



MAKE EVERY VOTE COUNT-ALWAYS!

PPR123 = 'Perfect Proportional Representation' + 'Instant Runoff Voting' = 'Voter Equality' + 'True' Democracy!

BRIEF TO THE CANADIAN HOUSE OF COMMONS SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL REFORM

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Relevant study

My analytical skills were developed through my career in Information Technology, beginning in 1964 at IBM as a systems analyst, with a degree in Engineering Physics from U of Toronto.

My serious study of electoral reform began in 2004. As a former candidate and political activist concerned about the perverse consequences of our voting system, I closely followed the work of the BC Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform. Quickly recognizing the defects of all existing voting systems, I concluded that something better was needed and must be possible. I scoured the 1,600+ submissions to the BCCA looking for new and better ideas.

From this knowledge base, I was inspired by the promise of this Government to "*Make Every Vote Count*", leading to this proposal of an original electoral system: **PPR123 (Perfect Proportional Representation)**.

Recommendations

I recommend **PPR123** as the only electoral system that *truly* fulfills the definition, the promise and the Citizens' expectations of Democracy.

(Detailed recommendations are included as an Appendix.)

Summary

- Each electoral system is evaluated against the definition of Democracy; all of the standard systems fail.
- In the Information Age, the possibilities and public expectation are much greater than in past centuries.
- It is unnecessary and unjustified to accept the limitations of antiquated electoral systems that compromise the integrity of Democracy.
- **PPR123** is a new electoral system designed for the 21st Century. It *truly* fulfills the promise to "*Make Every Vote Count*", and always ensures both Perfect Proportional Representation and Voter Equality!

PPR123 also fulfills the five principles for electoral reform established by this government.

- *The link between voter intention and election results:*
PPR123 ensures Perfect Proportional Representation!
Based on a preferential ballot (IRV), it liberates voters from 'strategic voting', hence, every 1st choice vote is a 'true' vote for each voter's true preference; this 'true' vote directly becomes part of that party's voting power in Parliament, so **PPR123** perfectly reflects the true intentions of *all* voters with *every* vote in Parliament.

- *How to foster civility in politics:*
With **PPR123**'s preferential ballot, all parties and politicians will be motivated to seek secondary support from those who prefer other parties, fostering more cooperation and civility.
- *Increase voter participation:*
PPR123 ensures Voter Equality, which gives every Citizen a much stronger reason to vote, by making every vote count equally, everywhere and every time; it literally *Makes Every Vote Count--Always!*
- *Ways to safeguard the integrity of our voting system:*
PPR123 has the highest integrity, by ensuring honest voting and honest results (i.e. a direct link between the Citizens' votes and Parliamentary votes.)
- *Taking into account local representation:*
PPR123 does not change local representation, accountability, or riding boundaries!
But it also has flexibility to revise ridings to natural boundaries of any size, because population sizes are automatically reflected in the Parliamentary vote.

Rationale

The ERRE committee has already received input from numerous acknowledged experts in Political Science and democratic institutions, so the flaws of all existing electoral systems are well known.

This submission is very different. It does not come with credentials in Political Science, but instead is based on the sound principles of systems analysis.

Firstly, a definition of Democracy (from Merriam-Webster dictionary)

1. government by the people; *especially*: rule of the majority
2. a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections

The two key points from this definition are: (1) majority rule; (2) supreme power vested in the people.

Hence, under this definition of democracy, our existing *First-Past-The-Post* (FPTP) voting system, where election is based only on a plurality, fails to comply with majority rule.

Similarly, *Mixed Member Proportional* (MMP) also fails to comply with majority rule, as it rides along on top of FPTP dispensing 'free' seats to its *list members*.

Also, the *Single Transferable Vote* (STV), where election is based on a quota (e.g. Droop or Hare) which is a smaller fraction (based on the number of seats in the district), is markedly less than majority rule.

Instant Runoff Voting (IRV, also known as AV) is based upon "majority rule".

The second criterion of "supreme power vested in the people" requires more interpretation. This implies that the Citizens hold the ultimate power, that the power exercised by elected officials is power entrusted to them by the People, and the criteria for evaluating electoral systems is their faithfulness in eliciting and representing the true '*Will of the People*'.

This can be translated into the electoral ideals of *Perfect Proportional Representation* and *Voter Equality*.

While MMP and STV produce quasi-PR and do make most votes count, they both fall short of *Perfect Proportional Representation* and true *Voter Equality*.

IRV by itself is highly disproportional, and fails the Voter Equality test, but it is far superior to FPTP, as it eliminates the problems of *strategic voting*, *vote splitting* and the *spoiler effect*. It also ensures that each voter can vote honestly for each of their choices.

Do these voting systems produce the ‘*rightful*’ winners, as individual candidates and governments? FPTP fails on both counts: it often produces ‘*wrongful*’ winners who would be defeated under IRV (i.e. under *majority rule*); occasionally it even elects the ‘*wrong*’ government (i.e. with fewer votes than an opposition party).

MMP inherits the ‘*wrongful*’ winner problem for those elected seats (under FPTP)—and *none* of the ‘free’ compensatory seats from party lists could be deemed democratically ‘*rightful*’.

Hence, we should not consider any of these established electoral systems to be democratically acceptable, as they all fail the basic criteria of Democracy.

We should also recognize that all of these defective attempts at producing a *democratic* electoral system are complicated, convoluted and problematic. They make voting more difficult, degrade the connection between voters and representatives, make representation more arduous, and introduce other undesirable defects (e.g. in MMP, the fact of there being two votes leads to some amount of ‘gaming’ the system by both the parties and the voters). What makes this situation worse is that none of these complications and problems were necessary, and they could have been entirely avoided if there had been a true commitment to the principles of Democracy.

These false remedies were the best products of highly rational deep thinking—but were based on a flawed ethical foundation. Specifically, an elitist contempt for the most fundamental principle of democracy—i.e. “supreme power vested in the people”. Instead of establishing the *Citizen’s vote* as paramount, the ethic of the era (18th Century), that still endures, has been to enshrine the elected *Member’s vote* as sacrosanct.

This understanding has led me to spend about two years of my life pursuing of a new and better electoral alternative, resulting in **PPR123**.

Simply put, we are now in the 21st Century—while our FPTP voting system is rooted in the 13th Century, and the other contenders came from the 18th and 19th Centuries. We’re living in the Information Age, yet are still stuck with a voting system from the Feudal Age, while mulling over the advancements of the Age of Enlightenment. People today live so differently than even fifty years ago, and expect so much more.

With **PPR123**, Canada can leap forward democratically by about eight centuries, and lead the world to a new and better electoral system that is worthy of 21st Century Democracy!

The most important thing about **PPR123** is that it is a *hybrid* electoral system derived directly from the first principles of Democracy: (1) *majority rule*; (2) supreme power vested in the people.

Firstly, **PPR123** ensures that every representative elected is the *rightful* winner under *majority rule*. It achieves this through a preferential ballot and IRV voting, as simple as 1-2-3! This also ensures honest voting, and incentivizes politicians to become more cooperative and build a more civil political climate.

Secondly, **PPR123** ensures both *Perfect Proportional Representation* and *Voter Equality*, by fulfilling the commitment to “Make Every Vote Count”, by making every Citizen’s vote count directly (cast as a proxy vote by an elected representative), with every vote in Parliament! This is in strict compliance with the principle of supreme power vested in the people.

Finally, the unique power of **PPR123** is based on a new principle: “*The Primacy of the Citizen’s Vote*”.

In contrast, all other electoral systems are based upon an unwritten and undemocratic elitist rule that they blindly adhere to: *The Primacy of the Representative's Vote*. Under this universally practiced and hitherto unchallenged doctrine, once the Citizens' votes have been mistranslated into some elected body of representatives, ALL CITIZENS' VOTES ARE THROWN AWAY, leaving each member to simply cast their own single vote. This is a fundamental violation of the very definition of Democracy!

In the 21st Century, we have the power of computers, that are transforming how everything is done. Computers can count the millions of Citizens' votes (cast as proxy votes by their entrusted representatives) far more quickly and accurately than humans can count the several hundred Members' votes.

Under **PPR 123**, all votes for defeated candidates are retained by each party and reassigned amongst their elected representatives. To prevent the waste of any Citizens' votes, some accommodations should be made to deal with votes for small parties and independent candidates. Such details are examined in documents available on the website: ppr123.ca

Conclusion

This Government should be saluted by all Canadians for its resolve to replace our antiquated and defective voting system.

The Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE) should also be saluted, for its democratic composition and its diligence in undertaking this historic initiative.

At decision time, this Committee and this Parliament will face a simple choice: to move forward as a hesitant straggler by finally upgrading our electoral system to an 18th Century model of quasi-PR democracy; or to leap forward as a confident world leader to a 21st Century solution that guarantees Perfect Proportional Representation and true *Voter Equality*, by design. In making this decision, Parliamentarians are urged to focus on the definition of Democracy, which it is believed should be taken as the criteria for evaluating the alternatives.

As such, the *only* electoral reform that truly fulfills the criteria of Democracy, and the only one worthy of the 21st Century, is **PPR 123**.

References

Website: <http://ppr123.ca/>

Voter Equality <http://makeeveryvotecount-always.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/PPR123-0-Voter-Equality-as-a-fundamental-Democratic-Right.pdf>

Implementation: <http://makeeveryvotecount-always.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/PPR123-2-PPR123-Implementation.pdf>

Comparative Eval. <http://makeeveryvotecount-always.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/PPR123-c1a-Comparative-Evaluation-of-Electoral-Systems.pdf>

Appendix 1: RECOMMENDATIONS ON ELECTORAL REFORM

Appendix 2: PRESS RELEASE: PERFECT PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION is Here!



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RECOMMENDATIONS ON ELECTORAL REFORM

Submitted to the Parliament of Canada,
Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)

by

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Mission BC

1. **PPR123 (Perfect Proportional Representation)** should be adopted as Canada's new electoral system, to be implemented in two stages.
2. The first stage should be the implementation of **IRV** (i.e. **Instant Runoff Voting**, the "**123**" component of **PPR123**) as the voting system to be used in the next election (2019), along with a **Referendum on PPR123** to be held coincident with that election. While there's no necessity for a referendum, and it would be politically inadvisable if not properly supported, it would provide an excellent opportunity to build public trust and confidence in **PPR123** as the best electoral reform alternative.
3. The second stage would be the implementation of the "**PPR**" component as the new Parliamentary Voting Procedure, subject to public approval in the Referendum on **PPR123**, to occur as quickly as possible. Until then, or in the unlikely event that the Referendum on **PPR123** failed to obtain public approval, the existing Parliamentary Voting Procedure (i.e. *one-member=one-vote*) would remain in effect.
4. With the full implementation of **PPR123**, consideration should be given to the advisability of a '*double-majority*' requirement (i.e. a Parliamentary *majority* under *both* the existing and the **PPR** Parliamentary Voting Procedures) applicable to motions of non-confidence, to ensure no increased risk of instability.
5. As a minor refinement on **IRV**, it is suggested to use a modified *Borda count* (i.e. based on the expressed voting preferences as **1,2,3**) to determine the order of elimination of candidates, to ensure that each person elected is *always* the candidate with the highest public approval.
6. Clear guidelines or formulae should be established for each party to follow in their reassignment of all votes for their defeated candidates to their elected candidates. This should address the possibility of more balanced demographic distribution of parliamentary voting power.
7. Some accommodation should be provided to ensure that the Government has representation from all provinces and/or regions. Similar accommodations should probably be considered for the Official Opposition. (Some suggestions are provided in **PPR123** analyses.)
8. Some accommodation(s) should be provided to avoid wasting votes for small parties and independent candidates. (Some suggestions are provided in **PPR123** analyses.)
9. At some point, consideration should be given to riding modifications that would improve overall effectiveness of representation in under-populated areas and reduce travel burdens on MPs. An attribute of **PPR123** is that it provides much greater flexibility in determining riding boundaries, as population levels and growth are automatically reflected in parliamentary voting power.



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PPR123: AN ELECTORAL SYSTEM FOR THE DIGITAL AGE!

Options for a new and better Democracy

The power of **PPR123** comes from its foundation on the two voting systems, AV (Alternative Vote or IRV) and Proxy voting, which fulfill the two essential principles of democracy: majority rule, ensuring democratic legitimacy of all MPs; and perfect proportional representation of the truly expressed 'Will of the People', ensuring the democratic legitimacy of the parliamentary voting power of all parties.

Beyond this, even greater benefits can be achieved by leveraging the power of computers and proxy voting to upgrade citizen participation and provide more balanced representation of demographic diversity.

The Digital Age is transforming modern life and public expectations. Democracy should become digitally empowered to better serve its Citizens.

PPR123 would be unthinkable without computers (which may explain why it wasn't advocated by electoral reformers of previous centuries). With computers, it's now possible to count millions of Citizens' votes, cast as proxy votes by MPs with every vote in Parliament. There's no excuse for throwing away all Citizens' votes and counting only the several hundred MP's votes. This is an archaic elitist violation of fundamental principles of democracy, and is no longer acceptable.

Here's how proxy voting in Parliament could be implemented:

- each MP casts a single vote via their cellphone or tablet computer, recorded on a local computer under the Speaker's control
- for an absent MP, their proxy votes could be temporarily reassigned to another MP of that party
- the computer tallies the **PPR123** proxy votes assigned to each MP
- the computer converts the total proxy votes to equivalent numbers of seats
- the Parliamentary vote of record remains denominated in numbers of seats
- hence, there would be no problem if some provinces chose to vote under **PPR123** and other provinces vote under another voting system (i.e. with one-MP=one-vote)
 - this might result from a referendum on **PPR123** being adopted in some but not all provinces
 - this might arise from constitutional considerations (e.g. a guaranteed number of seats for certain provinces)

While **PPR123** does not require computers for tallying the votes in each riding (manual procedures for AV/IRV vote counting have been used for over a century), it would be much quicker and more accurate with computers.

PPR123 could be a catalyst for the implementation of **secure and verifiable online voting**.

- As with online banking, online voting should be made available to all Citizens via their cell phone or PC. This would make voting much easier and more convenient, which should promote citizen participation.
- For citizens who don't have a cell phone or PC, local voting centres (or perhaps public schools or libraries?) should provide online access (with technical assistance) via PC
- This would not require any costly voting machines, and should reduce election costs.
- The digital infrastructure for elections (databases, software, administrative controls) could also be used at very low cost for citizen engagement (e.g. public opinion polling or referenda).

- This digital infrastructure for federal elections could also be used for provincial elections.
- The non-personal electoral data could also be provided to political parties and researchers for their analyses.
- Citizens should be able to review their voting records online at any time. This would provide verification of the correctness of the data, and ensure public confidence in the process.
- Another possible enhancement to our democracy, subject to political approval and suitable controls, would be to allow voters to switch their vote to a different party between elections. Under **PPR123**, this would simply result in a corresponding change in the voting power of each party in Parliament (i.e. no change of elected representatives). This would give citizens greater power to hold elected representatives accountable, and apply pressure on all parties to serve the 'Will of the People'. This would transform democracy—and the relationship between Citizens and their Government, making it much more responsive and true to its definition of 'rule by the People' (i.e. consistent with the Athenian model). It might also reduce the volatility that often occurs with general elections where the driving public concern is to 'throw the bums out'.
- If midterm vote shifts provided a plurality or majority to a different party or coalition, the roles of Government and Opposition should switch and Parliament would continue under new leadership until the next election (i.e. a 'constructive' non-confidence vote)

PPR123 also provides unique opportunities to achieve more effective representation, without increasing the number of MPs, specifically: to have smaller ridings in Canada's vast sparsely populated areas; and to design an electoral system that gives much more balanced representation in Canada's challenge of demographic diversity.

- **PPR123**, by making every vote count equally, removes the concern that ridings should have similar populations.
- There are many seats in urban areas that could be much more effectively used by being redistributed to achieve other electoral goals of improved regional and demographic representation (n.b. only **PPR123** has the potential to provide such benefits without increasing the number of MPs, and while fulfilling the highest democratic standards of perfect proportional representation, voter equality and democratic legitimacy of all MPs).
- The recommendation is that there should be no riding changes for the 2019 election; but subject to Citizen approval of **PPR123** and proxy voting in Parliament, we recommend that Elections Canada should undertake major revisions to riding boundaries for the following general election in 2023.
 - reduce riding sizes in sparsely populated remote areas
 - establish more natural boundaries
 - within urban areas, combine multiple ridings into districts of two to seven ridings or seats; designate equal numbers of seats for ridings that would be contested only by male or female candidates (i.e. to substantively improve gender parity in Parliament), and one or more seats for ethnic minority candidates only.
 - under **PPR123** with online voting, Citizens within urban districts could choose which riding in their district that they would vote in; it wouldn't matter how many votes were in each riding as, under **PPR123**, every vote counts equally for the chosen party, and every MP would be elected under majority rule.