

Submitted by: Daniela Gadotti

October 7, 2017

Committee on Electoral Reform

## **RE: Feedback on Electoral Reform**

I so appreciated the efforts of this committee to get in touch with citizens. Here are my thoughts.

**Yes to proportional representation in its simple form except for a quorum.** Proportionality should be nation-wide, with no boundaries of province or ridings. If it takes 100,000 votes to elect an MP and his party scores only 60,000 in this corner of BC, but also 20,000 votes in Southern Alberta 20,000 in the Territories, all together these carve out one MP for that party. Who that MP should be, if from BC Alberta or the Territories, will have to be a balance between the pool of competent people parties have on hand and where they hail from. This is very much like cabinet ministers are chosen right now. If we try to be proportional within current riding boundaries or even provinces (think PEI) it won't work short of vastly increasing the number of MPs. Increasing MPs would be bad for two reasons: it is expensive and having too many colleagues would make your job harder. Note: Italy is now in the middle of a referendum to decrease the number of their MPs for those two reasons (+ abolish their senate). This will make it harder for independents to be elected, unless of course someone with nation-wide name recognition runs as an independent, however independents are few and disadvantaged in the present system as well.

**A quorum** should be set for a party to be elected, the quorum should be nation-wide. This would be a deterrent to the proliferation of small parties. Yes, those votes cast and not adding up to a quorum would be wasted, they would not elect anyone, but this would be some two orders of magnitude smaller than the number of wasted votes we are right now suffering with the current system.

**Local representation is much overrated. Example A:** What needs representing is a scale of priorities, not a postal code. When the National park of Gwaii Hanas (Haida Gwaii, BC) was created, after 13 years of negotiations, it took the personal involvement of then Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, (a conservative!) who had been elected in Central Nova, and his minister of the environment Tom McMillan, of PEI. You cannot go much further from Haida Gwaii than Nova Scotia and PEI and still be in Canada! Meanwhile the local politicians of British Columbia, both provincial and federal, were intent on turning the 1,000 year old trees of Lyell island into toilet paper (I mean it: when a tree that old falls it shatters and is not much good for anything other than fibre).

**Local representation is much overrated Example B:** personal assistance to citizens. I hear politicians talk of how they intervene to assist individual citizens; I was always a bit foggy on how that works, I am not sure I like it even, comes close to clientelism. But if it came to that, if I were looking for help, I'd go to a politician that I like, I trust, who shares my scale of values, not my postal code. In the past I lived in a different province, the MP that was "my representative" in that location...well, I cannot imagine circumstances that would induce me to ask for help from that individual. I felt more "represented" by MPs hailing from a different province entirely.

**I don't like MMP.** I do not favour any system that: A, will lead to two different categories of MPs. Bad enough to have front benchers and back benchers, but two sets of MPs elected by different criteria?!! B, I don't want a system that leads to a greatly increased number of MPs for the two reasons mentioned above, too expensive and too loud.

**I don't like STV either,** because at the end of the day you don't know who you ended up voting for.

**Young voters.** I am all for promoting political awareness in young people, but not by lowering voting age! In fact I'd rather raise voting age. Proportional representation, making (almost) every vote count will go a long way to increase interest. Is our political system taught in the school curriculum right

now? Are elections, when they occur, the object of school assignments? Do politicians visit schools on a regular basis? Do we encourage school trips to Ottawa? Or at least the legislature for those too far away?

**Electronic voting:** Yes! There will be growing pains, but the system as it is now is not perfect either and is so very costly. Fear of coercion? We let people to do their banking from a computer, we decided to not worry about coercion there.

Thank you so much for this opportunity, much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Daniela Gadotti