

# Proportionately Reflecting Divisions in the Canadian Electorate

WITHOUT CHANGING OUR ELECTORAL SYSTEM !

## **A Proposed Reform to The Legislative Process** *(ballot change optional)*

**A Brief Submitted to  
The Special Committee on Electoral Reform**

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The grass is always greener  
on the other side  
of the fence.

A simple and effortless adjustment  
to a known and reliable path  
can take us further along  
than a large leap into the unknown.

**Thoughts  
on  
Electoral Reform**

# Big Projects Fail at an Astonishing Rate

“Managers expect they can plan for all the variables in a complex project in advance, but they can’t. Nobody is that smart or has that clear a crystal ball.”

- [Why Good Projects Fail Anyway](#)

*(By Nadim F. Matta and Ronald N. Ashkenas, Harvard Business Review, September 2003 Issue)*

# Big Changes Are Hard to Evaluate

“Because electoral systems have psychological as well as mechanical effects, the long-term effect of changes may take some time to work through. Parties, candidates and voters may take two or even three electoral processes to fully observe and respond to the positive and negative effects of particular changes. The tendency towards mixed systems may accentuate this, as the overall effect on candidates and voters of mixed incentives may be less clear.”

- [ACE Electoral Knowledge Network](#)  
(*Electoral Systems: The Process of Change: Assessing the Impact of Change*)

# Big Change May Be Neither Affordable Nor Sustainable

“A sustainable political framework takes into account the resources of a country both in terms of the availability of people with the skills to be election administrators and in terms of the financial demands on the national budget.”

- [ACE Electoral Knowledge Network](#)  
*(Electoral Systems: Criteria for Design: Making the Election Process Workable and Sustainable)*



# Electoral Reform? Can We Not Smoothen Some Edges?

“Voters, election administrators, politicians and commentators all tend to be comfortable with what is familiar. Years of use may have smoothed the rough edges of established systems. A new system can thus be a leap into the unknown, and problems in implementation can arise from its unfamiliarity.”

- [ACE Electoral Knowledge Network](#)  
(*Electoral Systems: The Process of Change: Advice on Implementation*)

**Thoughts  
on  
Electoral Systems**

# Canadians Must Have Faith in The Electoral System

“It is important that the mechanisms of the electoral system be as transparent as possible and known to both voters and political parties and candidates well in advance in order to avoid confusion and distrust in the results they produce at elections.”

- [ACE Electoral Knowledge Network](#)

*(Electoral Systems: Guiding Principles of Electoral Systems: Transparency)*

# Votes Must Fairly Influence How Canada is Governed

“Elections are all well and good, but they may mean little to people if [...] at the end of the day [they perceive] that their vote makes no difference to the way the country is governed.”

- [ACE Electoral Knowledge Network](#)  
*(Electoral Systems: Criteria for Design: Making Elections Accessible and Meaningful)*

# Effective Government = Fair Power + Fair Opposition

“Effective governance relies not only on those in power but, almost as much, on those who oppose and oversee them. The electoral system should help ensure the presence of a viable opposition grouping which can critically assess legislation, question the performance of the executive, safeguard minority rights, and represent its constituents effectively.”

- [ACE Electoral Knowledge Network](#)  
*(Electoral Systems: Criteria for Design: Promoting Legislative Opposition and Oversight)*

The Current Problem:

**Political Divisions  
Are Not  
Fairly Represented**

# Effective Representation Has Two Components

At it's simplest, the components of effective representation include:

- “Local” representation of concerns affecting citizens in a common geographic area
- “Political” representation of concerns affecting citizens with a common political inclination

## Local Representation in Our Current System

“Local” representation is currently handled with the first-past-the-post electoral system and ballot to elect representative MP’s in each electoral riding.

It is an easy, quick, and reliable method of selecting an MP. (Easy for the voter and, more importantly, easy for the process of tallying votes.)

Although the current electoral system allows for regional representation without majority support for an individual MP, majority support for an individual MP may be a very moot point in regards to an MP’s constituency work. (See the next page/slide.)

More ...



## Local Representation in Our Current System *(continued)*

“There is good reason to question the closeness of any link between electoral systems and the constituency orientation of MPs: when the voters want and expect their MPs to pay attention to local matters the MPs will more or less have to respond, regardless of the electoral system, while when voters do not then MPs will not engage significantly in such work.”

- [Ireland's PR-STV electoral system: a need for reform?](#)  
*(Trinity College Dublin)*

# “Political” Representation in Our Current System

“Political” representation (representation of differing Canadian values) is very poorly handled by our current electoral system, which more often than not yields very disproportional political representation:

- Direct political representation in a riding only to those who voted for the winning candidate
- Indirect political representation for “losers” in a riding via candidates (of preferred political party) elected in other ridings
- No political representation for “losers” in a riding because of no candidates (of preferred political party) elected in any other ridings

The Proposed Solution:

**A Reform to  
The Legislative Process**

# Modify The Process of Passing a Bill

Modify the current process as follows:

For a bill to proceed from any one step to another, the bill must have the support of one or more political parties (via whatever representatives chosen by the parties) that have in total earned more than 50% of the popular vote.

- This should increase the amount of collaboration between political parties
- This may allow MP's to take less partisan positions and, as a result, better represent their ridings

(See [Process of Passing a Bill - PARLIAMENT of CANADA](#))

# The Impact on Passage of a Bill

Passage of a bill and Royal Assent can only occur when both of the following conditions exist:

- A bill has the support of one or more political parties with greater than 50% of the popular vote (more on this in the next page/slide)
- The same bill is supported by the majority of elected MP's

# Tallying Proportional Support Per Political Party

The Options:

1. Figure it out as we have always done, as per our existing ballot  
(i.e. based on party votes received via votes for party candidates)
2. Or, add a second part to our existing ballot, specifically meant to identify support for political parties (sample on next page/slide.)

## Optional Change to The Ballot

For the purpose of indicating and tallying support for political parties, add a second part to the existing ballot, such that:

- The first part of the ballot is for selection of a local representative (this is the same as our current ballot, without any change)
- The second (new) part of the ballot is for identifying preferred political party

This allows a voter to indicate who he/she prefers as his/her MP (regardless of political party), and allows the voter to indicate which political party best represents his/her views.

# The Ballot:

## Who do you want to represent your riding in parliament?

Please indicate who you wish to represent your riding. Place an X in the circle beside the candidate, or colour in the circle beside the candidate.

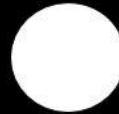
AKLAVIC, Iyerak  
Purple Party / Parti Violet



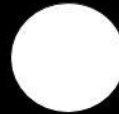
LACOMBE, Marie-Alma  
Amber Party / Parti Ambre



STEINBACH, Hanna  
Pink Party / Parti Rose



NELSON, Syndey G.  
Independent / Indépendant



## Which political party best represents your values?

Please indicate which political party best represents your values. Place an X in the circle beside the party, or colour in the circle beside the party.

Purple Party / Parti Violet



Amber Party / Parti Ambre



Pink Party / Parti Rose



Beige Party / Le Parti Beige





# Conclusions

# Benefits of This Proposed Reform to The Legislative Process

- Proportional “political” representation
- No need to change the electoral system nor the following:
  - electoral boundaries
  - the number of MP’s
- The ballot remains clear and uncomplicated
  - Simple to understand
  - Simple to tally
- Much more cooperation/collaboration between political parties
- Better legislation (*an “end” to omnibus bills ?*)
  - More balanced because of more input by cooperating/collaborating political parties
  - More concise/focused bills to facilitate both cooperation/collaboration and moving bills through the legislative process
- **Very little cost of any kind (if any) going forward**

# Should Canada Have a Referendum on Electoral Reform?

Look no further than the experience of Brexit. A referendum is an exercise that divides and bruises a country and its citizens.

Instead of large-scale reforms, our elected representatives ought to collaborate on small and meaningful reforms which:

- do not require a referendum
- can be tried, evaluated, and:
  - kept (and enhanced, if necessary)
  - or discarded

**Thank-you**