

October 5, 2016

## SUBMISSION TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL REFORM

### Recommendations:

1. That the Committee give the very serious attention it deserves to the Fair Vote Canada submission on electoral reform. Having recently been reading and studying Fair Vote's website and its related links, the organization is clearly an exceptional source of informed information and wise suggestions regarding a more inclusive and democratic voting method for our country than is now the case.
2. Perhaps a bit more negatively: I have seen claims in the media that a strong constituency in the Liberal party is bent on the adoption of the non-proportional representation Alternative Vote (AV) method. Irrespective of whether or not these claims are true, I would ask what the evidence is that the AV method is any more inclusive of people's real wishes as voters than first-past-the-post.
3. I hope the Committee will give serious consideration to the MMP (Mixed Member Proportional) option. I believe Canadians will be more comfortable with this option since it will include the voting feature they are already familiar with. But, in order to provide voters with choice in the candidates they select from top-up lists, and to help ensure that voters don't experience top-up list candidates as too distant from them, please don't make the mistake that Ontario did in 2007 of having a closed top-up list and one that covered an excessively large geographic area.
4. There are many Canadians who may be reluctant and suspicious about changing the electoral method we now have. However, an important consideration here is that people need to be as fully aware as possible of what a reformed voting method means in practice. For this reason, I suggest adopting the recommendation of the 2004 Law Commission of Canada report that a Parliamentary Committee review the new electoral system after three elections have been conducted under the new rules.
5. The apparent reality is that the Official Opposition will not support changing the first-past-the-post voting method, while the three other opposition parties are in favour of doing so. At the same time, a high profile Liberal promise in the last federal election was that the next election would not be run using first-past-the-post rules. Therefore, to fulfill their election promise without the risk of creating a significant and justifiable public backlash by going it alone, it is incumbent on the Liberals to come to an agreement with the three non-Conservative opposition parties on a voting option to be enacted into law.
6. For reasons of public acceptance, among other reasons, the new voting method as finalized should not entail unnecessary complications.
7. With public perceptions and potential resentment not least in mind, the number of M.P.s should remain the same
8. There should be no commitment to a referendum down the road since it could turn out to be unneeded. (Quite possibly falsely, a suggestion to the contrary has been associated with the NDP.)
9. Recommend that voting not be made mandatory. Negatives of mandatory voting include the risks of adding further to the resentment of those estranged from politics and of increasing the number of spoiled ballots (as apparently has been the case in Australia). (If mandatory voting is chosen, a suggestion is that consideration be given to including a none-of-the-above option on ballots.)

10. If electronic voting is adopted, needless to say absence of risk to the security of data is a must.

11. And last but far from least: every effort should be made to meet the Liberal election promise that the 2015 election would be the last to use FPTP. Given the substantial time remaining in the present government mandate, this goal appears feasible, especially if the Liberals and three non-Conservative opposition parties can reach consensus on a proportional representation (PR) option to replace FPTP without incurring unnecessary delay.

Respectfully submitted,

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