

## Electoral Reform — a suggestion for your consideration

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Our electoral system is being reformed — let's keep it simple. Our new way of voting should address the problems of the old but look and feel comfortably familiar. We shouldn't feel as if our election has been taken over by the system. Let's vote exactly as we have in the past, but make a slight change in how we use the results.

Let's allow all the "winners" in each riding to sit as MPs and use the same results to select an additional number of distributive "National" MPs. The percentage of the national vote will indicate how many additional National MPs are given to each party. The National MPs will be selected using our votes for those candidates who were not "first past the post". The higher percentage of the local vote such a candidate receives, the higher they are on the list of potential National MPs for their party.

Rather than having a political party create a prioritized list of National MPs, we get to choose through our voting pattern who is in the house. And we get to indicate one candidate we want, not who we want, who we could tolerate and who we don't want. And every one of our votes counts twice. First, every vote will boost our party's national percentage, increasing their percentage of National MPs. And then each vote will either elect the "first past the post" MP or raise our chosen candidate's percentage of local votes cast, increasing their likelihood of being a National MP.

The number of National MPs is not hugely significant. It could be started small and increased as we see how it works. Personally I like a larger number, around half the House of Commons. To my thinking this offers some sort of balance. In any event, there should not be any difference in status or privilege in these two kinds of MPs. They are all selected by our votes. They represent how we voted.

Many of the electoral districts in Canada would then have two (rarely three) representatives. This would initially seem to be a large change, but it reflects that in those ridings we gave a large percentage of our votes to those other candidates. I think we'd have little or no problem with being able to contact an MP of our own stripe.

A quick example of how this would work might be instructive. Our mock election results give 37% to the winning party, 32% to the official opposition and 19% to the third party. A fourth party receives 7% and the remaining 5% go to independent candidates. 80 National MPs would be distributed as:

winning party	$37/95 * 80 = 31.2$	or	31
official opposition	$32/95 * 80 = 26.9$	or	27
third party	$19/95 * 80 = 16.0$	or	16
fourth party	$7/95 * 80 = 5.8$	or	<u>6</u>
total National MPs			80

'95' is used because 5% of the votes cast did not go to political parties — in this system, an independent candidate cannot possibly be a distributive MP.

Which party wins the election and holds power will likely not change from who would have won under our present system. You would have to have an extremely close 'first past the post' tally and the party coming second with a significantly higher national percentage of votes. So far this has never happened. But if it ever does, it will reflect how we voted and the party who wins, holds power.

This system will motivate us to get out and vote because no vote will be "wasted". Even if there is no likelihood of our candidate being 'first past the post', our vote will raise the national percentage of our candidate's party and their local vote percentage. Let's care about how we vote, it's our government.