decisions that were made in the best interests of the residents of BC and were free of party politics and the need to be re-elected. There would be no incentive to leave difficult decisions for the next government to deal with.

Overall, we would have a government comprising informed, engaged citizens from a wide range of backgrounds who want to do their best for their province. They would not be concerned about the need to be re-elected, and thus their behaviour would be free from the constant bickering and self-promotion that drains so many of our resources. They would not have to worry about their political or subsequent careers and would not be given gold-plated pensions. We would not be plagued by special-interest groups, influence-peddlers, lobbyists, vote-buying, fund-raising dinners, thinly-disguised party advertising, and pay-for-access schemes.

I have no doubt that many people would be outraged by this suggestion and would quickly and energetically go into great detail over how this is undemocratic and why it can't possibly work. I would hope that they would be able to step back for a moment and imagine how effective government could be if it were constructed along these lines, and then to look for ways to make it work instead of ways for making it fail.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, January 27, 2018 8:46 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote

I am a senior and have been voting in this province for [REDACTED] years. Other seniors I have spoken to are always telling me "we don't understand what proportional representation is all about."
Their must be a concerted effort to get the message out to the public at large, and seniors in particular in order to make this proposal fly.
People need to go to seniors homes and residences and explain in "plain speak" exactly what this system is all about. When asked – I use the partition of 100 to try and give people a clearer picture.
If a party gets 43% of the popular vote – they get 43% of the seats {or as closely as possible} This is overly simplistic – but they can at least understand it. [This may be a hard sell in light of the resistance ads I expect will be run by anyone who doesn't want to see their "party" lose power in the legislature.
Something to be considered !
Thank you

[REDACTED]

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

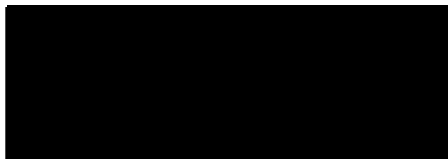
Election Reform Feedback

I had considered myself to be reasonably knowledgeable about election systems throughout the world. Hence I seemed competent enough to complete the survey on engage BC. However after reading the information on the 'engage' website, and researching voting systems throughout the world, including Samara Canada and ACE Project, I realize how woefully unprepared I am to make an informed decision on this matter. Furthermore, I suspect that I am typical of the voters in BC who have been asked to complete a survey and soon to vote on the possibility of an alternative.

It seems apparent that neither the Government nor the Engagement Committee can or should expect that the citizens of BC will do their own due diligence and research the status of voting systems in the rest of the world. With that in mind, it seems absolutely mandatory that the general public be flooded with information concerning the manner in which the vast majority of civilized democratic countries conduct their electoral systems. Only then will they have the knowledge which will enable them to make an informed decision about the matter at hand.

Whether or not it may be perceived to be biased in moving forward with the election reform ballot, the Government needs to accept the challenge of educating its citizens, or at the very least, provide sufficient funds to non-partisan groups to provide the necessary information to British Columbians.

Your careful consideration of this submission would be greatly appreciated.



[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 26, 2018 7:13 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote

Justification for adequate representation is particularly recognizable in districts that contribute heavily to the provincial coffers but on average get only 1% of that value back in services. An example of this is the Peace River/Liard Districts who on average contribute almost 25% of the net revenues to provincial coffers and receive only a pittance in return. Extra representation for contribution would be justified. This would spur under performing regions to apply themselves more energetically and become major contributors as well, it is a win win and justification.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, January 25, 2018 8:07 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote

I am writing in response to the Electoral Reform process.

I like the MMM proposal as long as the majority (80%) come from the FPTP riding elections.

The remaining 20% would come from the proportionate voting with the following restrictions;

- Each party would need an internal elections process to have a pool valid candidates to choose from; avoid cronyism
- The 20% should be split into regions to ensure all areas of the province are covered
- Parties would need to reveal their list ahead of the election, with profiles

I like this method as it provides us with a modest step towards proportionate representation. We could vote again in 10 years time to see if people are still approving the system or want further changes.

Thanks for all your efforts.

[REDACTED]

**Advisability of the BC Citizens
Assembly STV recommendation.**

**Submission to the Attorney General
reporting on electoral reform to the British Columbia
government. (January 2018).**

New Zealand Royal Commission on electoral reform recommended the Mixed Member Proportional system (MMP), being influenced by the UK Labour Party Plant report, objecting to “intra-party competition” in Irish elections by the single transferable vote (STV). (Nick Loenen: Citizenship and Democracy.) The preliminary Plant report noted that less threatening to incumbency was the Additional Member System (a.k.a. MMP).

The UK Labour Party rejected democratic arbitration, thru in-built primaries, that STV gives. Instead, vicious in-fighting accompanied purges by the ascendant wing, formerly new Labour, now the left.

A transferable vote offers democratic arbitration across parties, as well as within parties. Voters can prefer individual candidates, not only within parties, but of more than one party, establishing which coalition most voters prefer. This could save months of post-election haggling by the parties to form a government.

When New Zealanders voted for electoral reform, a second referendum gave them a First Past The Post (FPTP) choice of reforms. When a poll showed MMP to be slightly in the lead, people voted strategically “like lemmings” for MMP, so as not to split the votes between reforms having a proportional count. (Graham Kelly, NZ High Commissioner to Canada, submission to Ontario CA.)

A democratic referendum on voting methods need not produce a democratic voting method.

An election referendum is a paradox. Knowledge of how to elect an election precludes having to elect it. An election cannot be elected in ignorance of how to elect it.

Voting method is not a matter of opinion but a matter of demonstration. It is amenable to scientific treatment, like anything else. (HG Wells, 1916. The Elements of Reconstruction.)

A court requires expert witness on specialist subjects, not uninformed testimony, from no matter how many members of the general public.

Mass ignorance, of electoral reform, showed when the mass media never got beyond the false dichotomy, of either Ranked Ballots or Proportional Representation, in which the Liberal premier framed the terms of the debate.

Informing opinion was the point of the independent BC Citizens Assembly. It started in favor of MMP, the only system with organised publicity, from the NDP and Greens, who, it turned out, were hostile to STV.

The more tutelaged Ontario Citizens Assembly yet followed much the same trajectory, as the BC CA, but ended, while its decisions were still changing. We can not know what its settled recommendation would have been. Their chairman George Thompson said they didn't have enough time to do their job.

The first BC referendum observed the contempt of court rule, meaning that only factual information was allowed on the working of the contested electoral systems, not prejudicial party campaigning, subject to conflict of interest.

Whereas, the second BC referendum allowed a propaganda of unsubstantiated assertions. For example, a No-to-STV tv advert alarmed about huge constituencies. But the BC CA members, from rural and urban ridings, amicably agreed on as little as a 2-member riding for the vast wilderness constituencies; a province average of four or five, and no more than seven.

Provincial elections in Edmonton and Calgary had 5 to 7 member STV constituencies for over 30 years. Winnipeg had a 10 member STV constituency.

A years special learning by the BC CA was unlearned by the general public in a 30 second tv advert.

The provincial parliament discredited the BC CA recommendation, with two 60% barriers against the referendum vote, like police road-blocks of escaping criminals. This was not in the terms of engagement, to the CA, but imposed later, without consent. This double 60% referendum requirement was unlawful breach of contract.

Moreover, Patrick Boyer QC, held that the BC government transgressed the democratic constitution of Canada, which would have allowed Québec to leave the Federation, on over 50% of referendum votes.

Political contestants cannot be their own referees. Sport testifies to human frailty, as competition results require judgment independent from the contestants. All credit to politicians, who recognised this reality, by establishing the BC CA, under such free and fruitful conditions.

The projected third electoral reform referendum is like a match, in which the home team (the NDP-Green government) disregards the rulings of the referees (the BC CA), and appeals, for a judgment, over their heads, to the spectators (currently comprising a joint partisan majority) to out-manoeuvre the most, with the least, scientific and democratic

election method.

Peace-making Power-sharing, my book, on the Citizens Assemblies, appends 1981 UNESCO article (in French): *Modèle Scientifique du Procès Electoral*.

An expanded version is the eponymous chapter of my second electoral e-book: *Scientific Method Of Elections*. (STV follows four main scales of scientific measurement.)

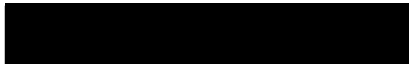
The Spanish-speaking world has come out with the first World Electoral Freedom Index 2018:

“In fact, only Ireland, which leads the 2018 ranking, reached an outstanding level of electoral freedom, slightly exceeding the 80 points out of a maximum possible 100. Among other virtues, Ireland is one of the few countries with a single transferable vote system...”

The 1979 audit of the Electoral Reform Society records the gratitude of the British medical profession for replacing the FPTP election of all white male GPs to the GMC, with STV proportionally representing women, immigrants, and specialists.

December 2017 report on the Welsh Assembly recommends changing from AMS (a.k.a. MMP) to STV. So did the Richard report, because the doubly safe seat MMP system of dual candidature denies voters the fundamental democratic right to reject candidates.

The first convener of the Scottish parliament, David Steel, in his Edinburgh library speech, criticised the “democratic deficit” of AMS and urged change to STV. In 2017, a former Scottish First Minister Henry McLeish thought all MPs should be elected on a proportional basis, and former FM Jack McConnell criticised the party lists half of the hybrid system, in giving jobs for life.



[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 12, 2018 1:02 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote

I applaud the approach of the BC Government to the issue of electoral reform and look forward to participating in the fall plebiscite.

I believe those considering the next steps would do well to take a look at how the situation in the UK has evolved on this issue, as no fewer than six different methods of voting are now in use there for different levels of government in that country.

Opponents of change in Canada seem only to be aware of the failed British referendum on Westminster voting in 2011 — and again, the BC Government would do well to learn any lessons from that, as there are several.

It seems from the enabling legislation here that the most important lesson has been learned - that there should be a two part question, the first dealing with whether we want a change at all from first-past-the-post, the second offering options for alternatives if the first question results in a desire for change. I warmly welcome that, and hope there will be no backtracking on the approach.

What follows is my response to a letter opposing change which had been published in the Comox Valley Record on January 9 2018. In it I have tried to make the point about the UK lessons. I am formally submitting it here to make the points to a wider audience than the Comox Valley, where I am a resident and voter. I would be happy to provide more information, contacts or links of required, as I am a dual citizen of the UK and Canada.

[REDACTED]

Letter submitted to the Comox Valley Record:

In opposing any change to the way we vote, correspondent [REDACTED] (Record, 9 January) describes the existing first-past-the-post method of casting ballots as “a workable system, given to us and most of the world’s democracies by the British Parliament.”

While that may be true, many western democracies have long since ditched the old winner-takes-all system because it does not adequately or fairly represent the true views of voters, especially in places where there are more than two parties on the ballot.

And while Britain itself still uses first-past-the-post for its Westminster elections, it has progressively changed the voting system used for several other levels of government. For the past 20 years, it has used proportional representation nationally for the election of UK members of the European Parliament, and has also switched to fairer voting systems for the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Assembly, all municipal elections in Scotland, the London Assembly, and the election of city mayors in England.

Interestingly, six different voting systems are used in different parts of the UK, but all the systems make people's votes count in more effective ways, and — contrary to a popular myth put about by opponents — voters are quite comfortable voting in different ways than simply marking a single X.

When Ireland was on the cusp of switching to proportional representation, objectors argued no one would understand the system. Voting was (and is) as simple as 1,2,3 — putting candidates in order of preference on the ballot paper. The complication comes in the counting, but as independent election officials are trained to do that, it is not something that bothers voters.

It is true that a UK referendum to change the voting system for Westminster elections failed in 2011, despite opinion polls suggesting a clear majority wanted to scrap first-past-the-post. In my view, the problem was there was only one question on the ballot, alongside which voters had to write Yes or No. Many supporters of proportional representation could not bring themselves to vote for a half-way house of the proposed Alternative Vote system, and opted to live with first-past-the post until the opportunity arose for a second go round (which has yet to happen).

The new BC Government seems to have learned this lesson by proposing two elements to the provincial plebiscite this fall. First, a decision for or against first-past-the-post, followed by a second question about alternatives. That sounds like a fair and even-handed approach to me.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Submission to How We Vote British Columbia

Introduction: This submission explains Single Member District Proportional Representation (SMDPR), which is a proportional representation (PR) electoral system. Because SMDPR is more highly proportional, and retains Canada's single member constituencies, it is superior to both Single Transferrable Vote (STV) and Mixed Member Proportional Representation (MMPR) systems.

Theory and experience have established conclusively that there is no such thing as a perfect electoral system. But, there are constitutionally better classes of system than British Columbia's current First Past the Post (FPTP). This submission is about SMDPR, but any PR system would be an improvement.

Much of the following is federally oriented, but applies to Provinces equally well.

By way of analogy, the following non-academic description of SMDPR examines the forest—its boundaries and rivers—instead of the trees. A more thorough presentation of electoral reform for Canada, and how SMDPR uniquely meets its demands, will be available in *Canada Votes: Representation at its Constitutional Best*, currently in publication. In the mean time, if the demand is not overwhelming, the author may be contacted at reformvote@eastlink.ca

To make Canada's single member representation proportional—with minimal change to the plurality rule—SMDPR is the best option.

Why so?

Democracy means 'rule by the people', but since groups of people are rarely unanimous, democracy has come to mean 'majority rule', where majority means more than half.

The "Carter" ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada held that every Canadian citizen's vote, federally and provincially, should provide effective representation:

"Representation comprehends the idea of having a voice in the deliberations of government." (Carter 1991).

Majority rule therefore can only refer to making a decision, not to having a voice in making a decision: it should not be used to exclude voices from the House through elections.

Votes in Parliament are always between two options—pass a law or don’t—for which, the majority rule is well suited. It is an accident of history that the majority rule came to be used in selecting representatives for ridings, for which it is totally inappropriate in a democracy.

So long as there are only two candidates in an election, the majority rule has a superficial attractiveness for deciding who represents a riding—“The candidate with more than half the votes wins”. In a race of three or more candidates, the majority rule is replaced by the plurality rule, which says, “The candidate with the most votes wins”.

During its first fifty years, Canada had only two political parties, but that situation changed forever with the advent of the Progressive party in the 1921 election: since then there have always been at least three parties. There is strong technical evidence that this change was a direct result of the inadequacies of applying majority rule to deciding elections between even only two parties.¹

In all but two of the 29 federal elections in Canada since 1921, the party forming Government has been supported by less than half of the voters. The exceptions were, Mackenzie King’s Liberal Government of 1940, and the Progressive Conservative Government of John Diefenbaker in 1958. In other words, the last true majority Government in Canada was 60 years ago.

Today because of the plurality rule, the party forming Government is routinely supported by less than 40 percent of votes cast.

As a result, the majority rule—appropriately used in Parliament—has resulted in legislation and authorized expenditures with the support of less than 40 percent of the voters.

But that’s not the whole story.

As mentioned, the “Carter” ruling held that an effective vote is one that provides a voice in the deliberations of government, i.e. a voice in the House.

From the perspective of effectiveness, there are three types of plurality vote: losing, winning, and surplus. Votes needed for a candidate to win are effective. Losing and surplus votes are not effective, because they do not provide the voter with an equal voice in the deliberations of government. They provide a chance for a voice, or part of a voice: but the constitutional guarantee is of an equal voice, not just for a chance, or some part, of a voice.

¹ Contact [REDACTED] for pre-print of the relevant portion of [REDACTED]

Only 30 percent of votes cast in Canadian federal elections since 1867 have been effective in the sense of the “Carter” ruling: 70 percent have not been effective. Only slightly more than half of the effective votes have been for the party forming Government, the rest were for multiple parties forming Opposition.²

Therefore, as a means of deciding elections—i.e. deciding who has a voice in the deliberations of government—the plurality rule has historically silenced seventy percent of Canadian voters. Laws have been passed and expenditures authorized based on the effective votes of a little more than 15 percent of the voters.

What a sorry, undemocratic state of affairs.

Clearly Canada needs another way of electing its MPs, one that places the focus on effective vote, as the Constitution demands.

When Parliament applies the plurality rule to enact laws, it should do so supported by at least half the country’s voters—not by a special-interest political minority that has gamed the system for a false majority. As with the Constitution, people, not parties, should be the focus of Parliament.

It is a fact that the only viable way to keep single member riding representation, while giving a voice to all voters, is to relax the plurality rule.

All PR systems relax the plurality rule: SMDPR the very least amount necessary. In the process of relaxing the plurality rule, STV and MMPR destroy Canada’s existing single member representation: SMDPR does not.

How does SMDPR manage this?

The principle of PR is to make every vote count: if a party receives 39 percent of the vote it should be allotted 39 percent of the seats in the House. Respecting Canada’s federal nature, this must also apply to federal election results in Provinces (or parts of larger Provinces). SMDPR calls a region of the country in which the PR rule applies, i.e. where votes are effective, an effective-vote region.

SMDPR proportionally allots seats to parties in effective-vote regions, which makes it the most proportional system possible for Canada. It also does this in a way that removes the possibility of fiddling with riding boundaries for partisan advantage, ensures perfect parity between votes regardless of riding size, can better represent minorities, and prevents regionalization of political parties.³

But, which party candidates should sit in Parliament, and from which ridings?

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

To the greatest degree possible, the voters in each riding should decide who fills the allotted seats. Proportional seat allotment having afforded everyone a voice in the deliberations of government, the plurality rule can decide the rest.

SMDPR ranks all party candidates on the basis of local votes, and then matches the top candidates to their parties' seat allotments.

Excellent! Simple!

But, what if two candidates clash by being matched to the same riding?

SMDPR decides such a clash upon purely local results: by the plurality rule, the winning candidate is the one with the most votes and the other candidates are defeated.

Resolving a clash in this way does not change the allotment of seats for the parties of the defeated candidates: each losing party's allotment is topped up with the party's highest-ranked, un-defeated candidate. Since this action may also result in clashes, the procedure is repeated until there are no clashes: all done almost instantaneously by computer. For technical reasons, resolving clashes has a strong positive affect on both party cohesion and the influence of MPs within their own parties.⁴

Once there are no clashes, matched candidates are declared elected.

How does this look from the candidate's perspective?

In order to win, an SMDPR candidate must:

- a) Belong to a party proportionally allotted seats
- b) Have a high enough vote in their own riding to command one of those seats, and
- c) Defeat any other local candidate satisfying a) and b)

As a result of its higher bar for winning, SMDPR MPs are more accountable: if a sitting MP does not poll well, s/he will likely not command one of his/her party's proportionally allotted seats on re-election.

SMDPR seems perfect!

What's the problem? There must be something to dislike.

That would be the effect of making the plurality rule subject to the rule of proportional representation, of doing what the Constitution demands. Adopting SMDPR means about one-in-five ridings will have a representative who was not the most popular local candidate.

⁴ Ibid.

Illogically, it is a shock to people to realize that correcting the unconstitutional effects of the plurality rule can result in the plurality not deciding the result.

Logically, it seems pretty clear that making an omelette breaks eggs. In this case the omelette is an effective vote for all Canadians, and one of the eggs is the plurality rule.

Bear in mind that an effective vote is demanded by the Constitution, while the plurality rule is an accidental anachronism pre-dating Canada's 20th Century democracy by a thousand years. The former has preferred constitutional standing, while the latter is a bad habit.

To add perspective, twelve million, of the seventeen million Canadians who voted in 2015—seventy percent—did not have the effective vote the Constitution guarantees. How can that compare to twenty percent of ridings not getting their local choice? Especially recognizing that the Constitution does not guarantee a democratic voice in the deliberations of government for ridings—only for people.

So, SMDPR seems very much better than FPTP, but what about the main other PR systems? How do they look as alternatives to our current system?"

Both STV and MMPR change everything—the ballot, the ridings, the nature of MPs, and the plurality rule. SMDPR changes only the plurality rule. STV and MMPR make a four-egg omelette: SMDPR makes a one-egg omelette.

Comparatively, SMDPR ignores the plurality rule in favour of proportionality about twenty percent of the time. MMPR ignores the plurality rule thirty-three to fifty percent of the time, and STV ignores the plurality rule about forty percent of the time, both dependent on the effectiveness of amalgamating existing ridings.⁵

Ridings under SMDPR are the same as under FPTP: ridings under MMPR are one-and-a-half times to twice as big as under FPTP, while those under STV are proposed to be seven times bigger.

To make the next point, it is important to know that the Gallagher index is a simple means of measuring how proportional an electoral system is—in the case of Canada, of how constitutional the system is. The lower the Gallagher index the more proportional the system—the more constitutional the system.

SMDPR has a Gallagher index of less than 2. The Gallagher index for STV is between 2 and 8, depending on how ridings are amalgamated, and between 2 and 10 for MMPR, again depending on amalgamation of ridings. FPTP's Gallagher index is over 12 in Canada.

⁵ Ibid.

SMDPR is the most proportional of the viable PR systems.

So, where are we?

SMDPR provides Canada with the simplest constitutional electoral system possible, while retaining and strengthening one-member local representation—all with minimal disruption. It simply makes the plurality rule subject to the rule of proportional representation, as does the Constitution: it can leave the ballots, the ridings, and the nature of MPs as is.

SMDPR, like all PR systems, leaves electing a strong Government up to the voters, not to political parties successfully gaming the electoral system.

Unique in the world, SMDPR can be implemented quickly with an amendment to the Canada Elections Act.

Hard to argue against!

Two questions remain. The first is, “Should the electoral system be decided by referendum?”

No! And, yes!

In a democracy, everyone should have an equal voice: a voice that cannot be silenced by others.

Also, no referendum, or election, can supplant the Constitution, and no referendum can substitute for the sovereign power of the House.

So, there should not be a referendum on keeping FPTP.

On the other hand, the value of different PR systems is somewhat subjective. A referendum might be an appropriate mechanism for the electorate to determine which PR system should be adopted.

The problem is, “How is the average citizen to digest the technical and legal details of the arguments: how can they come to an informed decision—and continue to have a life?”

The answer is, of course, that the people’s representatives are supposed to do this for them. And perhaps they could be trusted to do so if they did not obtain a benefit from the existing system—in other words, if they were already proportionally elected.



But our system is weighted in favour of political parties, not people. So a referendum may be the only way to bludgeon or embarrass some politicians into implementing a PR system—into doing what is constitutional, sensible, and required.

A suitable referendum question should not offer FPTP as an option: it is unconstitutional, and it is the problem. Asking such a question will not make the problem go away, because people generally opt for the devil they know.

The above ‘forest’ description of the values of various PR systems may not be too hard for the average busy, and probably uninterested, voter to digest. But whether it is or it is not, the simplest referendum question might be something like:

**British Columbia’s first-past-the-post electoral system must be made proportional,
in order for everyone to have the effective vote guaranteed by the Constitution—
a vote that gives the voter a voice in the deliberations of government**

**Check each of the following you feel
SHOULD NOT BE CHANGED
in British Columbia’s electoral system**

- ☐ **One MLA per riding**
- ☐ **All MLAs elected in the same way**

**And/Or, check the following
DEFAULT OPTION**

- ☐ **Change as little as possible**

Such a question would make the choice as simple and clear for everyone as possible, given the available options. It is the spur that may unfortunately be needed to get some politicians off their comfortable seats to do the job they’re paid for: to sort out electoral reform as demanded by the Constitution. In the interests of democracy and the people, not themselves!

The second and final remaining question is, “Who should choose and monitor any new electoral system to ensure it remains appropriate and is not abused?”

Partisan politics should not decide electoral systems in the future, just as partisan politics no longer sets riding boundaries in Canada: politics is too slanted to be fair.

Legislators should set electoral policy, which should then be implemented by independent, objective, well-informed minds—with the time and resources to do so in accord with constitutional principles.

Comparison of MMPR, STV, and SMDPR to FPTP

	MMPR	STV	SMDPR	FPTP
Effective Vote	Better	Better	Much Better	-
Gallagher Index	2 to 10	2 to 8	Less than 2	10 to 15
Plurality Rule	Relaxed	Relaxed	Minimally Relaxed	-
Importance of Parity	Greater	Greater	None	-
Gerrymandering	Possible	Possible	Impossible	-
Strategic Voting ¹	Greater	Greater	Less	-
Local Representation	Lees Important	Lees Important	More Important	-
Patronage	Weakened	Weakened	Weakened	-
Number of Ridings	Fewer	Much Fewer	No Change	-
Riding Amalgamation ²	Yes	Yes	No	-
Types of MLA	2	1	1	1
Function of MLA ³	Altered	Altered	No Change	-
Status of MLA ⁴	Lessened	Lessened	Improved	-
Accountability of MLA	Less	Less	Greater	-
Average Riding Size	55,711-74,282	259,987	37,141	37,141
Dilution of Rep. ⁵	Yes	Yes	No	-
Minority Rep. ⁶	Better	Better	Much Better	-
Regionalization ⁷	Lessened	Lessened	Much Lessened	-
Intra-party Competition ⁸	No	Yes	No	-
Changed Campaigning ⁹	Yes	Yes	No	-
Party Riding Org. Change ¹⁰	Yes	Yes	No	-
Party Cohesion ¹¹	Improved	Improved	Mixed	-
Party Financing	Altered	Altered	Same	-
Party Spending	Altered	Altered	Same	-
Party Focus on Riding	Lessened	Lessened	Increased	-
Adaptability	Poor	Poor	Good	-
Cost	Expensive	Expensive	Bargain	-
Count Speed	Same	Slower	Same	-
Ballot	More Complex	More Complex	No Change/Ranked	-
Changed Vote Counting	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Voter Turnout	Better	Better	Better	-

1. The facility to engage in, and potential effectiveness of, strategic voting
2. Formal amalgamation with loss of identity of previous ridings
3. The functions of MLAs compared to under FPTP, and in relation to each other
4. The status of MLAs in their own party, as well as in Parliament
5. Decrease in time available with MLA
6. Capacity for fair representation of minorities arising from the mechanics of the electoral system
7. Chance for regionalization of political parties and of the Province
8. Direct competition between MLAs of the same party
9. Changes made to the non-PR aspects of campaigning, e.g. running a full slate of candidates in each riding
10. Changes made to political party riding associations
11. Centripetal effect on number of provincial parties

Works Cited

Dixon v. B.C. (A.G.). 248 (Supreme Court of British Columbia, Apr 18, 1989).
 Flavey, Denis. *Canada Votes: Constitutional Representation at its Best*. 2018.
Reference Re Prov. Electoral Boundries (Sask.). 22345 (Supreme Court of Canada, June 6, 1991).



[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, January 11, 2018 4:24 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote

I respectfully offer the following submission.

Fundamentally, our parliamentary system of government is based on local representation. An MLA is elected to represent each riding and the number of ridings that exist is based on an attempt to maintain a feeling of connection between riding constituents and their elected MLA. The governing party is the one who wins the most seats. If that party has a majority of seats then it can govern with relative impunity. If it has a minority of seats then it needs to gain the support of another party or parties in order to maintain the confidence of the legislature. Forming government is all about winning seats and only about winning seats.

Overall popular vote percentages across the province, while interesting, have no standing or relevance within the current parliamentary system. Each time that we invoke discussion about overall popular vote, we are in essence saying that voters in one riding should somehow have some control over the choice of MLA desired in another riding. If a few ridings were to elect representatives with overwhelming majorities, these votes beyond the minimum threshold for election can have a powerful effect on the through a proportional system of some type. For example, should the fact that 100 percent of the voters (hypothetically) in Surrey-Cloverdale might have voted for a particular party have any bearing on the choice of the voters in Cowichan Valley or Peace River North. I don't believe that many constituents would be happy to have their choice subverted by outside interests. Yet, that would be the effect, in many respects of a proportional system unless we truly abandon our current riding based means of representation.

All of the proportional alternatives offered for consideration at the How We Vote website have a common feature of increasing (possibly greatly) the size of the electoral districts. All of these systems are an attempt to reach a compromise between proportionality and meaningful local representation. However, all of these approaches will significantly diminish the connection between voters and their local MLAs. I find it hard to believe that people will find this to be satisfactory. A truly proportional system would have voters pick the top 87 (or whatever number is determined) candidates from a list of several hundred. Obviously this would be unworkable. Another approach that could achieve a semblance of proportionality would be to elect two MLAs from each of the current 87 ridings. Not too many people would be in favour of the increased costs associated with that approach. Is any increase in the number of MLAs truly justified in the current context?

One of the main complaints regarding the current FPTP system is that an MLA can be elected with less than 50 percent of the overall vote, especially if there are a number of strong contenders. Emphasis for change should be placed on strengthening the mandate of local representatives. The way to do this is by adopting a method of preferential voting sometimes referred to as Instant Runoff Voting, a system commonly used in Australia. Voters would rank their candidates in order of preference. If a candidate receives more than 50 percent of the first choice ballots, then that candidate wins outright. If not, then the second choice tallies would be added and so on and so on until the candidate with the most votes exceeds the fifty percent threshold. Such a system will improve the proportionality of the legislature while retaining the positive character of local representation that currently exists.

It will be argued that such a system as proposed will still disadvantage small or fringe parties. This may be true; however it is not the job of voters in a particular riding to improve the standing of a party province wide. Their

job is to elect the MLA that they feel will best represent their, and/or the province's, best interests. It is the job of the party to convince the voters, riding by riding, that their candidate can be that person. This is not an impossible task as attested to by the recent success of the Green Party in winning three seats. In order to form a government, they have to continue to build on this success until they manage to win the most seats of any party. That is how governments are formed.

To conclude, overall province wide popular vote percentages have no standing in our current parliamentary system. The only polls that matter are those carried out within each individual riding. Nothing should be done that diminishes the connection between constituents and their elected MLA. Implementation of Instant Runoff Voting or a similar approach which strengthens the mandate of individual MLAs would be an improvement on the current FPTP approach while maintaining the positive aspects of the current system. Governments should continue to be formed on the basis of "seats won". Attempting to draw a direct connection between the percentage of "seats won" and the percentage of the overall popular vote is an irrelevant and fundamentally misleading statistic.

Yours truly,



[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, January 10, 2018 9:29 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote
Attachments: Proportional Representation for and against.doc

Hello There;

I submitted the on-line questionnaire but would like to add a further comment. I was just reading about the group (Bill Tieleman, Suzanne Anton and Bob Plecas) established to promote voting no to a proportional representation electoral system. This prompted me to research more, and found a "for and against" document that was very helpful. I have attached it for your reference. It would be great to have a similar document that BC's for and against forces agreed was fair and balanced for all citizens to read.

Also, in listening to the [debate between Bill Tieleman and Stuart Parker](#) (for proportional representation) I was struck by the concern raised by Bill Tieleman about PR giving extremist parties that have horrible objectives, power in government, especially through the leverage of their support being needed to bolster the governing party. The thing is, every extremist party with electorally gained power in government got there because there are the citizens who voted for them to have power.

At the end of the day, it may be decided that it is more important to accept being disproportionately represented so we continue to reduce the possible chance of the extreme component of the voting population getting a toe-hold in government through their PR elected extreme representative. But before rushing to this decision, I'd appreciate knowing some actual facts that quantify these "extreme party" risks, and especially, provides me with some verified examples of where "extreme parties" have been problematic in other electoral settings, and if and how those cases apply, or don't apply here.

It is so disappointing that the first horse out of the gate on this matter is so biased and unhelpful to citizens. The irony is that their group is a living example of the principle of proportionate representation working together to accomplish something.

Thanks, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION: FOR AND AGAINST

FOR PR	ISSUE	AGAINST PR
PR ensures greater electoral fairness because parties gain representation (generally) in line with their popular support; 'third' parties in particular are not under-represented	<i>Electoral fairness</i>	Fairer representation does not necessarily ensure proportional power – 'third' parties enjoy pivotal power (can align with either major party) and they may exert disproportionate influence within a coalition (the tail wags the dog)
PR widens (effective) electoral choice because a larger number of parties have the prospect of winning or sharing government power; votes for minor parties are not 'wasted'	<i>Electoral choice</i>	Electoral choice is hampered because the electorate is not offered a clear choice between potential parties of governments, but only a choice between a large number of coalition members
PR ensures that the government has a popular mandate because governments are invariably supported by at least 50% of the electorate – governments thus enjoy popular legitimacy	<i>Mandate democracy</i>	Mandate democracy is undermined because the policies of coalition governments tend to be made through post-election deals which the electorate has not been able to endorse or reject
PR secures accountable government because governments have to gain the support of two or more parties in the legislature – the legislature cannot be dominated by the executive	<i>Accountable government</i>	Greater accountability may result in weak and ineffective government if the legislature becomes over-strong and government is unable to push through its policy programme
PR produces stable government in that there is a more consistent development of policy over a number of government with few dramatic ideological shifts to the left or the right	<i>Stable government</i>	Government may become more unstable in the sense that coalition governments more easily collapse due to internal divisions and are thus less likely to survive for a full term in office
PR counters political extremism by encouraging extremist political parties to engage in electoral politics and allowing their arguments and ideas to be publicly challenged	<i>Political extremism</i>	Extremist parties will be more likely to gain representation, giving them respectability and providing them with base from which they can broaden their popular support
PR fosters a political culture which emphasises rational debate and compromise rather than polarisation and point-scoring because policy is made through a process of consensus building	<i>Political culture</i>	A bias towards compromise and consensus building encourages parties to gravitate towards the centre, so blurring ideological choices and discouraging robust and healthy political debate

Bill Tieleman

strange system

doesn't guarantee local or accountable

decided by political party list

list system undemocratic

complicated, hard to figure out

Stuart Parker

closed list system used in less than 1/2 situation

PR is the principal that every voter gets accountable representation and the party's share of seats in the legislature is reflective of their share of votes at the poll – both principles = PR

STV had 57% yes, needed 60% (2009)

2018 – 50% plus 1

this is not setting bar at lowest possible – which government gets 50% of vote, yet they get 100% of power
STV doesn't use lists and lets voters, not parties rank candidates

process of selecting political party leaders is same as PR – could be last chosen candidate

system working for legislative reporter and lobbyists

system not working make guesses, vote for lesser of two evils, government doesn't represent majority of population, lots of brokerage, refereeing two party wrestling match

achieve more minority governments?

Bill Tieleman

yes, perpetual minority governments

minority parties deciding significant issues

current minority not like this?

Stuart Parker

examples of extremists infiltrating fpp governments

Bill T

Austria Freedom Party – 3rd largest party, 1 seat behind

Dutch Freedom Party

5% usually threshold to get a seat

Concern is that there will be enough people with extremist thinking who will give extremists enough support to get enough toe-hold to impose their extremist views

fundamental citizen equality – ban big money, enfranchising women, enfranchising Indigenous people – simple act of legislature – don't buy argument that PR is such an extreme change that it needs referendum. If marriage equality didn't require a referendum, why PR?

shouldn't everyone's vote count equally?

no accountability to local voters

average lifespan of pr governments 18-24 mths – this flaw exists in current fpp system

access to representation better with pr

entry of extremists into elected representation means undue influence

extremist politicians are the problem, they infiltrate in many ways, not unique to PR

Written Submission to the Electoral Reform Process

Submitted to [REDACTED]

January 2018

Thank you for this chance to submit recommendations about the future direction of British Columbia's electoral system. I am a lifelong resident of BC as well as an ardent supporter of electoral reform.

The importance of simplicity

First Past the Post is seen as a simple system - and in some ways it is. At the riding level, it's easy to explain how to vote, and how the winner is selected. Because it's the system we use and everyone understands it, it will be the baseline by which all other systems will be compared.

When there are multiple possible solutions, the simplest one is best - there are fewer points of failure. This is true across a multitude of fields, and it's especially true of electoral systems where transparency is a foremost consideration. How easily an electoral system can be understood and used is critically important to how voters will judge it.

When BC had its second referendum on electoral reform back in 2009, I remember trying to convince people why they should vote for change. One of the critical weaknesses of Single Transferable Vote was how difficult it was to explain. Its complexity is the result of combining multi-member districts with a ranked ballot.

STV depends on multi-member districts for its proportionality. Elections would have taken place in multi-member districts three to seven times larger than current ridings. Ballots would have changed from having a handful of candidates to perhaps dozens. Not only would voters have to assess the different parties, they'd also have to assess the different candidates within the same party, as each party would be running multiple candidates.

Explaining how Single Transferable Vote picked its winners was problematic. Most people could quickly understand how the winning quota was determined, but once you started talking about transferring surplus votes between rounds things got a lot murkier.

Simplicity is key. People need to have a clear understanding of what they're signing up for. I will argue that while there are a multitude of proportional electoral systems only one approaches the simplicity of First Past the Post - the Canadian-made Dual Member Proportional.

An election under Dual Member Proportional would look very similar to elections held today. The biggest difference being that the province's current single-member districts would be replaced with about half as many dual-member districts.

The ballot would look similar to the current ballot - the biggest difference being that instead of parties running one candidate, they could run a pair of candidates.

The first of the two seats would go to the candidate that received the most votes - much like how things work under First Past the Post.

The second seat would be distributed in such a way as to top-up the parties that were underrepresented by the first round results. If Party C received fifteen percent of the popular vote, but didn't win any of the first round seats, it would be awarded enough second round seats to bring them up to fifteen percent of the total. The order by which second round candidates are selected is based on their popular support - with the most popular candidates being selected first.

There are many benefits to having two local representatives - likely from different parties. It gives the voter twice as much choice as to which person they'd like to contact as well as encourages cross-party cooperation at the riding level.

DMP also supports independent candidates. Both of a riding's seats can be won by independents.

The elegance of Dual Member Proportional is in its simplicity. It allows anyone familiar with our current system to immediately understand how it works. Yet unlike our current system you can vote sincerely without worrying about wasting your vote. Even if your vote doesn't elect the candidate you chose - it will go towards the party's total vote count. The voter will know their vote hasn't been wasted.

Dual Member Proportional is one of only three proportional systems that have made it to the ballot box in Canada. Prince Edward Island held a plebiscite in 2016 to get voter input into which electoral system would be best for the province. Out of all the systems that were assessed only two proportional systems were chosen to be on the ballot: Mixed Member Proportional and Dual Member Proportional.

Principle of least astonishment

In the field of user interface design they have a term that I think is quite relevant to the discussion of changing our electoral system - the principle of least astonishment. It's a fancy way of saying that something should work in a way that is consistent with how the user expects it to behave. Users - and voters - should not be astonished.

The assumptions about how the system is supposed to work are partially determined by where you live. Voters in rural and urban areas tend to look at some issues differently - riding size being one of the most significant.

In an urban area, the riding size is usually not an issue. There are many people packed into a relatively small space. The ridings will necessarily be small and cohesive. Vancouver's West End riding can be traversed on foot in less than half an hour.

The reverse is true in rural ridings - many of them are already gigantic. The riding of Stikine is larger than the country of Greece. Some electoral systems such as Mixed Member Proportional or Single Transferable Vote will require ridings to be made larger. If your riding is already big, the idea of making it a lot bigger may be astonishing.

Dual Member Proportional allows for more flexibility in determining appropriate riding boundaries as it's not a requirement that the riding have the same population size. This would ease the concerns of many rural voters in the province.

Systems that depend on party lists - such as Mixed Member Proportional - elect two classes of representative: those elected at the riding level and those elected from the party list. To some this will seem like a transfer of power from local riding associations to the party leadership. If you are used to everyone getting elected in the same way, the idea of a party list may be astonishing.

With Dual Member proportional, everyone is elected at the riding level - no large multi-member districts or party lists needed.

Actions speak louder than words

While there's a multitude of different possible solutions - there is only one simplest solution and that is Dual Member Proportional. No other proportional system has so few downsides and so many upsides. It's the best for British Columbia because it respects all the geographic regions of the province, both urban and rural, delivers predictable proportional results and will allow people to vote their conscience without fear that they're wasting their vote.

As a society we hold up the act of voting as an important part of our civic responsibility. We tell people that their vote is important yet use a system where often a majority of votes do nothing. Actions speak louder than words. If we are serious about votes having value then we have to use an electoral system that reflects that. No system does that better than Dual Member Proportional.

Thank you for the opportunity to engage in a topic so important to the future of British Columbia. As the father of [REDACTED] soon-to-be voters, I would love to be able to tell my kids that their vote will make a difference.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, December 31, 2017 3:18 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote

I think that, regardless of their voting system, our citizens would be best represented in B.C.'s parliament by requiring MLAs to vote with secret ballots. This is the excellent idea that Rafe Mair proposed for Canada's federal parliament in his book, 'Politically Incorrect'. He wrote, "We all know that our Members of Parliament vote not as we say or as they think best but as their leader orders." See <https://watershedsentinel.ca/incorrect/>.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, December 26, 2017 2:00 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc:
Subject: How We Vote

Dear Attorney General:

I made my views regarding PR quite clear in my consultation submission, but I just want to stress one other thing:

We in BC have the opportunity to avoid the vile partisan politics that can so constipate the political process much as the FPTP system has done in the USA. Canada isn't quite as bad as the USA is right now, but I have no doubt that it could easily slide down the same slippery slope. BC can lead the way for other provinces and, ultimately, the federal government.

We must make PR a reality in BC for the good of the province and the good of the people.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, December 21, 2017 10:59 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote

Dear Mr. David Eby,

I am a grade [REDACTED] student at [REDACTED] school, and we are currently studying different electoral systems. I have studied the 5 different systems: First past the post, proportional representation, single transferable vote, mixed member proportionality and mixed member majoritarian. I believe the best system would be Proportional Representation. My reasons for this are as follows. Unlike our current electoral system (first past the post) proportional representation is easy to understand, fair, it accurately reflects the popular vote and ensures that all votes and voters are equally important. This system also encourages collaboration between parties, although this may sometimes cause instability, it also causes diversity and allows more peoples opinions to be heard. This system is also fair, in the sense that it is unlike first past the post, because first past the post allows majority of the power without majority of the votes. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

[REDACTED]
Monday, December 18, 2017 11:52 PM

To:

Subject:

[REDACTED]
How We Vote

Hi

I believe there should be two questions on the ballot in which one is a question that asks if the person wants to keep the current system which is first past the post and the second is a multiple choice question in which the person ranks their preferences of electoral systems other than first past the post. I believe that the types of electoral systems that the government should use is in this link:

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electoral_system as well as the ones that the government lists on its consultation survey website.

Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

[REDACTED]
Monday, December 18, 2017 11:43 PM

To:

Subject:

[REDACTED]
How We Vote

Hi

I would like to ask the government to review the information in this link when deciding the details for the referendum in the fall 2018:

<https://act.leadnow.ca/7tipsbcreferendum/>

Sent from my iPhone

There is so much debate and the issues are so complex that I feel it is best to go back 2,000 years to the basics. When I spend a day wandering around Athens from ancient site to ancient site, I was struck by the essence of democracy: any Athenian voter concerned about an issue could stand up in front of hundreds or thousands of others and have his say. If enough citizens at the assembly agreed with him, the vote would go his way. This democracy is so much better than the old norm, dictatorship, where the average person's wants are irrelevant. In 2018 electoral reform, the salient goal must be to stay as close to that original conception of democracy as is possible.

While modern BC differs from ancient Athens in many ways, the biggest difference affecting electoral systems is the number of people. It is difficult to assemble 3,156,991 people in a hall in Victoria so that every eligible voter can have a direct vote on every bill. With the proliferation of issues and the crazy complexity of each issue, probably we shouldn't have a direct vote even if we could. Thus we have representative democracy. The touchstone for representative democracy is to provide a voice for every citizen—not quite possible but a worthy goal that most discussion of electoral reform forgets.

When the federal government instituted electoral studies recently, they put out a list of principles against which any electoral system could be measured. These have gained some acceptance. For example, in Fair Vote Canada's current webinar series, the professor presenting is using this list of principles plus an additional principle. Unfortunately, this plethora of principles (discussed below) muddies the waters.

1. Effectiveness and Legitimacy—e.g., the percentage of votes translates into the same percentage of seats. This, if I may be allowed to restate it, is the crucial principle: the voice of each voter must be heard.
2. Engagement—e.g., encourage voting especially among the under-represented groups. If you listened to the hours and hours of testimony before the federal electoral reform panel (ERRE), you heard that countries around the world have had little success getting uninterested people to vote. Let's assume that when people start to see people's votes matter, some of the non-voters will start to vote.
3. Accessibility and Inclusiveness—e.g., avoid undue voting complexity. For example, if you were to require every voter to journey to the nearest major city to vote, people living in Vancouver would have an easier time of it than people living in Lower Post—quite unfair. But where do we draw the line. Putting one X on a ballot as in our current system is as easy as you can get, but what about putting two Xs? Some people claim that voting for a person on one side of the ballot and voting for a party on the other side is too complicated and exclusionary. Yet the Scots can somehow keep track of how to vote in three different systems; the Irish, using proportional Single Transferable Vote (STV), have fewer spoiled ballots than Canadians do. Let's assume that Canadians are no dumber than, say, their European counterparts.
4. Integrity i.e., get verifiable results. All systems considered in Canada meet this criteria.
5. Local Representation e.g., accountable MPs; accessible MPs; and MPs who understand the local conditions. This is probably the most complex and tricky of the principles listed. First,

many folks believe that under First-Past-the-Post (FPTP), if you do not like your MP, you can hold him or her accountable and get rid of him or her. But in a proportional system, you might not know exactly what role your MPs had in the coalition government, or, with several MPs from your large riding, you might not know who was responsible for the poor service you feel you have received. One thing to get straight from the start is that under FPTP, many MPs are not subject to “throw the bums out” because they are in safe seats. Also, it is extremely difficult to define exactly what “throwing the bums out” looks like. Is it change of government? If so, Canada has huge, long stretches of the same party governing e.g., over 40 years in Ontario and over 40 years in Alberta. Is that because the people are happy with the government? Or because the system is actually slow to change? Finally, it is worth noting that the biggest complaint about the proportional representation system in Ireland is that the MPs are too accountable to the local constituents (they sometimes call it “pot-hole politics”).

Although the above is not a full discussion, I’d like to move on to “accessible MPs.” Any time multiple member ridings are proposed, this is a huge objection: “I won’t have a local MLA that I can go to with problems.” Before the argument goes any further, we should ask, “How many times in the last x years have you gone to your MLA’s office and discussed an issue?” The answer will almost always be none. Another objection goes something like this: “If they make Vancouver Island one big riding with six candidates, all of them will be from Victoria and I’ll have no local representation.” It is theoretically possible that a party could select all six of its candidates from one floor of one apartment building in downtown Victoria, but the party’s stupidity would probably guarantee electoral failure. To get the northern vote, the party would look for a candidate in the north, to get the Nanaimo area vote . . . and so on, to where the wise party would have candidates spread around the large riding pretty much as candidates are currently spread around the six existing ridings. Another objection is “That’s too loosey goosey: I want a *local* representative.” What qualifies as “local”? Under the current system, your local representative can be some distance away. While I live on the [REDACTED] outside of [REDACTED], my MP is on Gabriola Island. In this era of the telephone and email, that should not be a grave concern. Finally, what does “accessible” mean? We have a simplistic notion that we can walk down the block, sit around the fireplace, and chat with your friendly representative about policy, but talking with your MP is not that cozy. Considering that most MPs will have been elected by about a quarter of the adults in the area, and considering that you may be on the far end of the political spectrum and your MP on the other, your best bet to having an *accessible* MP is to have a multi-member riding where you have a choice of representatives to speak to.

This principle under discussion also claims that local representation is crucial because the MP must understand the local area’s concerns. This is true. A country as small as The Netherlands may consider the nation one large riding, but in the large province of BC, concerns vary from region to region: northern BC [REDACTED] is “beyond Hope” as they say and has distinctly different issues than metro Vancouver does. But we have to be careful how narrowly we define *local*. For example, my local concern this week in the apparently large black bear rampaging through [REDACTED]. Does my MLA have to live in my neighbourhood? Or could he or she be from Vancouver Island in general and have an understanding of how urban sprawl is pressuring normally peace-loving bears?

6. Good Governance-e.g., stable government; e.g., long-lasting policies supported by the majority. This principle has been added to the list, I think by Fair Vote Canada, but I'm not sure. It is a mixed blessing. On the one hand, yes, the ultimate proof is in the pudding: Do we have good governance from the system we selected? But on the other hand, stable government and long-lasting policies are only two characteristics of "good governance," and especially the latter is slanted in favour of proportional representation. So maybe we need to redefine our evaluative criteria for "good governance." I have a hunch if we worked this out we'd be talking about things like radical leadership to save our environment, alternatives for the disappearing middle class, and so forth.

So we have three key principles:

1. All citizens have a representative to speak for them in government.
2. Every geographic area has representatives that understand its local concerns.
3. Ultimately, the government gets the job done addressing the most pressing issues facing our society.


Now that I have boiled the plethora of principles down to three, instead of being satisfied, I will try to go further. Consider them in the light of proportional representation versus first-past-the-post. Number 3 applies to evaluating any system. No electoral system proposed for BC violates Number 2, although the representation varies in character, so we still have to be careful how we define "local." So we are back to looking for a system where every citizen has a representative voice in government. All other considerations are secondary.

Obviously, First-Past-the-Post does not meet the crucial criterion and must go. FPTP does not even meet the common sense democratic criteria of majority rule. When Canadians are asked if an MLA or MP requires a majority in order to represent a riding, they say yes, but, as we know, that is wrong. Quite often someone with only 40% of the vote will "win" and "represent" the riding. There is a big difference between "represent" and "be the representative." This came out accidentally and beautifully during an ERRE hearing (2016) where Conservative member Gerard Deltell insisted that he represented all the people of Louis-Saint-Laurent, and the expert witness finally had to say something like "Mr. Deltell, the majority of voters in the riding did not vote for you, did not want you doing this job, and rightly do not think you represent their views." To Mr. Deltell's credit, you could see the light dawn on his face—an important revelation. Every election about half the people "win" a voice in government and half "lose" and have no voice. As far as I can remember, I have voted in every provincial and federal election in the last 40 years and never elected anyone to speak for me even though I have voted for four different parties. Yet proportional systems exist which can give as many as 95% of the voters a representative in government.

We should get back to the original idea of democracy. Currently, we subconsciously see elections as class warfare, typically, the rich, right-wing, business-oriented classes versus the poorer, left-wing, labour-oriented classes—or some version of this battle. In the future, we should see that elections represent as fairly as possible in government the views held by the entire voting population.

Proportional representation is necessary but not sufficient to reform our governance. It is necessary because it will make essentially every vote count, thus meeting the essential criteria of a democratic electoral system. But there are two common political practices that can undo the good that PR initiates. Lying. If a politician says, for example, this will be the last FPTP election, and the majority of people think that it a good idea, and then his party gets elected, and then he says no, he has just killed the voice of the majority. Although no regulatory system will be without major flaws, in the future we need some kind of regulation to hold politicians accountable for what they promise. And whipping. The representatives of a region are supposed to represent the region not vote like cattle whipped into line for the party. Until whipping stops citizens will not know whether the politician is going to speak for them or for the party but are wisest to assume they will have no voice.

Although we have a long way to go to rehabilitate a political system that has wandered far from the original path, instituting a form of proportional representation is a crucial first step.



Rt. Hon. Davis Eby
2909 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC
V6K 2G6

Dec. 5/18

Dear David Eby,

I am very happy that the government is going ahead with changing our provincial electoral system to be more representative. I hope you will not falter in this mission as the Federal Government did.

I followed the last attempt to reform the system proposed by the Liberals. I thought the process was a good one. The Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform looked at several representative systems and came up with the STV (Single Transferable Vote). I think the first step would be to re-examine these findings.

I believe the only reason this plan did not come to fruition is because very few people seemed to be clear on how it would work. In fact, many people do not understand how first past the post doesn't necessarily reflect the majority vote.

In addition, a very high level of approval was needed in order to pass the referendum
"For the referendum to be binding, the approval level must be:

1. more than 50% of the votes in at least 51 of the province's 85 electoral districts, AND
2. at least 60% of the total popular vote, province-wide."

Some people were worried about having more than one representative per riding, believing nothing would get done. I think just the opposite. A more cooperative government is exactly what we need. Each party has good ideas and we should maximize these. Look at what the Greens and the NDP have done together so far.

Sincerely,



Cc: John Horgan

Andrew Weaver

Electoral Reform in Canada: Why Proportional Representation Should Replace the Single-Member Plurality Electoral System



Simon Fraser University: POL 221 – C100

12 November 2017

To quote the great political philosopher Thomas Hobbes (2008), democracy is “an assembly of all that will come together” (p. 123). In Canada, however, the “Commonwealth” – a proud liberal democracy – has been reluctant to give power to the people in the form of proportional representation. If Hobbes believes that a democracy requires citizens to “come together,” then the *first-past-the-post* electoral system has left segments of the electorate unrepresented in parliament. Those without a political voice will lose faith in democracy, leading to a decline in political participation. Therefore, as a result of electoral reform, proportional representation (PR) will reverse the democratic deficit caused by single-member plurality (SMP).

Opponents on electoral reform claim, however, that PR will be disruptive to the Canadian political system. For instance, the promise for electoral reform was broken by, none other than, the current Prime Minister of Canada, The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau. According to Canada’s largest news broadcaster, CBC News (2017), the Prime Minister insists that PR will “weaken our country,” claiming that it will cause division between political parties. Alternatively, Trudeau believes that diversity should be reflected within the current political framework, relying on large and dominant parties to strengthen the country. On the one hand, it is true that diversity, within political parties, is an important consideration for national cohesion. On the other hand, large and dominant political parties – which are typical by-products of SMP – do not accurately reflect the democratic views of all Canadians. For instance, political scientists Eric Mintz, David Close, and Osvaldo Croci (2015), with the Memorial University of Newfoundland, refer to SMP as an electoral scheme that, in most cases, produces a winning candidate without achieving the majority of votes. In other words, a candidate that

receives the most votes will win the election, thereby giving representation for only those who voted for the winning candidate. Liz Couture (2014), with Fair Vote Canada, a national advocacy group for electoral reform, agrees when she writes that SMP creates a “false majority” and allows the government to “conduct business as if it has a true majority” (p. 6). Here, Couture warns that SMP will result in disproportional representation at the executive level, which is fundamental for the development of public policy. In other words, political participation will decline because those that decided to vote for a losing candidate will be unrepresented throughout the legislative process. Therefore, electoral reform is necessary to replace SMP with PR to increase democratic representation.

Rather than to reduce the division between political parties, as Prime Minister Trudeau believes, increasing disparity will, in fact, attract new voters and increase the representation of Canadian citizens. Given that politicians are democratically elected – that is, they must seek out the most number of votes within a plurality district – party leaders must deliver election platforms to encourage voter interest. With this in mind, a large and dominant party will attempt to attract voters from all ideological views in order to achieve a majority government. For instance, James Adams, with the Department of Political Science at the University of California, Davis, and Samuel Merrill, III (2006), with the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science at Wilkes University, found that only when a third, and much smaller, party was running against two dominant parties did the election campaigns of each party become more divergent. With this observation, Adams and Merrill claim that large parties position themselves on opposite ends of the political spectrum only when a smaller party is introduced into the general election. Adams and Merrill’s argument that the ideological disparity between

campaigns increases with the number of those running for election can be further developed to address the effect on individual voter behaviour. For example, according to Jeffrey Karp and Susan Banducci (2008), with the Department of Politics at University of Exeter, voters prefer a “clear and consistent” party platform, rather than one that “must widen [its] appeal to the broadest possible audience” (p. 316). Here, Karp and Banducci acknowledge that, in an attempt to combine ideologies into a single stance, an ambiguous political position will discourage voters. Karp and Banducci’s position that a consistent party platform will improve participation is understandable because citizens can easily identify which party they can associate with. Therefore, PR will increase the number of political parties and, as a result, lead to consistent party platforms to increase voter participation.

Together with an increase in turnout, more political parties will reflect the democratic views of minority citizens. It is important to realize, however, that SMP is not designed to promote minority interests. For instance, political scholars Susan Welch and Donley Studlar (1990) agree when they write that plurality elections are central to the “Anglo-American political culture” (p. 393). In using this example, Welch and Studlar claim that SMP is dominant in British tradition, in order to preserve a two-party system and limit the number of social and cultural influences. Welch and Studlar are correct that minority groups often struggle to promote their political interests, democratically, through SMP because it is designed to restrict smaller parties from gaining attraction by requiring them to win the most votes – that is to say, requiring them to accumulate more votes than both major parties in an election riding – to be elected. In Boyka Stefanova’s (2014) view, with the Department of Political Science and Geography at the University of Texas, San Antonio, minority representation at the legislative

level is critical for effective integration of immigrants into society. In particular, Stefanova believes that minority groups have specific social and economic issues that are often overlooked in the mainstream political climate. While integrating immigrants into the political framework is an important concern, as Stefanova argues, the main issue is to encourage minority citizens to run for election. For example, political scientists Karen Bird, Samantha Jackson, R. Michael McGregor, Aaron Moore, and Laura Stephenson (2016) find that visible minorities are more likely to support a minority candidate running for office than compared to a white voter. In other words, encouraging minority candidates to run during an election will increase the turnout of minority citizens. Bird et al.'s analysis of minority voter behaviour is extremely useful because it highlights the importance of diversity within the leadership of political parties. Therefore, allowing smaller political parties to run during an election will give the opportunity for minority citizens to run for leadership and, as a result, increase turnout of minority voters.

With an emphasis of party lists, PR will simplify the electoral process and increase voter participation. To begin with, PR allocates the number legislative seats by the number of votes a party receives during an election, with candidates selected based on their placement on a closed-list (Mintz et al., 2015). Basically, a closed-list PR system transfers every vote, proportionally, into democratic representation, allowing every citizen's vote to be reflected in the House of Commons – this is an important consideration because, under SMP, only the votes for the winning candidate receive representation. Surely, every vote deserves recognition because failing to do so will result in a decline in voter interest. For example, political scholars Shaun Bowler, David Brockington, and Todd Donovan (2001) agree when they write that

citizens feel that “their votes will be wasted” if their candidate did not win the election (p. 904). What is significant here is that Bowler et al. observe a disincentive if a voter failed to select a winning candidate. While removing voter disincentives is important, as Bowler et al. suggest, simplifying the overall electoral process, with the use of party lists, will encourage more citizens to vote. For instance, a closed-list PR system offers voters one choice: which party to vote for. In effect, removing the choice of candidates eliminates the amount of information that voters need to understand, allowing more emphasis on party platforms and leaders. According to academics Stephen Fisher, Laurence Lessard-Phillips, Sara Hobolt, and John Curtice (2008), voter participation will decline if the voting system is too complex. In other words, Fisher et al. believe that to reduce the amount of decisions that voters make will improve turnout. Fisher et al.’s analysis of complex voting systems is correct because it highlights the simplicity of a closed-list PR system. Thus, voter turnout will increase as a result of the closed-list PR system.

A closed-list PR system will not only increase participation but also improve the quality of democracy. Considering that citizens, primarily, vote for party leaders and not for local candidates (Blais et al., 2003), PR will produce the best politicians from each party. For example, under a closed-list PR system, candidates with the most credibility and experience are placed higher on party lists to encourage voter support. Andrew Eggers (2015), with the London School of Economics, agrees when he writes that proportional systems often produce “higher quality” candidates because “top members of a modestly successful [party] list can only expect to win seats under the PR system” (p. 141). Here, Eggers claims that small parties will win a relative few number of seats and, as a result, have to place their top candidates high on party lists to ensure the best possible representation on behalf of the party. Under SMP, however,

parties have to rely on the electorate to determine the fate of local candidates. In that case, unqualified politicians may be forced to fill key departmental positions because of unexpected election results in local ridings. While party lists will improve the quality of elected politicians, it will also provide equal representation of men and woman in major political institutions. For example, alternating top positions on party lists, by gender, will secure female candidates seats in the legislature and improve the representation of woman. Under those circumstances, it is not surprising to find that, for the most part, women are more likely “to be candidates” and “win elections” under a proportional system (Welch & Studlar, 1990, p. 394). All things being considered, a closed-list PR system will result in equal democratic representation for woman and assure that the best possible politicians are elected from each party.

Finally, through PR, the improved quality of democracy will encourage more Canadians to be involved in the political process. According to Fisher et al. (2008), voter turnout will improve with political efficacy. Here, Fisher et al. argue that improving the quality of representation and accountability will increase political participation and voter turnout. It is correct that higher political efficacy will increase voter turnout; however, the improvement of politicians will also encourage new citizens to vote. For example, Eggers (2015) finds that an increase in the quality of democratic representation will “appeal to previously unengaged parts of the electorate” (p. 151). In other words, Eggers claims that the entry of new smaller parties, with bona-fide politicians, will attract citizens who have been previously discouraged and left out from the democratic process. When Eggers states that competent parties will spark new voter interest, he needs to also take into account the motivations behind new voters. For instance, Karp and Banducci (2008) reveal that PR will “enhance overall participation by

fostering stronger party preferences” (p. 331). In making this observation, Karp and Banducci believe that smaller – but efficient – parties will improve turnout because voters stand behind politicians that reinforce party platforms. Karp and Banducci make an important point because citizens follow trustworthy politicians that actually fulfill what they promise during an election. Therefore, the improvement of democracy will encourage new citizens to vote as a result of PR.

Through proportional representation, electoral reform is necessary to increase voter turnout and restore political efficacy. Single-member plurality has discouraged voters by removing large segments of the electorate from the legislative process. While PR will increase the number of political parties, a closed-list system will restore confidence in politicians and reflect the democratic views of all Canadians. Furthermore, minority citizens will become integrated into the political framework of Canada and, at the same time, provide for equal representation of men and woman. With improved voter participation, political efficacy, and representation, Canada will effectively avoid the democratic deficit.

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A “Mensa Brief” to the BC Committee on Electoral Reform

(The author of this brief is a member of Mensa Canada and the term “Mensa Brief” is used to distinguish this brief from other briefs which the committee may receive. This does not signify support by Mensa Canada.)

1. Purpose:

- 1.1 Using the existing means of collecting and counting votes in a BC Provincial General Election, determine the number of seats in the BC Legislative Assembly to which each political party is entitled, proportional to the total number of votes cast for each political party in the election.
- 1.2 Determine which candidate will represent each of the electoral districts.
- 1.3 Using a protocol similar to existing protocols, determine the person who has the support of the majority of Members of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly, to nominate that person to the Lieutenant Governor for appointment as Premier of British Columbia.

2. Voting:

- 2.1 To enhance the acceptance of this electoral reform by the general public, this brief proposes that there be no changes to the existing electoral districts or to the existing procedures for casting, collecting and counting ballots.
- 2.2 It is proposed that Elections BC tally the total number of votes received from all sources for each political party and that it calculate each party's percentage of the total votes. This percentage will then be used to calculate the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly to which each political party is entitled.
- 2.3 On page 2 is an example of a “Mensa Brief” proposal applied to the 2017 Provincial General Election. The “Leading in Ridings” column shows the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly which were “won” by the different political parties, using the “First-Past-The-Post” (FPTP) electoral system. The “Seat Entitlement” column shows the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly to which each party would be entitled, using the “Proportional Representation” (PR) electoral system.

3. Allocating Seats to Electoral Districts:

- 3.1 The BC Liberal party “won” (got a plurality) in 7 electoral districts, and the NDP in 6 electoral districts, more than their entitlement for seats in the Legislative Assembly. It is recommended that a non-partisan organization, such as Elections BC, select the 7 and 6 electoral districts, in which the “winning” Liberal and NDP candidates, in turn, have the lowest percentage of the electoral district votes. These candidates will be replaced by candidates of the parties which have entitlement. An alternative would be to have the leaders of the parties select which candidates will be replaced and which will be declared as Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Example of the “Mensa Brief” proposal applied to the 2017 Provincial General Election in May

Political Affiliation	Valid Votes	Percent of Total	Leading in Ridings (FPTP)	Seat Entitlement (PR)	Required Adjustment
4BC	58	0.00%			
BC Action Party	205	0.01%			
BC Cascadia Party	248	0.01%			
BC Citizens First Party	90	0.00%			
BC Conservative Party	10,420	0.56%	0	1	+1
BC First	543	0.03%			
BC Green Party	332,387	16.84%	3	15	+12
BC Liberal Party	796,772	40.36%	43	36	-7
BC NDP	795,106	40.28%	41	35	-6
BC Refed	463	0.02%			
BC Social Credit Party	896	0.05%			
Christian Heritage Party of BC	3,398	0.17%			
Communist Party of BC	802	0.04%			
Land Air Water – The L.A.W.	580	0.03%			
Libertarian	7,838	0.40%			
Republican Party	318	0.02%			
The Vancouver Island Party	646	0.03%			
Your Political Party of BC (YPP)	1,137	0.06%			
Independent / No affiliation	22,107	1.12%			
Totals	1,985,536	100.00%	87	87	0

4. Advantages of the “Mensa Brief” Proposal:

- 4.1 No changes or additions are required to the existing electoral districts.
- 4.2 From the perspectives of the voters, no changes or additions are required to the existing ballot forms or to the existing procedures for marking, counting and reporting ballots cast.
- 4.3 This proposal provides literal proportional representation, in which the number of seats to which each political party is entitled is directly proportional to the total number of votes cast for that party by the voters of Canada.
- 4.4 A candidate who has received a plurality of votes in their electoral district, but who is not entitled to a seat in the House of Commons, is replaced by another candidate in the same electoral district, maintaining representation by a person known in the community.
- 4.5 When the Premier is selected by a majority of the sitting MLAs, the Lieutenant Governor is provided with a clear indication of the person who commands the confidence of the majority of the elected Legislative Assembly, to assist in his appointment of the Premier.

Submitted by

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 27, 2017 11:52 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote
Attachments: schulze.pdf

Dear Attorney General,

I recommend that British Columbia should adopt Condorcet/Schulze voting in single-winner districts for elections to its Legislative Assembly. I have attached a short paper (schulze.pdf; 3 pages; 98 kB) that explains this method.

When Condorcet/Schulze voting is being used, then each voter gets a complete list of all candidates and ranks these candidates in order of preference. So from the point of view of the voters, Condorcet/Schulze voting is similar to the alternative vote.

However, Condorcet/Schulze voting avoids the quirks of the alternative vote (like the violation of monotonicity or like the center-squeeze effect of the alternative vote).

When Condorcet/Schulze voting is being used, then the cast preferential ballots are used to run a series of virtual one-on-one contests. The winner is that candidate who wins all these contests. If there is no such candidate, then a complicated tie-breaking strategy is used that guarantees that the resulting single-winner election method still satisfies all important properties.

Sincerely
[REDACTED]

Condorcet/Schulze Voting in Single-Winner Districts

Summary. I recommend that the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia should be elected in single-winner districts exclusively. I recommend that the Assembly should be elected by Condorcet/Schulze voting. Condorcet/Schulze voting is a preferential single-winner election method.

1. Condorcet Voting

When Condorcet voting is being used, then each voter gets a complete list of all candidates and ranks these candidates in order of preference. The individual voter may give the same preference to more than one candidate and he may keep candidates unranked. When a voter does not rank all candidates, then this means (1) that this voter prefers all ranked candidates to all unranked candidates and (2) that this voter is indifferent between all unranked candidates.

Suppose $N[a,b]$ is the number of voters who prefer candidate a to candidate b . When $N[a,b] > N[b,a]$, then we say that candidate a beats candidate b *directly*.

A *Condorcet winner* is a candidate a who beats every other candidate b *directly*. It can happen that there is no Condorcet winner. *Condorcet voting* means that, when there is a Condorcet winner, then this candidate must be the unique winner.

2. Schulze Voting

Schulze voting comes into play when there happens to be no Condorcet winner. Schulze voting then takes *indirect* defeats into account. We say that candidate a beats candidate b *indirectly*, when candidate a beats candidate b *directly* or when candidate a beats someone who beats candidate b *directly* or *indirectly*.

To use a more formal definition: Suppose $c(1), \dots, c(n)$ is a path from candidate $a \equiv c(1)$ to candidate $b \equiv c(n)$. The *strength* of this path is the smallest of the margins of victory of the $n-1$ pairwise elections in this path. So the strength of $c(1), \dots, c(n)$ is the minimum of $N[c(i), c(i+1)] - N[c(i+1), c(i)]$ with $i = 1, \dots, (n-1)$. We say that candidate a beats candidate b *indirectly* when the strongest path from candidate a to candidate b is stronger than the strongest path from candidate b to candidate a .

A *Schulze winner* is a candidate a who beats every other candidate b *indirectly*. It can be proven that there is always a Schulze winner. *Schulze voting* means that the winner must be a Schulze winner.

Determining the Schulze winner is a bit complicated. However, Schulze voting is not justified by its algorithm to calculate the winner. Rather, it is justified by the large number of beneficial properties it has. It can be proven that Schulze voting satisfies all important criteria that are compatible with the Condorcet criterion (e.g. anonymity, neutrality, homogeneity, transitivity, resolvability, Pareto, reversal symmetry, monotonicity, independence of clones, majority criterion, Smith criterion, Schwartz criterion, prudence).

Condorcet/Schulze voting is currently the most wide-spread Condorcet voting method. It is used by many software projects (e.g. Debian, Ubuntu, Gentoo, OpenStack, Software in the Public Interest), by the Pirate Party in over a dozen countries, by dozens of other organizations (e.g. Five Star Movement of Italy, German Association of Pediatricians, Albert Ludwig University of Freiburg), and by the city of Silla in Spain.

3. Example

There are 4 candidates and 21 voters.

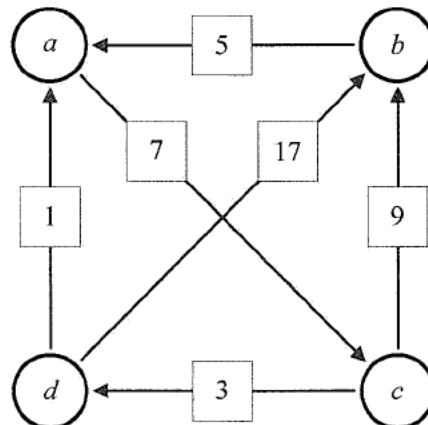
- 8 voters prefer a to c to d to b .
- 2 voters prefer b to a to d to c .
- 4 voters prefer c to d to b to a .
- 4 voters prefer d to b to a to c .
- 3 voters prefer d to c to b to a .

The pairwise matrix N looks as follows:

	$N[*,a]$	$N[*,b]$	$N[*,c]$	$N[*,d]$
$N[a,*]$	---	8	14	10
$N[b,*]$	13	---	6	2
$N[c,*]$	7	15	---	12
$N[d,*]$	11	19	9	---

The pairwise matrix can also be written as a graph. When $N[i,j] > N[j,i]$, then there is a link from candidate i to candidate j of strength $N[i,j] - N[j,i]$.

The corresponding graph looks as follows:



There is no Condorcet winner. Therefore, Schulze voting comes into play.

The strongest path ...

- ... from candidate a to candidate b is $a \xrightarrow{7} c \xrightarrow{2} b$ with a strength of 7.
- ... from candidate a to candidate c is $a \xrightarrow{7} c$ with a strength of 7.
- ... from candidate a to candidate d is $a \xrightarrow{7} c \xrightarrow{3} d$ with a strength of 3.
- ... from candidate b to candidate a is $b \xrightarrow{5} a$ with a strength of 5.
- ... from candidate b to candidate c is $b \xrightarrow{5} a \xrightarrow{7} c$ with a strength of 5.
- ... from candidate b to candidate d is $b \xrightarrow{5} a \xrightarrow{7} c \xrightarrow{3} d$ with a strength of 3.
- ... from candidate c to candidate a is $c \xrightarrow{2} b \xrightarrow{5} a$ with a strength of 5.
- ... from candidate c to candidate b is $c \xrightarrow{2} b$ with a strength of 9.
- ... from candidate c to candidate d is $c \xrightarrow{3} d$ with a strength of 3.
- ... from candidate d to candidate a is $d \xrightarrow{17} b \xrightarrow{5} a$ with a strength of 5.
- ... from candidate d to candidate b is $d \xrightarrow{17} b$ with a strength of 17.
- ... from candidate d to candidate c is $d \xrightarrow{17} b \xrightarrow{5} a \xrightarrow{7} c$ with a strength of 5.

The unique Schulze winner is candidate d because, for every other candidate x , the strongest path from candidate d to candidate x is stronger than the strongest path from candidate x to candidate d .

References

- Christoph Börgers, “Mathematics of Social Choice: Voting, Compensation, and Division”, SIAM, pages 37–42, 2009, DOI: 10.1137/1.9780898717624
- Markus Schulze, “A new monotonic, clone-independent, reversal symmetric, and Condorcet-consistent single-winner election method”, *Social Choice and Welfare*, volume 36, issue 2, pages 267–303, 2011, DOI: 10.1007/s00355-010-0475-4
- T. Nicolaus Tideman, “Collective Decisions and Voting: The Potential for Public Choice”, Ashgate Publishing, pages 228–232, 2006
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schulze_method
- <http://m-schulze.9mail.de/long.pdf>

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
Monday, November 27, 2017 8:39 AM
[REDACTED]
How We Vote

On electoral reform the citizens are not just looking for a better balanced accounting and elected seat assignment system but a system that changes the existing mentality and culture of how our politics are conducted. They are fed up with the consumptive and repellent partisan warfare domination and want to see more intellect and cooperation. They want to see smart and common sense concentration on innovation and problem solving. People really don't believe this current system is productive or effective. They want a complete change of the paradigm.

Our Charter of Rights and Freedoms mandates under Section 2(b) that guarantees freedom of expression and Section 32(b) mandates that this specifically applies to provincial legislatures. This right is quashed by party discipline, which is a harsh, heartless and undemocratic thing, and the system puts itself above the law on this. Don't bother denying this because everybody knows it is true. We are robbed of democratic representation because the MLAs are minions of the party and that is the interest they serve first and foremost. They are told what say and when - it is obvious. Their constituents come somewhere after this.

People want free expression and votes in the legislature and less party authoritarianism.

Politicians should also set out to elevate their professional estate out of the rock bottom position they hold public trust, respect and esteem. I am astounded that they so readily accept such a forlorn situation because, like anything else, it is a matter of choice that can be changed. Set out a self-administered ethics code to live by - no grease money or special interest

pandering; no lying; give clear answers to questions on issues.... just strive for honesty and sanction those members who do not follow the standard.



[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, November 24, 2017 9:57 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote

Hello Mr. Ebie: Re the question for the proposed ballot on changing our method of electing politicians:

First of all I appreciate your request for input on the wording of the ballot questions – no easy task!

I think it is very important that we don't unnecessarily jump from the FPP frying pan into the PR fire! FPP has disadvantages, to be sure, but it also has advantages. Rather than throwing the baby out with the bathwater why don't we just tweak our current system and preserve its inherent advantages?

All we need to do is keep our current FPP system with one additional rule: that no candidate can be declared the winner unless they achieve a minimum of 50% + 1 of all the votes cast. In ridings where no candidate achieves that threshold on a first ballot then a second ballot is held between the top two candidates. I acknowledge that under our current 19th century system of having to travel to polling stations or mail boxes and voting with pencils and pieces of paper this proposed new system would be too cumbersome and too expensive.... but... if we embrace the 21st century and adopt an online system of voting then any second ballot can be held very easily and within a very few days of the first ballot. And re online security, if we can devise secure systems for online banking then surely we can do the same for online voting!!

This proposed system would occasionally involve a short delay in the declaration of who is the winner of an election but this is a very small price to pay to ensure that every government is elected by a genuine majority.

Proposed ballot questions:

- 1, Leave the current First Past the Post system as is.
- 2, Scrap the current FPP and install a system of Proportional Representation similar to that used in many European countries.
- 3, Keep our current FPP system with changes to ensure that no candidate can be elected unless they achieve a minimum of 50% + 1 of all votes cast. In ridings where no one achieves this threshold on a first ballot, a second ballot would be held between the top two candidates. This proposal would involve a change to on-line voting.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, November 24, 2017 2:58 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote

It is now time for Indigenous people to have representatives in the Legislature through a minimum percentage of the seats set aside for all time. It should be an at-large vote of Indigenous British Columbians (to be enumerated through funding by the Federal Government under its 91(24) power) with candidates from the pool of Indigenous British Columbians. You should be consulting with First Nations and Metis as to how to make this happen as part of your process.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, November 23, 2017 9:34 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote

I worked all of my working life in [REDACTED]. Several truths became apparent to me in that time.

- 1) First it is sheer nonsense to pretend that proportional representation, or some other such system, encourages co-operation between parties. On the contrary, it results in a proliferation of minority groups who, if the numbers work out, can extort policies in backroom bargaining sessions that virtually no British Columbian would support, as the price of their adherence to the coalition.
- 2) Second, accountability disappears in such a system. Everyone has someone else to blame for unpopular decisions.
- 3) It is necessary for the efficient conduct of public policy that the governing party have a sustainable majority. Where that does not exist, senior public servants down tools and wait for calmer weather. No deputy minister ([REDACTED]) will be willing to go out on a limb and solicit the support of interest groups for a controversial policy, if the decision is liable to be reversed in the near future.
- 4) Our current system has served Canada well. We have the admiration of the world for our calm and reliable system of government. Throwing that out the door is pure pandering to noisy minorities, and there will be many more if we change our electoral system. What price an anti-abortion party, a seniors party, a Vancouver Island party and so on. In such a tower of Babel, all meaningful contact and trust between voters and government—already fragile—will be lost.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, November 26, 2017 11:55 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote: Another method of Proportional Representation

I submit the following method for achieving proportional representation in BC.

This method does not change anything about the election process so the voter sees no change. To the voter, it looks like a first-pass-the-post election, as usual.

The change comes in the legislature in the vote counting system which is more complicated. The WEIGHT of each MLA's vote is determined by the proportion of popular vote that his or her party obtained in the election, i.e. a vote in the legislature is no longer worth one but may be greater than or less than one, depending on the MLA's party and its share of the popular vote.

As an example (from the last election), suppose the Liberal Party won 43 seats, the NDP 41 and the Green Party 3 and further suppose the Liberal Party had 41.91% of the votes cast in the election, the NDP 40.90% and the Green Party 17.19% and there were no "other" votes. The Liberals have $43/87 = 49.43\%$ of the seats (too many), the NDP have $41/87 = 47.13\%$ of the seats (too many) and the Greens have $3/87 = 3.45\%$ of the seats (too few). To make the legislature proportional, the vote of a Liberal MLA would have to be worth $41.91/49.43 = 0.848$, the vote of an NDP MLA would be worth $40.90/47.13 = 0.868$ and the vote of a Green MLA would be worth $17.19/3.45 = 4.983$.

The Liberals could muster $0.848 * 43 = 36.464$ votes, the NDP $0.868 * 41 = 35.588$ votes and the Greens $4.983 * 3 = 14.949$ votes. The total votes are then 87.001 and the Liberals have 41.91%, the NDP have 40.91% and the Greens have 17.18% of the power in proportion to the popular vote, as desired.

There would be a minimum threshold that could be set at $100/(\text{total seats}) = 100/87 = 1.15\%$. Other values could be chosen, 5% has been suggested. The threshold makes sure that a bunch of tiny parties don't contribute additional MLAs.

There are a few problems:

1. What if a party gets more than the specified threshold of the popular vote but elects no members? One solution could be that the leader of the party would become an MLA and the worth of his or her vote would be calculated as above with the total number of seats changing to 88.
2. What if one or more independents were elected? They can't be called the "Independent" Party because they may have quite different political ideas. Perhaps the worth of their vote is just in proportion to the number of votes they get individually (low weight).
3. What about the "other" votes? In reality, the popular vote was not that given above but were all a little lower because there were 2.55% "other" votes. The party with the largest popular vote in the "other" category was the Libertarian Party with 0.40%. Hence, none of the "other" parties would have MLAs because they did not pass even the minimum threshold of 1.15%.
4. What if an MLA "crosses the floor"? The weights would all be re-calculated.

Thank you for reading this submission,



[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, November 25, 2017 12:18 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote Electoral System for BC

To whom it concerns;

I totally and utterly oppose any notion of a referendum on this subject as such was decided not long ago.

This is nothing more than a socialist NDP policy for a power grab, as they know that the majority of votes are centered in the Urban location like Vancouver, Victoria and some others. The PR system creates a terrible imbalance in decision making and that is just not a good method. PR tends to confuse matters against what the Majority desire. PR is expensive, dilutes the will of the Majority and destroys decisive decision making by the Majority.

The NDP proposal to just allow 50 +1 percent to make the decision is also so terribly wrong, as again, they know they can count on UNIONS, special interest groups, and those in Urban location to win their devious way to always win. The rural locations are the losers, the special interest groups are the winners that will in the end cost the taxpayer an enormous amount of money.

This proposal must be terminated, completely.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, December 8, 2017 10:05 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote in BC: Written Submissions
Attachments: Proportional Representation.Submission.[REDACTED].pdf; Referendum Rules.[REDACTED].pdf

I have attached two PDF files. One addresses the issue of what kind of voting system we should have. The second addresses the issue of how to run a fair referendum when we are asked to choose between alternative voting systems.

The first outlines the arguments in favour of selecting MLAs at the riding level using STP. The second sets out requirements for an unbiased vote and Yes/No campaign.

I appreciate the opportunity to put in my 2 cents worth.

Regards,

Electoral Representation vs. Proportional Representation:

Before we can address the issue of how the electoral system should work, we must define what kind of governance system we want as an outcome: Democratic, republican, oligarchic, authoritarian, hereditary, or some mix. Proportional representation is moot if the resulting governmental system is not representational.

Historically, the various hierarchical and authoritarian models of governance have been judged unacceptable in the majority of post-hunter gatherer, post-pastoral and post-agrarian societies; we have moved beyond chiefs, kings and other kinds of dictators. Because direct representation systems such as *village meetings* or *town hall forums* do not scale up for decision-making, democracies and republics have chosen to elect *representative governments* [at all levels of society]. Elections, in short, are ways for relatively large communities to select a person(s) to represent their proxy votes in order to make decisions that affect the larger community of which they are a part.

Four crucial ingredients [principles] are needed to make this upwards delegation acceptable:

1. *Voter eligibility criteria must be free of bias (gender, origin, financial status, etc.)*
2. *Individuals must surrender their decision-making power to assemblies of community representatives and agree to abide by the assembly's decisions;*
3. *There must be an agreed and fair means for selecting community representatives;*
4. *There must be a forum with rules that allow community representatives to fully and fairly represent and exercise the proxy votes delegated to them via the first two principles.*

Historically, all four principles have been the subject of pitched battles for dominance among members of Canadian democratic communities. The current system in British Columbia is by no means perfect and is quite flawed at levels 3 and 4.

Changing the Canadian Constitution is beyond the scope of provincial politics. A constitutional democracy, with governance and jurisdictions delegated by the Canadian Constitution is the base system for BC.

Electoral *communities* are defined by *riding boundaries* based roughly on population numbers. Currently, each riding is assigned one representative, called an *MLA*, to carry the riding's proxy votes to the provincial assembly, called the *Legislature*. The Legislature is organized around rules that govern how the representatives exercise the proxy votes of their riding; boundaries are set by the MLAs. The Legislature can also set the rules for how MLAs are selected. This recursive system is open to abuse: Gerrymandering of riding boundaries; rigging of selection rules; coercive block voting via party whips; manipulation of candidacies and candidate selections by party insiders; selection of party leaders; lobbying and advertising by those who can pay for influence and propaganda, etc. A long list! Election and Legislature rules must be designed to counteract all such forces if [proportional] representation is to be fair and effective.

Proportional representation in popular parlance addresses only the voting process, but election reform will be moot if representatives are not elected to represent similar numbers of persons, and if either the rules governing the election, or equally importantly, the rules governing how MLAs exercise riding proxies are not reformed. Any reform must ensure that one-person-one-vote is preserved while ensuring

that both the representatives selected (MLAs) *and* MLA's votes in the Legislature, are fair representations of their community's [riding's] wishes.

Problems With Most Forms of Proportional Representation:

Elections are ways to select a sub set of persons to represent the proxy votes of the electorate at large. Any election reform must ensure that one-person-one-vote is preserved while ensuring that both the representatives selected (MLAs) *and* MLA's votes in the Legislature, are fair representations of their community's [riding's] wishes. The essential problems with alternative versions of proportional representation are that the selection of candidates, the proportionality algorithm, or both, cut across the direct connection between a community and the person to whom they designate [elect] to represent their proxy votes.

At Large (List Based) Proportional Representation:

All of the variations based on this core model fail the basic tests for representative [delegated proxy] government. All result in a consolidation of governing power into the hands of party elites. Included are: Private List; Pre-published lists; Ranked lists; Pre-declared riding reps., Multiple MLAs per riding with half elected locally, and other variations along this spectrum. STP is the better way to represent and consolidate differing views at the community (riding) level.

The Core At-Large Proportional Model:

- Voters in each riding vote for a party/party candidate;
- The totals are added up for the whole population at large;
- Legislature seats are allocated in proportion to percentage of votes for each party;
- Parties nominate the persons who will represent proxies and sit as MLAs;
- Parties pre-select the potential leaders who might be Premier.
- Control of government is negotiated between the parties

Analysis:

- One person one vote [✓]
- Proxy votes assigned to person selected by the local community [✕]
- Persons selected by some form of community consensus [✕]
- Persons selected (MLAs) free to exercise these proxies in Legislature [✕]
- Control of government negotiated by proxy vote holders [✕]

How to fix the problems outlined above:

1. Proportional Populations at the Riding Level: This is a foundational requirement.

An examination of riding populations during the 2017 provincial election shows that in the largest riding 61,400 voters elected one MLA. In the smallest riding 20,240 voters also elected one MLA. This 3:1 ratio is clearly inequitable. The median riding size was 53,945 and the average size was 50,575. If representation is to be proportional, then the new electoral rules must specify the minimum population size that can be represented by one MLA. For example, riding boundaries could be adjusted until each MLA represents 50,000 voters, +/- 10%. This adjustment would conserve the number of MLAs and leave the large majority of boundaries essentially intact.

2. Selection of MLAs that Represent a Community Consensus:

First-Past-the-Post: The current system, in which the candidate that receives the most votes, regardless of the number (or percentage of the vote) in a riding often falls far short of a consensus in a pluralistic society such as BC's. In particular it discriminates against new or minority viewpoints in society. The 2017 riding vote-counts show this. First Past the Post is a non-starter in terms of electing consensus candidates.

Town Hall Meetings: An ideal solution would be for the community to meet together in a town hall meeting and discuss the candidates for as long as it takes to reach a consensus on who should represent the assembled voters. The political positions and proposed policies of the candidates would necessarily be tailored to win a consensus from the community. Desirable, but live meetings are not practical for 50,000 voters.

Multiple Votes with Run-offs: The electors vote once, and if no candidate polls 50%+1, then run-off elections between the top two or three candidates are held. Run-off systems are in relatively wide use at present, but are an expensive and a relatively time consuming way to eliminate third party candidates in order to determine which candidate will get 50%+1 of the vote. There is relatively little incentive to tailor policies to the wishes of eliminated candidates. This, together with the usual threshold of 50% +1, barely represents a consensus outcome.

Single Transferable Vote (STV): This is an alternative method for arriving at a consensus candidate, in which voters indicate their candidate preferences in advance of the count. It is in use in other Westminster-based democracies. Because preferences are recorded in advance of the count, there is significant incentive for candidates to move their policies to the centre of community opinion in advance of the vote in order to gain as many 2nd and 3rd choices as possible from uncommitted or unsure voters. In the ballot box, each voter assigns a preferred-rank to each of the candidates (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.). If necessary, recorded ballot preferences can be used in a run-off election by eliminating the least popular candidates and redistributing those votes according to the voters recorded preferences. In most STV systems, when the vote is counted, a candidate that receives 50%+1 of the votes is declared elected. If none reach that total, then the preferences of the electors who voted for the least popular candidate are redistributed to the remaining candidates and the votes re-counted; this continues until one candidate reaches 50%+1.

Single Transferable Vote Plus (STV-Plus): The level of Consensus can be improved by setting a higher threshold for election, say 60% or even 66%. Ranked ballots are tabulated as in STV above, but voting continues until either one candidate reaches the Consensus percentage, or there are only two candidates left. When only two are left in, the candidate with the most preferred votes wins by consensus.

Conclusions on MLA Selection:

Using a Single Transferable Vote Ballot to select *one MLA* representing *one proportional sized community* is preferable to any of the other systems currently in use to select governments because:

- The number of proxy votes represented by each elected MLA is close to equal in number;
- The MLAs represent the total aggregate-proxies of the whole voting population;

- Each MLA was elected by consensus; the MLA was the preferred 1st, 2nd or 3rd, etc. choice, i.e. the preferred choice in aggregate of the ridings' voters.
- STV Plus would likely strengthen the level of consensus in a pluralistic society with multiple viewpoints and political position.

3. Additional Reforms are Necessary:

All of this consensus building will be for naught if the way political parties act remains leader-based and outside the control of the electoral system. Several issues denigrate the principle of representation by proxy:

- Election of Party Leaders [before the election];
- Centralized Control of MLAs;
- Leadership Cults;

Election of Party Leaders [As putative Premiers Elect, outside of the Legislature]: This is a modification of the Westminster model that is causing many problems with legitimization within our democracy. Although party membership is nominally open to anyone, only Party members vote. *This party apparatus is currently outside the electoral process.* Putative leaders must 'build a support base' or 'network' and fundraise within the party in order to win or sign up a whole bunch of new captive members in a hostile takeover. Both leave the leader beholden to power brokers and/or financiers. Neither is a legitimate way to select the government leader, who is supposed to represent the proxies of the voters [a majority], as delegated to the riding MLAs. Centralization of power within political parties and subsequent governments exacerbates this disenfranchisement of constituency voters (see also below).

The solution is to go back to the original Westminster model and re-instate election of government leaders via 'confidence of the House', i.e. the Premier must be an MLA with support from enough other MLA's, expressed *after* the election, such as to represent a majority of the proxies delegated by ordinary voters. *Candidacy for leadership may not be restricted or preordained by persons or entities outside the electoral process.* It will be a travesty of representation if a local MLA, elected by an STP Consensus (i.e. by transferred votes within a riding) is then subjugated to the power of a party apparatus constituted outside of the electoral process.

Centralized Control of Candidates [And block voting of MLAs according to Party Whips]: Candidate selection and election financing must be returned to the control of local [riding] organizations.

Block voting is not inherently problematic. What is problematic is the process by which blocks are formed and enforced. It is very difficult for an independent candidate to be elected at the provincial level. To gain centralized and local party support, a candidate must be deemed suitable by the party and be loyal to the current party leader. Many of the scandals around elections derive from leaders vetoing candidates, parachuting in favourite candidates, or otherwise overriding riding-based community initiatives. In short, once a Leader is selected, MLA candidate selection is not in the hands of riding members, but largely in the power of a centralized administration (one is tempted to say cabal); certainly a clique, the majority of them not elected. So voters can only vote for candidates that are already subservient to 'The Leader'. This control over candidacy is the power that drives block voting of MLAs inside, and controlled communications outside, the Legislature. We are all painfully familiar with MLAs and MPs 'staying on message' a technique refined to a fine torture by the recent 'Stephen Harper Government'.

Leadership Cults: We are urged for example to elect a “Horgan government” – rather than to elect our local NDP MLA. This is a direct result of the first two items above, and the parties’ centralized power enforces this on the post-election governing process. We do not get a government leader who has the confidence of a majority of the voter proxies cast in the election. Instead, we get a charismatic personality who was selected by party insiders based on his/her electability (read: marketability via media and personal appearances). The disenfranchisement, and subsequent disengagement of voters is bad enough in first-past-the-post elections, but will be even more severe under proportional representation elections where voters think that MLAs represent a voter consensus, but government policies are set by party insiders. Fix the first two, and this one will go away as party leadership becomes less consequential.

How to Conduct the Referendum:

In 2005, the Citizens' Forum, after considerable research and thought, recommended a proportional representation process with MLAs elected in each riding, using transferable votes to build riding-level consensus. The vote passed the 66% threshold province-wide, and in every riding except one. This one small rural riding was used as the excuse to thwart the desires of 66% plus of the province's population represented by 90% plus of the ridings. These results show that in 2005, with a clear question, a large majority of the citizens of BC wanted to change the election system to one built more on community representation with consensus, with consensus building and representation based at the riding level.

The second referendum in 2009 was sabotaged by a confused question that biased voting in favour of the status quo (vs. a poorly articulated alternative). The anti forces in this referendum also tapped into a large groundswell of anti-government sentiment engendered by peripheral policies like the GST/HST proposal (equally badly communicated to the electorate). It was not an unambiguous answer.

Neither of these flawed examples should be followed. Future referendums must have:

Example Mail Out Ballot (Page 1):

- **One Clear and Reasonable Question on the Ballot**

The proposed voting system will replace the current First-Past-The-Post system at the next election.

Are you in favour of changing the election procedure to the proportional representation procedure published in (web site link), and summarized on this ballot:

Yes ☐

No ☐

Proportional Representation Summary:

- How the names/parties on the ballot will be selected;
- How the votes will be recorded on the ballot;
- How the votes will be counted;
- How MLAs will be designated to represent each riding.
- How the government will be formed after the election.

Please mail your ballot to Elections BC in the enclosed, postage paid envelope.

Example Mail Out Ballot (Page 2): Rules for Adoption and Confirmation of Proportional Representation

Pass Mark:

- If 51% of those voting at large vote Yes, the question is passed, but only if the question received 51% of the votes in at least half of all the ridings (45/89).
 - 51% of all unspoiled ballots province-wide vote Yes:
 - 50% of all ridings (45/89) reach this 51% threshold.

Adoption:

If the question passes, the legislation enacting this change will include a section that says "*A second referendum on proportional representation will be held eight (8) years after the first election using this system and it will ask this question: "Do you wish to keep the current proportional representation voting system? Yes/No".* Vote counting and the pass percentages will be the same as in this referendum. If the answer is NO, then the legislation will say that the Legislature *must* restore first-past-the-post elections for the next election and for a period of at least eight(8) years following that election.

Additional Items for the Enabling Legislation:**Clear and Reasonable Campaign Rules:**

- Limits on the number of For/Against, Yes/No campaign organizations (1 each)
- Limits on the total funds each side can spend (in \$millions)
- A reasonable starter grant for each side from the government (20% of \$ limit).
- Only individuals may contribute funds; same rules as for elections, with tax receipts.
- MLAs may participate as individuals only and may not use party or government funds.
- Political parties, like corporations, unions, and other NGO's, must stay neutral and uninvolved

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, November 30, 2017 4:00 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: How We Vote submission

BC Electoral Reform 2018 Referendum, Survey

Submitted on Nov. 30, 2017 by [REDACTED]

First, politicians, political parties and any partisan interests are in a conflict of interest when deciding or influencing electoral reform. It is sad that David Eby does not understand this. His presence diminishes public acceptance of the process and provides the BC Liberals a target. They will simply criticize the process, with justification, without engaging in the merits of the issues. This concern has been pointed out to Eby, Horgan and Weaver from the first but without as much as an acknowledgement of receipt.

Second, we learned from the earlier BC referenda on electoral reform that the designation 'STV' communicates poorly. A much preferred designation would be 'Preferential in Multiple-seat Districts'.

Third, in the section Voting Systems 101, you do not list and explain the possibility of combining Preferential in Multiple-seat districts (STV) with Preferential in Single-seat districts (AV), the first for urban and the second for rural ridings. [A possible division could be two-thirds urban and one-third rural constituencies] Such a combined system suits BC's geography better than any alternative. BC's past experience with electoral reform suggests that a mixture of Preferential in Multiple-seat districts with Preferential in Single-seat districts has the greatest probability of being acceptable to all regions of the province. It seems sort-sighted to exclude the one system that might be more acceptable than any other. As a note of interest, both Fair Voting BC and Fair Vote Canada suggested this mixed system to the 2016 federal parliamentary committee on electoral reform and for good reasons.

Fourth, in explaining the various systems you fail to rate systems on party discipline. Party discipline is a very important consideration. Preferential in Multiple-seat districts has the greatest potential to decrease party discipline. That deserves to be mentioned.

In my view 'making every vote count' is far less significant than empowering MLAs in their dual role of holding government accountable and in representing voters.

Early advocates of Preferential in Multiple-seat Districts such as J S Mill, England 1860 and Sir Sandford Fleming, Canada, 1891, did so exclusively for its ability to give MPs the independence from party control the Westminster Parliamentary form of government requires, lest single party majority government turns into an elected dictatorship. JS Mill called Preferential in Multiple-seat Districts, "Personal Representation" as well "English PR", because he saw that this system in representing persons as opposed to parties fits the Westminster model and was therefore uniquely designed for England.

Question:

Where are these submissions available for public viewing?

[REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

Saturday, February 17, 2018 1:13 PM

To:

Subject:

[REDACTED]
How We Vote

Hi,

I've taken your survey and it visibly short on 2 significant and clear questions.

1. Do you want to change the voting system?
2. Do you want a referendum?

Without these two simple questions, your survey is incomplete and appears to be designed to head towards a particular answer without asking the right questions. It presupposes that the audience interest in redesigning the voting system when the survey does not confirm it in a clear manner.

From the various strengths and weakness of each of the proportional voting systems, the key weakness that appears to be vary common to be a lack of accountability.

When things go wrong who get's blamed? Who takes responsibility? And things will go wrong. No government is perfect. The decisions they make are difficult and the results are complex.

Have you ever heard of the saying, never drive a car designed by a committee? Same thing for proportional voting systems.

We all need to hold someone accountable. If you can't find anyone accountable, then everyone can hide.

Everyone deserves to have an opinion. But not everyone's deserves to govern especially without accountability.

Regards,