

**Submission by  
Guy Boivin  
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on  
Electoral Reform**

I believe that Canadian government should comprise five branches: the Ombudsman, the Chief Electoral Officer, the Chief Information Officer, the Auditor General, and Parliament itself, composed of cabinet, the Senate and the House of Commons.

The British parliamentary system was never well aligned with Quebeckers' political vision. What they want is an MP whom they like and who speaks on their behalf. That is why I am asking Parliament to change our institutions. The House of Commons should be made up of non-partisan MPs who represent each region (equitable division of Canada based on tourism regions) and who pass bills that serve the common good. No longer would we have backbenchers forced to toe the party line.

“One person, one vote” is not true democracy. Under that kind of system, the House of Commons can be dominated by city-dwellers at the expense of the regions or by Torontonians at the expense of the other provinces. It is like amalgamating urban and rural communities: the more populous urban area ends up making all the decisions, while the more sparsely populated rural area exists merely to pay taxes to a city that acts in its own best interest.

The people want their House of Commons representatives to manifest true gender equality. The provinces and territories should therefore be divided according to their size into tourism regions, with each region sending one male and one female representative to the House of Commons. No longer would ridings be orphaned; each would always have two representatives, a man and a woman.

The House of Commons should sit for most of the year because there are always matters that need to be addressed. It could rise for one month in the summer to give MPs a break at a time when the political pace slows down.

The Government of Canada should comprise five branches: the Ombudsman, the Chief Electoral Officer, the Chief Information Officer, the Auditor General, and Parliament itself, composed of cabinet, the Senate and the House of Commons.

Because of their impact on Canadian democracy, the powers of each of the five branches should be enshrined in laws that would have to be agreed to by 80% of members of the House of Commons. The five branches would meet once a year to determine their respective budgets.

The Ombudsman would be elected by members of the Bar for a five-year term and become the Governor General and Speaker of the House of Commons. The Ombudsman would be the point of contact for MPs and citizens who want to blow the whistle on the

injustices and problems arising in our laws and our society. The Ombudsman would review each claim and, upon finding a claim to be well-founded, draft a bill for introduction in the House of Commons. The Ombudsman would ensure continuity of government in the absence of a Prime Minister. The Ombudsman would prepare the House of Commons' order paper and ensure that the election of the Chief Electoral Officer is carried out properly.

The Chief Electoral Officer would be elected by and from among members of the association of notaries public for a five-year term. The incumbent would ensure that all elections are carried out properly, including those of the Ombudsman, the Chief Information Officer, the Auditor General, the Prime Minister, senators and members of the House of Commons.

The Chief Information Officer would be elected by members of the journalists' guild, an association of all journalists that upholds a common code of ethics. Guild members would elect the Chief Information Officer from among themselves for a five-year term. The Chief Information Officer would ensure that all Canadians can access information that is as neutral and complete as possible. The incumbent would be responsible for CBC/Radio-Canada.

The Auditor General would be elected by and from among members of the accountants' association of Canada for a five-year term. The incumbent would ensure that government services are delivered properly and advise the Ombudsman on changes to laws as needed.

Members of the House of Commons would each be elected for five-year terms. Elections would be held in the case of normal life events (resignation, retirement) to ensure legislative continuity and guard against long interruptions.

Elections would take place on a cyclical basis as seats are vacated. All seats would be filled for fixed five-year terms. The Elections Act would be amended to ensure that all political parties self-finance and receive no public funds. As soon as a writ is dropped, the Chief Electoral Officer would become the sole fundraiser in each riding for all parties and candidates so that all are on a level playing field. No spending other than by the Chief Electoral Officer would be authorized in the riding.

In a general election, including the election of the Prime Minister, all registered parties would have the opportunity to nominate two or three potential leaders for their party. Voters would vote for a party and for their preferred leader of each party. After tabulating the ballots, the Chief Electoral Officer would announce the party that won the most votes in the country. Of the leaders nominated by the winning party, the one with the most votes in the country would become Prime Minister for five years and select ministers as he or she sees fit.

Each province and territory would select one Senate representative. The Senate's role would be to study laws and regulations clause by clause with interested MPs and ministers.

The Ombudsman would meet with the Prime Minister weekly to draw up the House of Commons order paper. The Government of Canada would be able to act only in accordance with laws and regulations passed by the House of Commons except in a national emergency, when the Prime Minister would have the power to impose a regulation or a law that would subsequently and without delay be put to the House of Commons for approval or rejection. The Ombudsman would introduce bills and proposed regulations. A sponsor (Prime Minister, minister, MP, citizen, expert) would explain the bill to the House of Commons, which would have the opportunity to request clarification. The House of Commons would vote on whether to pass the bill. If the bill were to pass, it would be referred to a parliamentary committee that would conduct a clause-by-clause review of the bill with the Senate. Interested members and ministers would request to participate in the review of the bill or regulation. Once reviewed, the bill or regulation would be referred to the House of Commons for second reading, and the House of Commons would vote. If the bill were passed, the Speaker would sign off, and the law or regulation would come into force on the date specified. If the proposed legislation were rejected, it would be returned to the parliamentary committee and the Senate, where MPs would discuss why it was rejected and the original committee would consider what might be done. Things would proceed in this way until the House of Commons passed the bill. If the law or regulation were rejected at fifth reading, it would be dropped from the order paper and returned to the Ombudsman's office for analysis of the reasons it was rejected.

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