

Federal Electoral Reform Proposal

Integrated House of Commons and Senate Parliamentary Representation

Federal Electoral Reform creates an opportunity for Nation Building by strengthening our parliamentary system. This proposal for reform involves the voter electing their local MP as they do now as well as nominating their regional Senator for top up proportional representation in Parliament. Accordingly Canadians will have a more balanced representation of political views in our democratic institutions.

To accomplish this, the House of Commons' Special Committee on Electoral Reform Committee should consider the following proposal entitled: Integrated House of Commons and Senate Parliamentary Representation (IHCSPP).

IHCSPP representation combines the current First Past the Post election system for MPs in the 338 constituency ridings with a new proportional Senator nomination system for the 105 Senators. Under the IHCSPP representation proposal there are two steps: 1) Voting for the House of Commons and Senate; 2) Senate Proportional Top Up.

First Step - Voting for House of Commons and Senate

Each Voter would cast two votes as described below:

a) First Vote (Election) - House of Commons

Voters would elect the MP for their constituency riding by using the current First Past the Post (FPTP) system. Accordingly, the voting for the 338 MPs in the House of Commons would remain the same as it is today. The riding candidate can be affiliated with a Political Party or run as an independent.

b) Second Vote (Nomination) - Senate

Voters would vote for a Political Party by nominating a Senator for their respective province or territory from a list of candidates prepared by the Political Parties for appointment by the Prime Minister.

The Voter does not have to vote for an MP and a Senator from the same Political Party.

Second Step - Senate Proportional Top Up

i) Proportional

Elections Canada would develop an algorithm to determine the proportional number of provincial and territorial seats each Political Party should have in the Senate. This algorithm would be based on each Political Party's combined total vote for the House of Commons and the Senate for that specific province or territory.

A Political Party would receive Top Up seats in the Senate if the Party did not win enough ridings in the House of Commons to reflect their combined total vote in a province or a territory. However, a Party would need a minimum amount of the popular vote or constituency riding wins to be eligible for Top Up seats in the Senate.

ii) Top-Up

The Prime Minister would appoint the appropriate number of nominated Senators to top up each Political Party's representation for each province and territory in order to reflect each Political Party's proportional share of their combined total vote in Parliament for that province or territory.

If a Political Party won more FPTP seats in the House of Commons than their proportional vote share warranted for that province or territory then this Party would receive no Top Up seats in the Senate for that province or territory. However, if the Prime Minister's Party did not have any seats at all in the Senate then there is a constitutional provision that could be used to rectify this problem. This provision allows the Sovereign to appoint four or eight extra senators. Use of this provision would ensure that the Prime Minister's Party has Senators for legislative leadership.

Some of the advantages of the Integrated House of Commons and Senate Parliamentary Representation model are:

1. The 338 constituency ridings in the House of Commons would remain the same.
2. Canadians would continue to elect their MPs using the FPTP system so no confusion under a new system.
3. Canadians, by their votes, would nominate a Senator from a Political Party list to be appointed to the Senate for their province or territory.
4. The appointment of Senators are term limited and would only last until the next Federal Election. However, in the next election, Senators could again be candidates for nomination to the Senate if a Political Party added them to their provincial or territorial list of candidates.
5. No constitutional amendment is needed to allow Canadians to nominate Senators for appointment.
6. Along with MPs and Political Parties, Senators would now be held accountable by Canadians at each election.

Acceptance by all Canadians of this Integrated House of Commons and Senate Parliamentary Representation proposal would improve the diversity, dialogue and decisions of our Federal Parliament and be an inclusive act of Nation Building from coast to coast to coast for Canada's 150th Birthday.

submitted by,
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October 3, 2016