

## Electoral Reform

*“Regardless of electoral system,  
there will always be opposing views as to advantages and disadvantages of each”*

Submitted by SR-F 06 September 2016

Because elections and referenda require a high level of voter awareness and responsibility, civic participation in governance must be encouraged in order that Canada’s Democracy becomes one that protects liberties, particularly communal liberties, rather than simply emphasizing individual Rights.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMIbH5D0waA>

*Direct Democracy* would be the ideal voting system because it allows citizens to participate in most every aspect of governance through initiatives/voting/referenda... laws and changes to the national constitution being voted on *by the citizenry* affording them a much greater measure of control over political minutiae. Switzerland is the most prominent modern democracy to use elements of Direct Democracy [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voting\\_in\\_Switzerland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voting_in_Switzerland) with versions of it at State and local levels in the USA.

As opposed to direct democracy, some version of *Representative Democracy*, founded on the principle of elected officials representing a group of people (*includes Referendum/Initiatives/Recall that provide limited Direct Democracy*), would appear to be more practical for Canada at this point in time.

### Present System : FPTP - Plurality

In “winner-take-all” electoral systems, generally just two parties end up competing in national elections, forcing political discussions into a narrow two-party frame where loyalty and party line assertions can distort political debate, voters left undecided as to where to place their vote. When FPTP Voters realise that their preferred candidate cannot win, knowing that their vote won’t count or will be wasted, they have little incentive to vote.

Furthermore, unless boundaries are drawn by non-partisan bodies, Gerrymandering can result (*Gerrymandering, a means to maximise partisan power, has historically been used in Canada,*).

### Proposed System : PR (AV/STV/PLP/MMP) - Proportional Representation

PR Electoral systems can incorporate various forms of Proportional Representation that result in multi-party systems (*many parties represented in the parliaments*) which generally foster higher voter attendance in elections, fewer wasted votes and promote and allow for a wider variety of representative political opinions.

Societies using some version of PR have proven to benefit from increased voluntary voter participation, overall improved health, education, personal security, economic growth, lower deficits, larger surpluses, less inequality and increased/accelerated environmental protection/conservancy.

When Voters are aware that *all votes* count toward the result, knowing that their vote *can* make a difference, they are more likely to make the effort to vote and less likely to vote tactically. Voter turnout improves and the population voluntarily and more readily involves itself in the political process

My suggestion : **DPR (AV/STV) - Direct Preference Ranking**

- Elected terms should be 4 years, never to exceed 2 concurrent terms.
- Members of the Senate must be elected.
- All Candidates (*MP/Senator/Party Leader*) are Ranked by voter preference  
3 candidate lists are on every ballot : MP/Senator/Party Leader
- Each winning candidate on each list (*MP/Senator/Party Leader*) must achieve 50%+

Method : Voters rank candidates **on each list** (*MP/Senator/Party Leader*) in order of preference. Ballots are initially counted for each elector's top choice. If a candidate secures more than half of these votes (50%+), that candidate wins. Otherwise, whoever is in last place is eliminated from the race. On any ballot ranking this defeated candidate, all the candidates ranked behind him or her move up one ranking. The top choices on all the ballots are then counted again. This process repeats until one candidate is the top remaining choice of a majority of the voters. If the field is reduced to two, it becomes an "instant runoff" that allows a comparison of the top two candidates head-to-head.

An actual Referendum on Electoral Reform should be envisaged *only* once the citizenry has had ample opportunity to review and assess *all* of the proffered/proposed options/alternatives.

**Addendum**

Outlines of Electoral systems :

**Plurality electoral systems**

Also called "first-past-the-post" or "winner-take-all" systems, plurality systems simply award a seat to the individual candidate who receives the most votes in an election. The candidate need not get a majority (50%+) of the vote to win; so long as he has a larger number of votes than all other candidates, he is declared the winner.

**Majority electoral systems**

Also called "second ballot" systems, this system attempts to provide for a greater degree of representativeness by requiring that candidates achieve a majority of votes in order to win. "Majority" is normally defined as 50%+1-vote.

**Proportional Representation (PR)**

Characterizes electoral systems by which divisions in an electorate are reflected proportionately in the elected body that reflects the overall distribution of public support for each political party.

**Alternative Vote (AV)**

On the ballot, voters rank the candidates running in their electoral district in order of their preference. To be elected, a candidate must receive a majority (more than 50%) of the votes cast. If no one receives a majority on the first count, additional counts take place until a candidate wins

**List Proportional Representation (List PR) or Party List**

There are two main forms of List PR: closed-list and open-list. Both forms elect members from lists of candidates drawn up by each party before election day. Voters vote for a political party (closed-list PR) or for preferred candidates from a party list (open-list PR), and each party is allocated seats in the legislature in proportion to its share of the national vote.

**Single Transferable Vote (STV)**

Citizens in multi-member electoral districts (for example of 3 to 5 representatives) rank candidates on the ballot. They may rank as few or as many candidates as they wish. Candidates get elected based on how well they rank overall. Unlike the Alternative Vote, which also uses ranking, the result in STV is proportional because each district is represented by a number of MPs that together represent the overall vote.

**Mr Trudeau**'s stated personal preference leans toward *Ranked-Choice Preferential* ([RCV/IRV/STV](#)). Voters rank all candidates in order of preference (only *Instant Run-Off* and *Single Transferable* versions are used in governmental elections).

<http://www.fairvote.org/>

### **Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)**

Voters in an electoral district cast two votes: one to directly elect an individual member to serve as their representative, and a second for a party or parties to fill seats in the legislature allocated according to the proportion of the vote share they receive. Each party's seat count is proportional to the share of votes it received in the election. Seats are held by a combination of directly elected MPs and candidates from parties' lists.

Also called the Additional Member System (AMS), is a hybrid, two-tier, mixed member system combining a non-proportional Plurality/Majoritarian election and a compensatory regional or national party list PR one. Voters have two votes, one for their single-member district and one for the party list, the party list vote determining the balance of the parties in the elected body. Biproportional apportionment is a two-tier method for adjusting an election's result to achieve overall proportionality

### References :

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Direct\\_democracy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Direct_democracy)

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proportional\\_representation](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proportional_representation)

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Party-list\\_proportional\\_representation](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Party-list_proportional_representation)

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerrymandering>

The following (well conceived), *hard to find* Web Page should without delay be made accessible to the general Public countrywide through *all Media outlets* :

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/Committees/en/ERRE/StudyActivity?studyActivityId=9013025>