

Improving Voting and Democracy in Canada

A Brief to the Special Committee on Electoral Reform

Submitted by:

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Dear Special Committee on Electoral Reform,

Having listened carefully to the many Expert Witnesses and Members of the Special Committee on Electoral Reform who have taken the time to consult with Canadians, there are three things that they have consistently said that Canadians want from a new voting system:

- Local Representation,
- Elimination of “false Majorities”, and
- Votes that mean something even if their Candidate/Party does not win.

Fortunately there is a simple fix to our FPTP voting system which will fulfill all of the requirements in the Special Committee’s Mandate, and give Canadians exactly what they want.

This Made In Canada simple fix to our FPTP voting system is a package of reforms that I call First Past the Post Tempered by Popular Support (FPTPTPS), and is one that will:

- Maintain 338 Members of Parliament all elected locally,
- See “false Majorities” eliminated through popular vote proportionality,
- Give a real meaning to votes cast for both non-mainstream and mainstream Registered Political Parties, and most importantly
- **Not** change the way Canadians vote one iota

FPTPTPS is a hybrid voting system that is different from all of the other hybrid voting systems that have been studied by the Special Committee because **it does not reduce local representation** (MPs) in order to increase proportional Party representation. Rather, it keeps all 338 local representatives and adds ‘Party Votes’ (not Seats) based on the proportion of the popular vote that each Party receives in a General Election.

FPTPTPS will require just two changes:

1. Adding ‘Party Leader Seats’ to the House of Commons for all Party Leaders whose Parties get at least 1-338th of the votes in the General Election, and
2. Adding up to 338 House of Commons ‘Party Votes’ (not Seats or Members) to the existing 338 MP Votes in House of Commons voting, thereby creating a House of Commons voting environment that has approximately 776 votes

Canadian voters will continue to use the same single ballot where they choose their preferred Candidate by marking an X next to the Candidate’s name just like they have done in every election since Confederation. The ballot will still have the Candidate’s Name and the name of the Party that each Candidate represents. Once again, nothing will change for the Canadian voter.

Change 1: Adding ‘Party Leader Seats’ to the House of Commons

‘Party Leader Seats’ are given to each and every Party Leader whose Party has earned at least 1-338th of the Canada-wide popular vote in a 338 Electoral District General Election.

For example, in the 2015 Federal Election if FPTPTPS had been employed there would have been five 'Party Leader Seats' given out: One to each of the BQ, CPC, GPC, LPC, and NDP Party Leaders. Similarly, if FPTPTPS had been employed in the 2000 Federal Election there would have been seven 'Party Leader Seats' given out: One to each of the BQ, CAPC, LPC, GPC, NDP, MPC, and PCPC Party Leaders.

As you can see from the 2000 Federal Election example the Green Party and the Marijuana Party Leaders would both have had Seats in our House of Commons even though they did not win a single Electoral District race. Their voters' votes would have mattered. Their Party Members and voters would have had a daily voice in our House of Commons to promote their platforms, introduce Private Members Bills, and participate in Committees and Media Scrums simply because they had a significant amount of Canada-wide popular support, rather than having to focus all of their resources on Saanich -- Gulf Islands, say, in order to have a chance at maybe getting that same voice.

There will obviously be a variable number of these 'Party Leader Seats', and the number of these 'Party Leader Seats' will depend entirely upon the individual popular support of each Party in each General Election, but there will only ever be a very small number of 'Party Leader Seats'.

The inclusion of 'Party Leader Seats' in the House of Commons will ensure that every Party Leader whose Party gets a significant number of votes Canada-wide will have a Seat in the House of Commons, and I would highly recommend that 'Party Leader Seats' all be placed in the front row of the House of Commons to signify their importance.

Change 2: Adding up to 338 Party Votes (not Seats or MPs) to the existing 338 Member Votes in House of Commons Voting

Members of Parliament who win their Electoral District races will still have one (1) vote to use as they, or their Parties, deem appropriate.

A new type of vote, however, '**Party Votes**', will be created for **use exclusively by Party Leaders** in each vote in the House of Commons. MPs get one vote each, but the Leaders of the Parties in the House of Commons will now get all of their Party's multiple 'Party Votes' to exercise in each vote in the House of Commons.

The number of '**Party Votes**' each Party Leader gets is determined by **multiplying 338** (the number of Electoral Districts) **by the percentage of the popular vote that each party received in the General Election.**

For example, had 'Party Votes' been employed in the 2015 General Election the number of 'Party Votes' that each Party would have received is as follows:

| | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| LPC Party Votes | = 338 x 39.5% popular support | = 133.51 | = 133 Party Votes |
| CPC Party Votes | = 338 x 31.9% popular support | = 107.82 | = 107 Party Votes |
| NDP Party Votes | = 338 x 19.7% popular support | = 66.586 | = 66 Party Votes |
| BQ Party Votes | = 338 x 4.7% popular support | = 15.886 | = 15 Party Votes |
| GPC Party Votes | = 338 x 3.4% popular support | = 11.492 | = 11 Party Votes |

Had 'Party Votes' been employed in the 2015 General Election each Party's House of Commons (HoC) Votes (not Seats) would have been as follows:

LPC HoC Votes = 184 MP Votes + 133 LPC Leader's Party Votes = 317 HoC Votes
CPC HoC Votes = 99 MP Votes + 107 CPC Leader's Party Votes = 206 HoC Votes
NDP HoC Votes = 44 MP Votes + 66 NDP Leader's Party Votes = 110 HoC Votes
BQ HoC Votes = 10 MP Votes + 15 BQ Leader's Party Votes = 25 HoC Votes
GPC HoC Votes = 1 MP Votes + 11 GPC Leader's Party Votes = 12 HoC Votes

Please note that a Party Leader does **not** get an MP vote unless they have won a race in one of the 338 Electoral Districts.

The important thing to remember is that 'Party Votes' can only be exercised by Party Leaders, or whoever is sitting in the Party Leader Seat. 'Party Votes' are in essence a purely whipped vote because the Party Leader has sole discretion as to how they will cast these votes. Presumably they will cast them as their Parties wish if they hope to keep their jobs as Party Leaders.

As you can see from the 2015 General Election results using 'Party Leader Seats' and 'Party Votes' (above) **the LPC would currently be leading a MINORITY Parliament if Party Votes and Party Leader Seats had been employed** (the LPC would have 317 HoC votes, and the other Parties would have a combined 353 HoC votes). There would be no "false Majority" as is currently the case under FPTP.

Actually, the only Majority Government using FPTPTPS with 'Party Votes' and 'Party Leader Seats' in the last twenty-five years would have been the 1993 Liberal Majority government.

Even though FPTPTSP looks like FPTP to the voter the hallmark of FPTPTSP is the addition of purely whipped votes – the 'Party Votes' - which the Party Leaders cast on behalf of their Parties from their 'Party Leader Seats' in all votes in the House of Commons.

FPTPTSP with 'Party Leader Seats' and 'Party Votes' in the House of Commons when used with or without mandatory and/or electronic voting is the Made In Canada voting system that checks all of the boxes on the Special Committee's Mandate, and, more importantly, is the electoral reform that Canadians have already stated that they desire according to the Expert Witnesses and Members of the Special Committee who have taken the time to consult Canadians, those being: Elimination of "false Majorities", votes for both mainstream and non-mainstream parties becoming meaningful because they create or augment non-winning Party's votes in the HoC, and the preservation of the exact same local representation that Canadians have had since Confederation.

These FPTPTPS package of reforms are a good and easy fix to what ails voting and participatory democracy here in Canada under FPTP.

I strongly urge the Special Committee on Electoral Reform to unanimously support these Made In Canada FPTPTPS package of reforms in their entirety for presentation to the House of Commons for eventual implementation in the 2019 General Election.

Sincerely,
Mark Brown
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