

The following report for the Electoral Reform(ERRE) Committee is for the town hall meeting at Odell Park Lodge Fredericton NB held on Tuesday August 9 2016 from 7 – 9 p.m.

Over forty people gathered for the town hall meeting at Odell Lodge to discuss the government's campaign promise to update our electoral system for the 2019 election. The event featured talks by keynote speaker David Meslin (Every Voter Counts Alliance), Andrew MacLean (Fair Vote Canada), and Simon Ouellette (CUPE).

“Any proportional representation system has flaws, so don't look for a perfect system,” explained Mr. Meslin “but they don't come close to the flaws in our current First Past The Post voting system. It is by far the worst system and personally I don't even consider it a system. It makes no attempt to create fair results.”

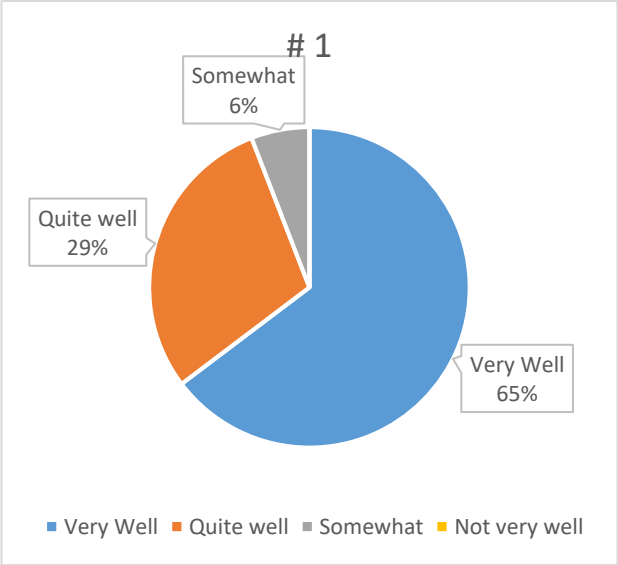
The presentations were followed by the completion of Fair Vote Canada's Questionnaire, which is based on the ERRE's questions. The results of the completed questionnaires are attached.

Polling Questions on Electoral Reform

Developed by Fair Vote Canada, this questionnaire is meant to provide information on citizens' views likely to be of interest to our politicians and the general public. The questionnaire is in five parts respectively covering some general topics, what people hold dear in an electoral system, respondents' preferences for different families of systems, a number of variables to produce reports by category of respondent, and a space for qualitative comments and follow-up.

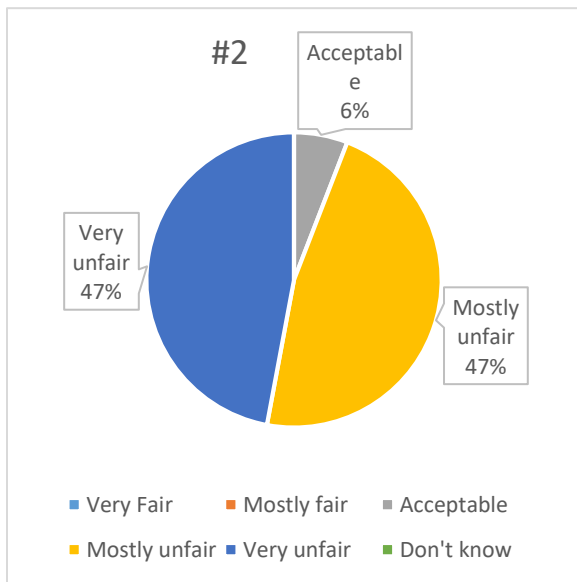
PART I: General Considerations

1. How well do you feel you understand Canada's existing First-past-the-post system and how governments are elected under that system? Please circle a., b., c. or d.
 - a. Very well
 - b. Quite well
 - c. Somewhat
 - d. Not very well



2. How would you judge the fairness of that system to all voters and political parties

- a. Very fair
- b. Mostly fair
- C Acceptable
- D Mostly unfair
- E Very unfair
- F Don't know.



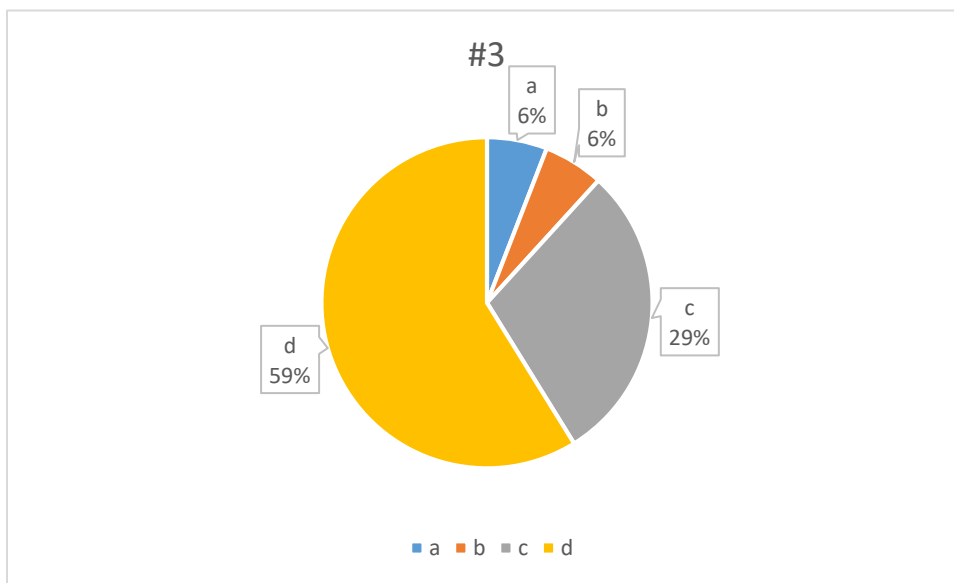
3. There is no requirement for the winning party to have majority voter support to form a majority government under our current First-past-the-Post system. A share of 40% or less usually suffices. Which of the following best summarizes your views about this?

a. This is a good thing because it makes it easier to form majority governments.

b. That is how our system works, but this is neither good nor bad. I think minority governments are fine but majority governments are fine too.

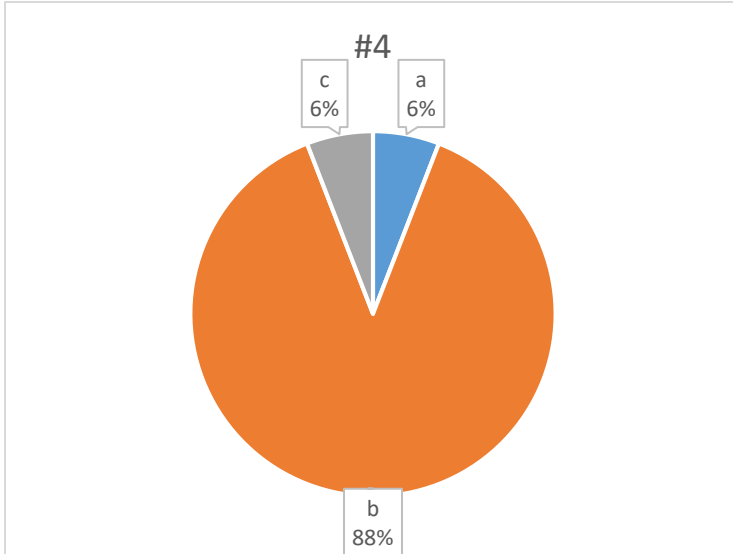
c. It is problematic because it gives an unfair amount of power to the winning party.

d. It is profoundly undemocratic. The share of seats should be equal to the share of votes.



4. Which is preferable to you?

- a. A government with a majority able to pass legislation without the support of other parties
- b. A government that is obliged to consult with other parties and make compromises
- c. Don't now



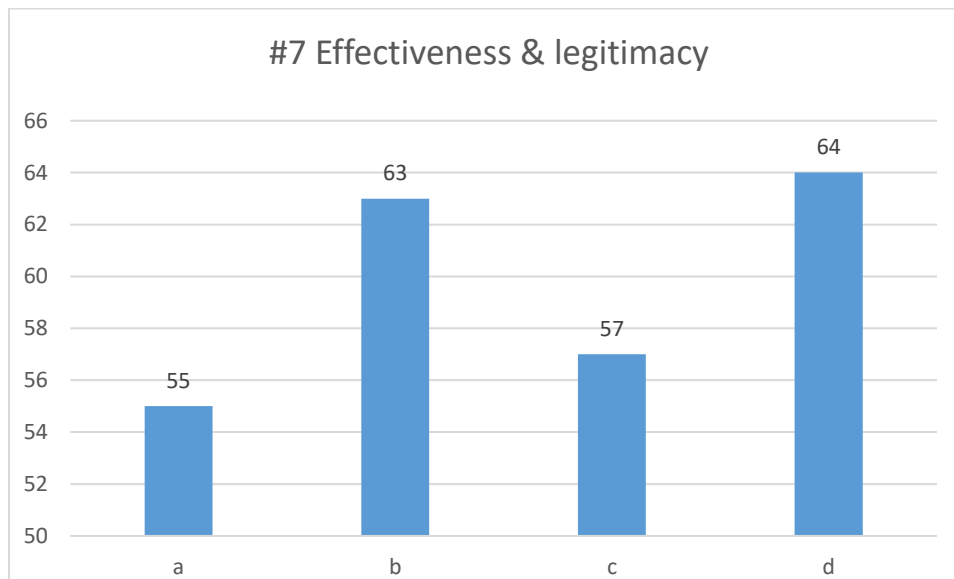
Part II - Principles and Values

What follows are a number of features of electoral systems that could be affected by electoral reforms. These are organized into five groups, corresponding to the five principles being considered by the multi-party electoral reform committee of parliament.

Please read through these various features and determine which ones are most important to you and rate their importance to you from 0 to 4, giving a value of 0 to features that you don't consider important at all or that you might consider as a bad thing, and 4 to features that you consider to be of the most fundamental importance.

7. Effectiveness and legitimacy

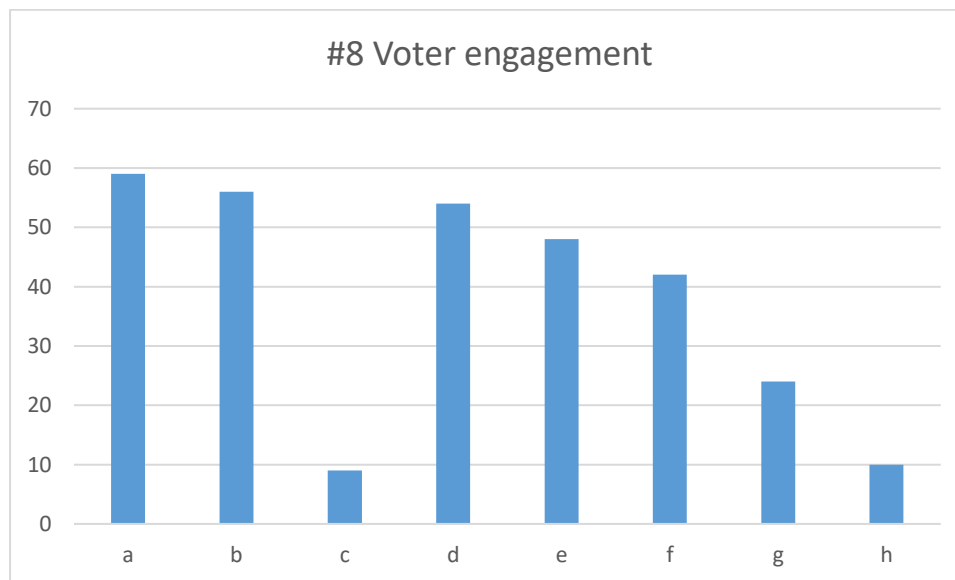
- Make it unnecessary for voters to vote strategically (0 to 4) _____
- Ensure that the number of parliamentary seats of each party should correspond to its share of the popular vote (0 to 4) _____
- Ensure that as large a share of votes as possible should count to elect representatives in line with voters' political preferences (0 to 4) _____
- Make sure that votes matter equally in safe ridings or swing ridings (0 to 4) _____



Total Points Score

Voter engagement

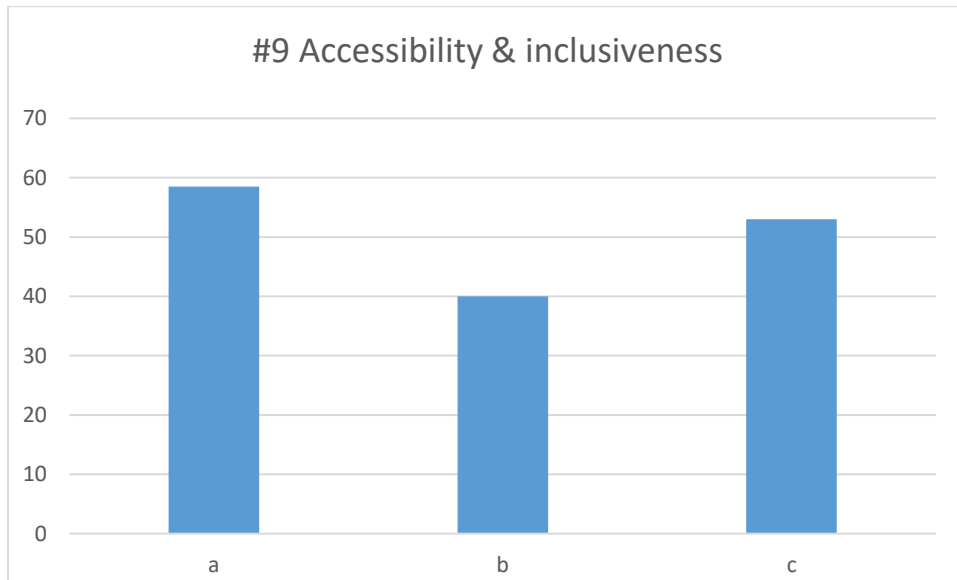
- a. Give voters a greater reason to vote by making all votes count equally (0 to 4) _____
- b. Encourage collaboration and compromise among parties and greater civility when discussing policy options (0 to 4) _____
- c. Make it easy to have majority governments led by the party with the greatest share of seats with or without a majority of votes cast (0 to 4) _____
- d. Encourage the formation of coalition governments representing a majority of the electorate (0 to 4) _____
- e. Make it easier for independents to be elected (0 to 4) _____
- f. Make it easier for new parties to form and prosper (0 to 4) _____
- g. Avoid the election of MPs from too many small parties (0 to 4) _____
- h. Encourage the dominance of two major parties (0 to 4) _____



Total Points Score

9. Accessibility and inclusiveness

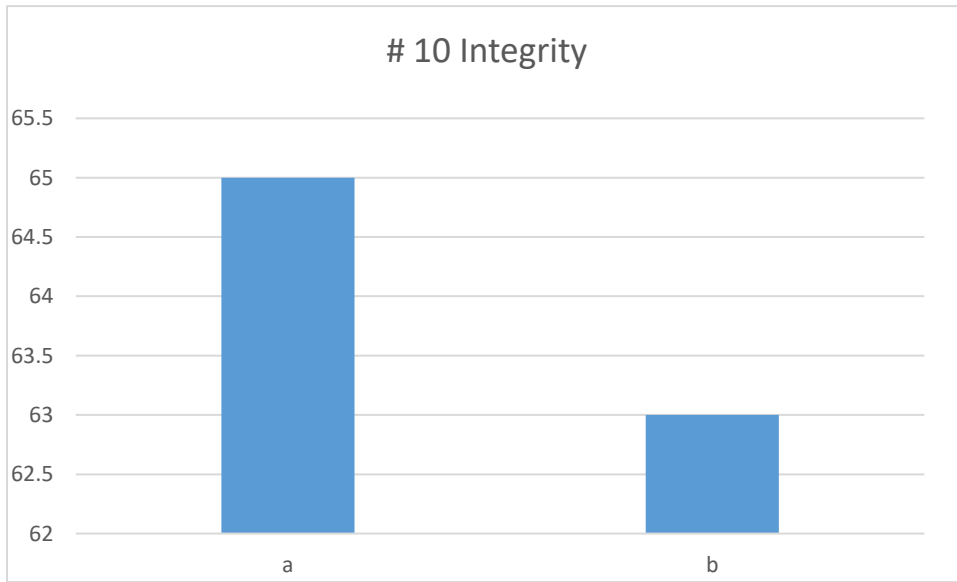
- a. Make the process of voting as easy as possible for voters (0 to 4) _____
- b. Avoid increasing the frequency of elections (0 to 4) _____
- c. Elect more women to Parliament (0 to 4) _____



Total Points Score

10. Integrity

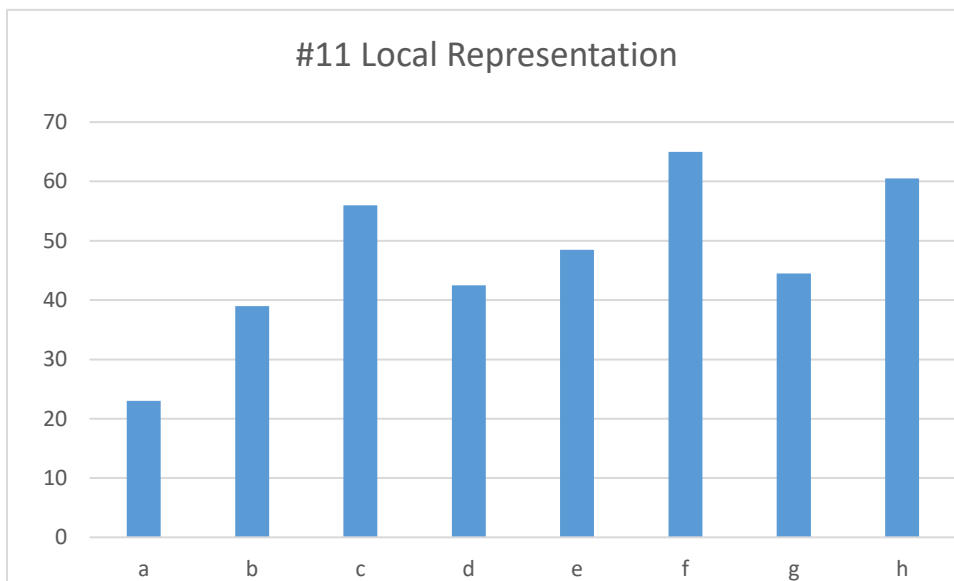
- a. Ensure that our democratic system is based on strong principles of integrity and that measures are taken to safeguard every aspect of the process (0 to 4) _____
- b. Ensure that all votes matter equally in electing representatives (0 to 4) _____



Total Points Score

11. Local representation

- a. **P**rioritize having one single MP per riding (0 to 4) _____
- b. Prioritize multi-member ridings large enough to ensure proportionality (0 to 4) _____
- c. Ensure that voters elect representatives across the country in proportion to their share of the votes in each region (0 to 4) _____
- d. Ensure that the loyalty of MPs to their local constituency does not override their duty to work for the public good at the national level (0 to 4) _____
- e. Elect MPs that are attentive to local issues and can help constituents with personal issues (0 to 4) _____
- f. Encourage politicians to take a long-term policy perspective (0 to 4) _____
- g. Avoid large policy swings due to small changes voter preferences (0 to 4) _____
- h. Ensure that we elect the best representatives in each party (0 to 4) _____



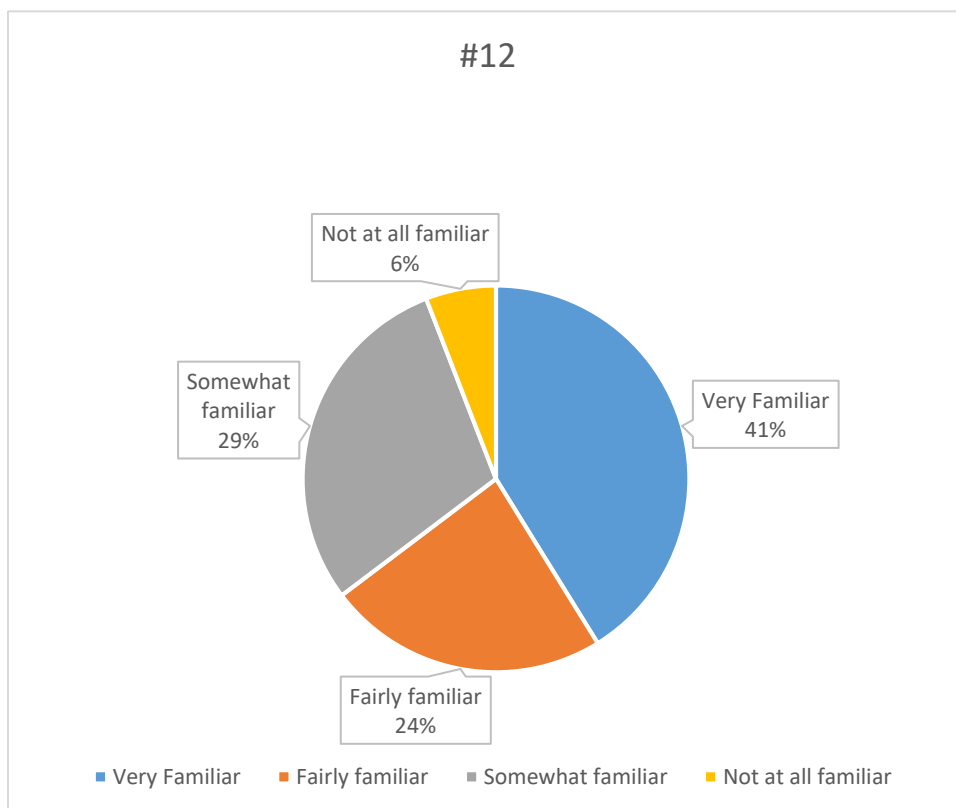
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Part III: Electoral Systems

Respondents should feel free to consult the [one-pager](#) that we have developed on different systems or other sources before answering the questions in this section.

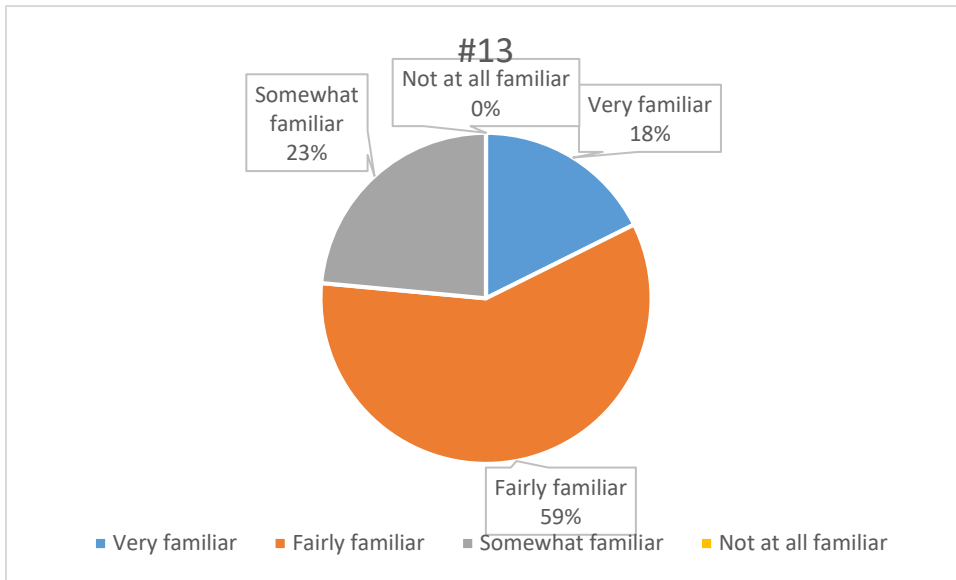
12. How familiar are you with the proposal to introduce ranked ballots while retaining the winner-take-all approach that we have now (otherwise known as the Instant Runoff or Alternative Vote system)?

- a. Very familiar
- b. Fairly familiar
- c. Somewhat familiar
- d. Not at all familiar



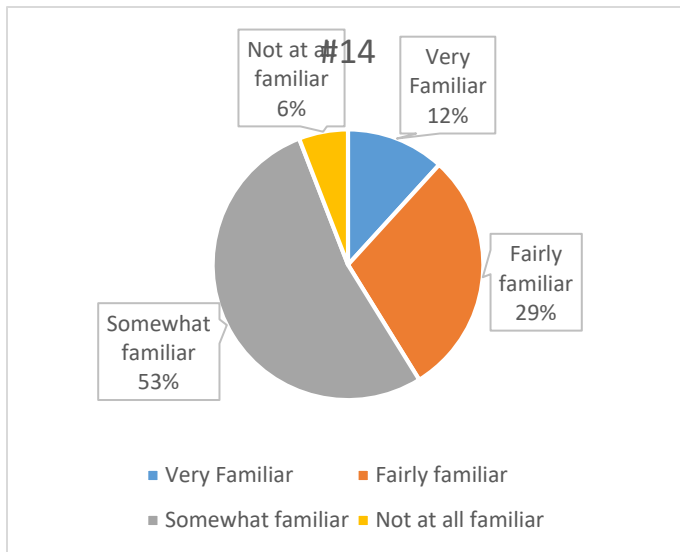
13. How familiar are you with the proposal to introduce a Mixed Member Proportional system (MMP), based on somewhat larger ridings combined with the use of top-up seats on a regional basis to ensure proportionality?

- a. Very familiar
- b. Fairly familiar
- c. Somewhat familiar
- d. Not at all familiar



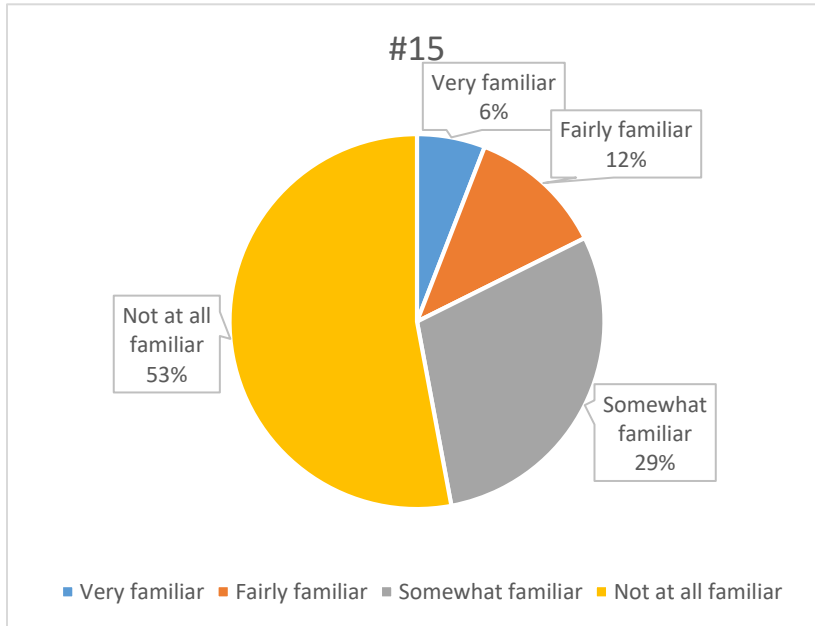
14. How familiar are you with the Single Transferable Vote system (STV), which would group ridings together in multi-member districts to ensure that voters with different preferences can elect a number of MPs to reflect those different preferences?

- a. Very familiar
- b. Fairly familiar
- c. Somewhat familiar
- d. Not at all familiar



15. How familiar are you with some of the hybrid options being put forward that would combine multi-member ridings in cities with single-member or two-member ridings in rural areas, while adding a small number of top-up seats to ensure proportionality?

- a. Very familiar
- b. Fairly familiar
- c. Somewhat familiar
- d. Not at all familiar

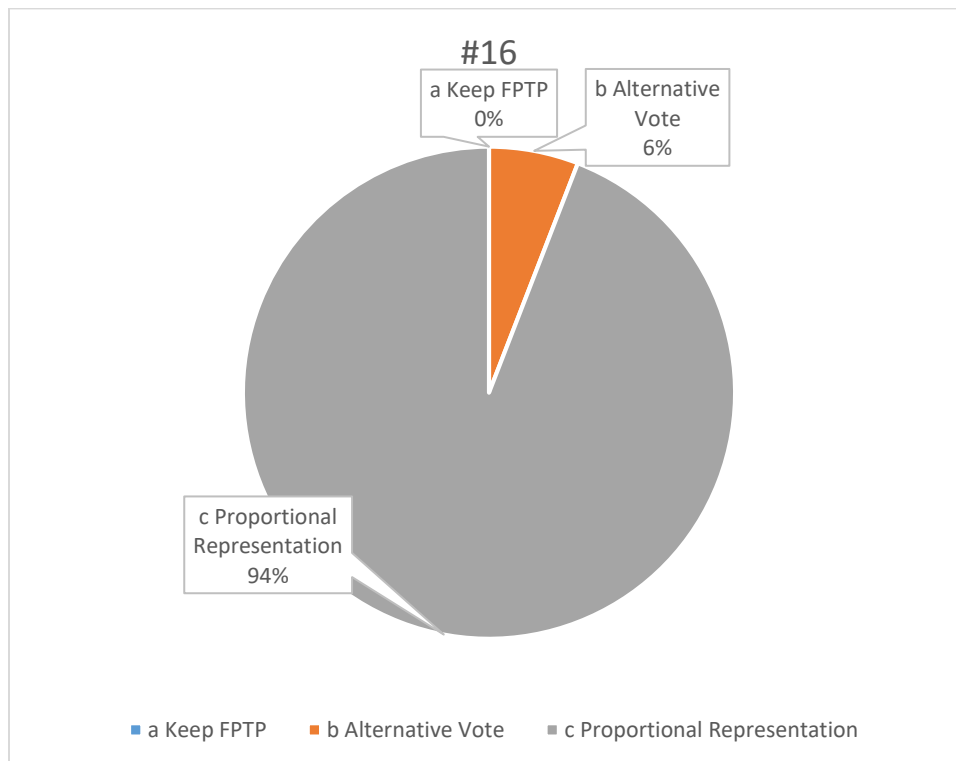


16. Given a choice between keeping the current First-past-the-Post system, or changing it, what would be your preference?

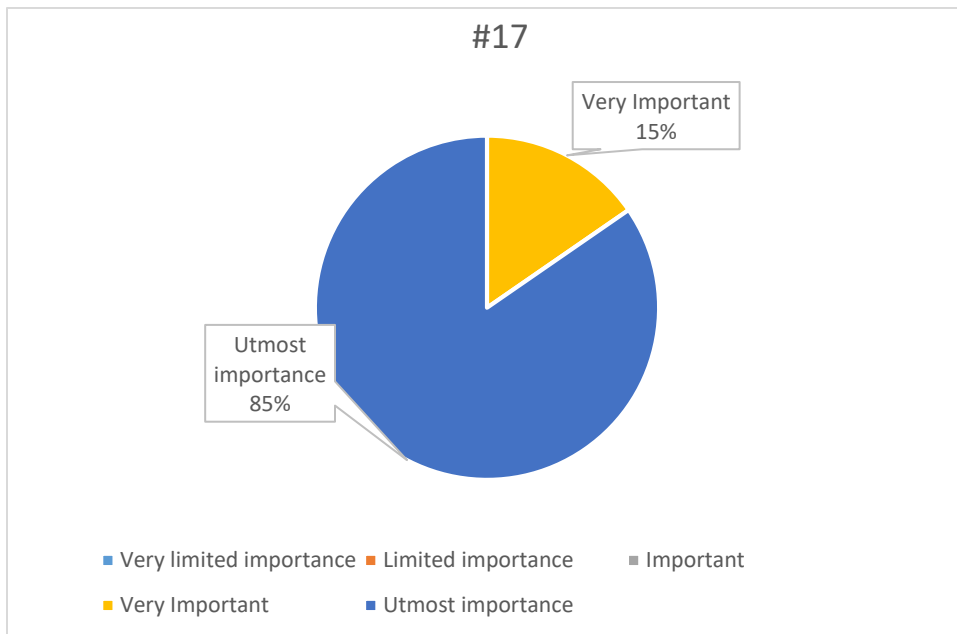
a. Keep the current FPTP system based on single-member ridings in which the candidate with the most votes is elected MP

b. Keep the current system but add the option of ranked ballots with instant runoff, otherwise known as the Alternative Vote system, which also uses single member ridings and elects a single winner per riding. The difference with FPTP is that the winner must earn 50% of either first or second-order preferences to be elected.

c. Replace the current system with some form of proportional representation, where the number of seats in Parliament approximates each party's share of the vote.



17. Please indicate how strongly you feel about your choice. How important is this issue to you from 0 to 4, “very limited importance” to “utmost importance”? (0-4)_____



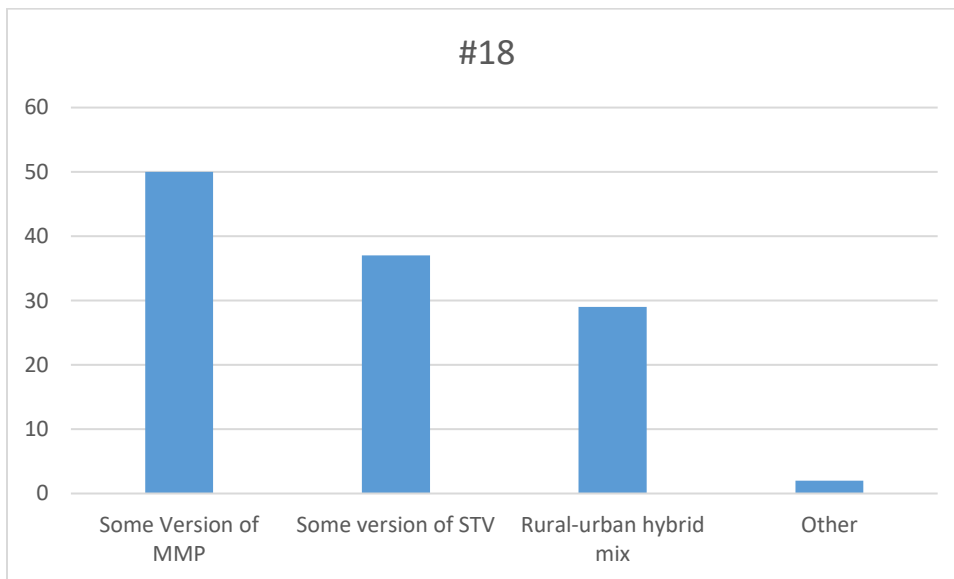
18. The proportional systems that might be considered most appropriate for a vast country like Canada can be reduced to MMP, STV or a hybrid model involving small multi-member ridings and a small number of top-up seats to increase the proportionality of the system. Based on your understanding of what these systems entail, would you please indicate below your personal assessment of each if these options from 0 to 4, from “don’t like it at all” to “would be an excellent choice for Canada.”

(0-4) ____ Some version of Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) (retaining single-member seats while adding top-up seats on a regional basis to ensure proportionality)

(0-4) ____ Some version of single transferable vote (STV) (grouping ridings to form Multi-member ridings to ensure that voters with different preferences can elect a number of MPs to reflect those different preferences).

(0-4) ____ A rural-urban hybrid option involving a mix of multi-member ridings (larger in urban areas, smaller in rural areas, combined with a small number of top-up seats for increased proportionality)

____ Don’t know.

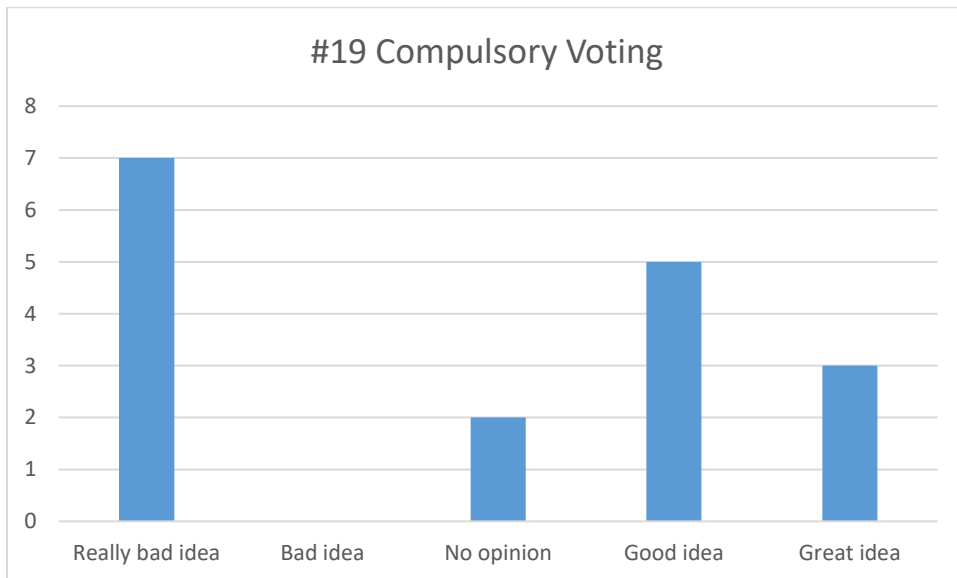


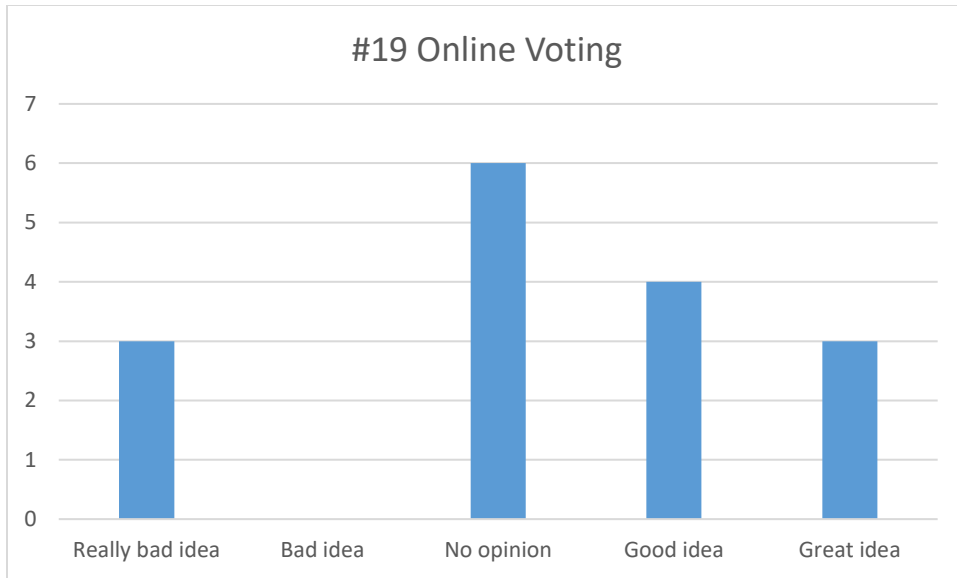
Total Points Score

19. Regardless of what system you might prefer, please indicate your views of whether compulsory voting or on-line voting might be good to boost voter turnout. Rate your response from -2 (really bad idea) to +2 (great idea) use -1 and +1 for more tempered negative or positive views, and use "0" if you don't have a view on the matter.

(-2 to +2)_____ What do you think of compulsory voting to boost voter turnout?

(-2 to +2)_____ What do you think of on-line voting?





24 Please rate the following federal parties in terms of your support for them (0-4, from “do not support at all” to “my top choice”)

Bloc Quebecois (0-4) _____

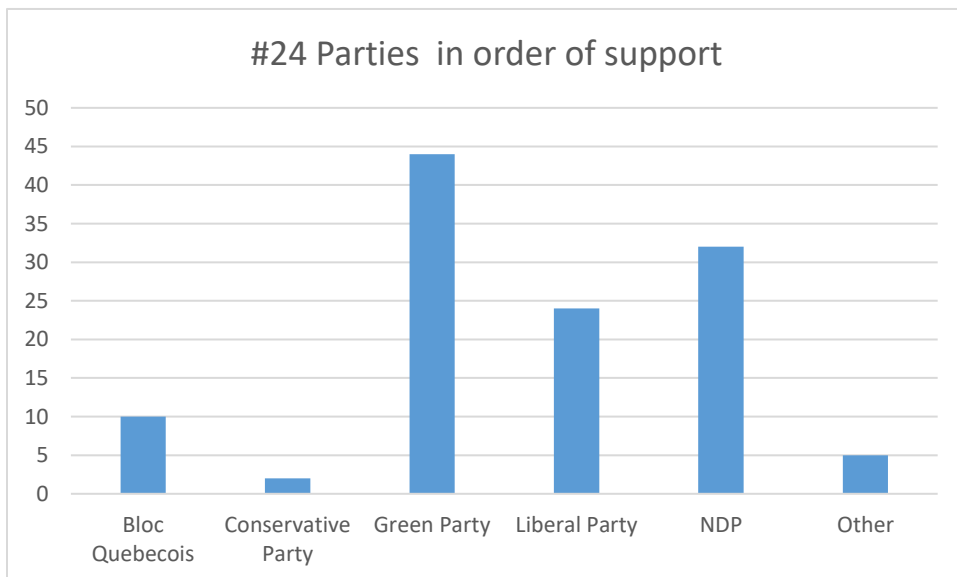
Conservative Party (0-4) _____

Green Party (0-4) _____

Liberal Party (0-4) _____

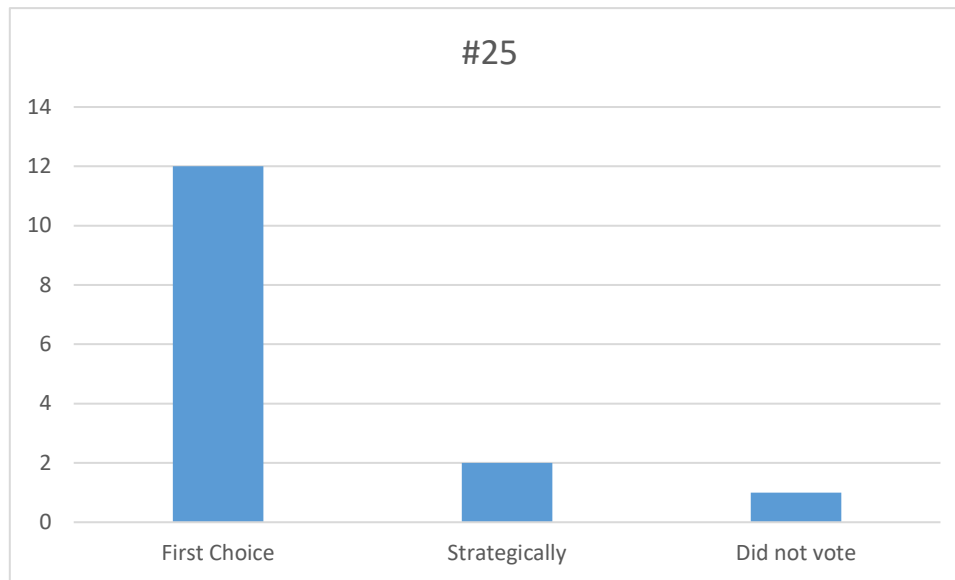
NDP (0-4) _____

Other party (0-4) _____



Total Points Score

25. Did you vote for your first preference in that election, or did you vote strategically?
- First choice
 - Strategically
 - Did not vote



Total Points Score

26. Please use this space to offer any other comments that you would like to emphasize, including comments on the questionnaire itself.

1. Avoid a referendum at all costs. There is a better system.
2. We have to consider that Canada is a larger country than others using PR and that we are very sparsely populated.
3. I'd be happy with any reasonably proportional system including MMP but I think STV has the particular advantage of downplaying the importance of parties, and giving a fair chance to independents.
4. Please limit the choices of proportional rep and nkeep accurate and simplest possible explanation for the public. Example:LEGO demonstration

5. Choose a proportional system instead of bogging down in academic and confusing discussions.
Then organize!

To try out this questionnaire on line, go to

<http://tinyurl.com/hzycv4w>