

The following is submitted as my views on Electoral Reform.

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### **Recommendations re Electoral Reform**

1. Develop a system for MMP whereby the list developed by parties makes up for the demographic shortcomings of particular interest to each party, be that gender, age, region, ethnicity, aboriginality, etc. So for example a party might declare that until their party elects 50% women in one election, the first ten candidates on the list will be women in the subsequent election. How those candidates are selected is another issue – whether by a national or regional nomination process or appointment by the leadership.
2. The Committee should consider combining a PR or MMP system with a ranked ballot so that each local MP is elected with at least 50% support.
3. Empower Elections Canada to undertake a massive PR campaign starting well before the next election, on two issues:
  - A new electoral system (assuming it is to be changed)
  - Encouraging all eligible voters to vote
4. Online Voting. We need to move to online voting at some point in the near future. The security of the system is still a concern as there appears to be a serious problem of international hacking that can distort or hijack elections. This is an issue that the Committee should identify for ongoing examination.
5. Compulsory voting: While the 2015 election saw a significant increase in the voting level, it is still not satisfactory. Compulsory voting should be implemented, perhaps with a fine for those who do not vote.
6. Accept that Canadians will not universally embrace any system. We need to recognize that no system is perfect and that every system has flaws. Further, that Canadians may have different ideas about what prime purposes of the system are, such as proportional reflection, gender equity, regional equity, making every vote count, ensuring that every MP is supported by a majority, etc. Put differently, Canadians have different views about what electoral reform needs to accomplish so there is virtually no way of satisfying every one.

## Comparisons of Electoral Systems

### First-past-the-post (FPTP):

Advantages	Disadvantages	Comments
System has worked for 150 years and has, in general, provided good government		
Citizens vote for local MPs who they can interact with and hold accountable		With any change some voters want to ensure local representation
Generally, each constituency has the same number of voters – similar representation across the country. (exceptions include regions such as PEI and the Territories)		
Some people prefer majority government, seen as stable government for a specific period of time (even if it's not the party they want)	Frequently a party with less than 50% (even as low as 37%) can end up with more than 50% of the seats and have a majority government.	For those who don't like the system this is the primary reason some Canadians want to move to a proportional system where the seats are proportional to the votes
Voting is simple, and easy to understand, or at least is understood since it is our current system, which can result in better public support.		
Votes are simple to count and results can be delivered in a matter of hours after polls close, or even minutes if they are counted electronically		This allows for an efficient electoral process and helps to keep costs down for Elections Canada.
	FPTP often provides majority government to a party that has considerably less than 50% of the popular vote.	
	With FPTP, a candidate in a riding can win with as little as low-30s percent, if they get more than any of the others. The rest of the voters can feel unrepresented. Winner-take-all again with less than 50% of the vote.	A ranked ballot or preferential voting can mitigate this. As a winning candidate would need to have at least 50% support, whether a first or subsequent choice.
	FPTP can encourage strategic	Strategic voting could still take

	voting, which causes individuals to vote for the Party that is most likely to defeat a party they most dislike, rather than voting for the party which most accurately represents the person's views	place in any other system such as PR.
	Rather than allocating seats in line with the popular vote across the country, FPTP sometimes rewards parties with support concentrated in geographical areas.	So a party with less of the national popular vote, that is regionally concentrated, than others can get more seats. This can affect who wins government, and more frequently distorts the relative size of opposition parties.

**Pure Proportional Representation (PR):**

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Parties get seats in the legislature based on their popular vote, and a has to win a majority of the popular vote in order to have a majority government.		
Allows smaller parties which win a sufficient amount of the vote to be represented in the House of Commons.		Allows for more voices to be heard.
	MPs represent much larger electoral districts, which can make it more difficult for citizens to hold their elected members to account, or to have regular contact with them.	
	In a pure PR system, MPs are not directly elected, but are on a list of preference created by each party.	This creates an issue of 'insider baseball' for party candidate selection and reduces accountability for elected officials, especially those in the top places for party candidate selection
With multiple elected officials in each riding, likely from different parties, constituents can approach the MP who best represents their views with their constituent		

concerns		
Leads to a greater plurality of views represented in the House of Commons		
Results in more minority and coalition governments		This forces the governing party to work together with parties in the opposition and can result in more centrist legislation which is representative of the views of a greater number of Canadians.
	Results in more minority and coalition governments	These governments tend to be less stable and less productive than majority governments.  These governments increase the likelihood of political gamesmanship.
Every vote would count towards election results		It is estimated that this would increase voter turnout.  This would also result in more real, meaningful choices for Canadians at the ballot boxes.
	PR has the potential to allow parties on the extremes of the political spectrum to gain a foothold in federal politics	
Most commonly used electoral system in advanced democracies around the world		The only advanced democracies using different electoral systems are Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, India, and France.
Votes are simple to count and results can be delivered in a matter of hours after polls close		This allows for an efficient electoral process and helps keep costs down for Elections Canada
The percentage of the vote received by a party relates more closely to the number of seats held by a political party		This results in better representation in government of Canadians and their values.

### Mixed member proportional (MMP)

Advantages	Disadvantages	Comments
Significantly fewer voters will feel that their vote is wasted or doesn't have a meaningful impact		This is likely to increase voter participation in elections
Allows smaller parties which win a sufficient amount of the vote to be represented in the House of Commons	If there is no threshold, small or fringe parties can elect seats and in a "hung" parliament can have disproportionate strength as they bargain with major parties for their support.	
	Some MPs are not all directly elected, but can gain office by being on a list of preference created by each party	This creates an issue of 'insider baseball' for party candidate selection and reduces accountability for these elected officials, especially those in the top places for party candidate selection. Also creates two classes of MPs.
	MPs represent much larger electoral districts, which can make it more difficult for citizens to hold their elected members to account	
Reduces the likelihood of majority governments	Reduces the likelihood of majority governments	While the electoral process does limit majority governments, it is not the most effective system to that end.

### Ranked Ballot / Preferential Ballot / Single Transferable Ballot (STB)

Advantages	Disadvantages	Comments
Easiest reform to implement which requires the least amount of change to the system.		
Candidates have to receive at minimum 50% of the vote to win their seat		
Significantly fewer voters will feel that their vote is wasted or doesn't have a meaningful impact		This is likely to increase voter participation in elections
	The manner in which votes are counted can be confusing	May keep people from voting because they don't understand

		how the system works
	Could make it harder for smaller parties or independents to be elected	
Reduces the likelihood of polarizing being used as a campaign tactic. Parties are forced to tone down partisanship as they need the support of voters who will be willing to provide them with a subsequent vote if not the first preference.		Parties win as a result of big tent politics rather than targeting just enough of the vote to be successful. Therefore, the most desired candidate wins rather than the least unpopular one.
Ridings remain the geographically and demographically the same in the immediate		There is no need redraw the borders of ridings as would be required for other electoral systems