

## A “Mensa Brief” to the Committee on Electoral Reform

(The author of this brief is a member of Mensa Canada and the term “Mensa Brief” is used to distinguish this brief from other briefs which the committee may receive. This does not signify support by Mensa Canada.)

### 1. Purpose:

- 1.1 Using the existing means of collecting and counting votes in a federal election, determine the number of seats in the House of Commons to which each political party is entitled, proportional to the total number of votes cast for each political party in the election.
- 1.2 Determine which candidate will represent each of the electoral districts.
- 1.3 Using a protocol similar to existing protocols, determine the person who has the support of the majority of members of parliament, to nominate that person to the Governor General for appointment as Prime Minister.

### 2. Voting:

- 2.1 To enhance the acceptance of this electoral reform by the general public, this brief proposes that there be no changes to the existing electoral districts or to the existing procedures for casting, collecting and counting ballots.
- 2.2 It is proposed that Elections Canada tally the total number of votes received from all sources for each political party and that it calculate each party’s percentage of the total votes. This percentage will then be used to calculate the number of seats in the House of Commons to which each political party is entitled.
- 2.3 On page 2 is an example of a “Mensa Brief” proposal applied to the 42<sup>nd</sup> General Election of October 19, 2015. (Many people are surprised to learn how many political parties receive votes in a general election.)  
The “Leading in Ridings” column shows the number of seats in the House of Commons which were “won” by the different political parties, using the “First-Past-The-Post” electoral system. The “Seat Entitlement” column shows the number of seats in the House of Commons to which each party would be entitled, using the “Proportional Representation” electoral system.

### 3. Allocating Seats to Electoral Districts:

- 3.1 The Liberal party “won” (got a plurality) in 51 electoral districts more than their entitlement for seats in the House of Commons. A review of the election results showed that there were 51 liberal candidates who got less than 45.88% of the votes in their electoral districts. These electoral districts were then allocated to the other parties in accordance with their entitlements and the percentage of votes cast for them. Page 3 shows how the seats were allocated to the different parties according to the entitlements determined by the proportion of votes cast for each party in Canada.

**Example of the “Mensa Brief” proposal applied to the 42<sup>nd</sup> General Election, October 19, 2015**

Political Affiliation	Valid Votes	Percent of Total	Leading in Ridings	Seat Entitlement	Required Adjustment
Alliance of the North	136	0.00%			
Animal Alliance/Environment Voters	1,699	0.01%			
Bloc Québécois	818,652	4.66%	10	16	+6
Canada Party	271	0.00%			
Canadian Action Party	401	0.00%			
Christian Heritage Party	14,558	0.08%			
Communist Party of Canada	3,868	0.02%			
Conservative Party of Canada	5,600,496	31.89%	99	108	+9
Democratic Advancement Party	1,187	0.01%			
Green Party of Canada	605,864	3.45%	1	12	+11
Independent	30,190	0.17%		1	+1
Liberal Party of Canada	6,930,136	39.47%	184	133	-51
Libertarian Party of Canada	34,273	0.20%		1	+1
Marijuana Party	1,148	0.01%			
Marxist-Lenninist Party	9,521	0.05%			
New Democratic Party	3,461,262	19.71%	44	67	+23
PACT	91	0.00%			
Pirate Party of Canada	908	0.01%			
Progressive Canadian Party	4,476	0.03%			
Rhinoceros Party	7,313	0.04%			
Seniors Party of Canada	157	0.00%			
Strength in Democracy Party	8,106	0.05%			
The Bridge Party of Canada	122	0.00%			
United Party of Canada	57	0.00%			
Other	24,461	0.14%	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>17,559,353</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>0</b>

Example of the "Mensa Brief" proposal applied to the 42<sup>nd</sup> General Election, October 19, 2015

## Electoral District Representative Adjustments

<u>Electoral District</u>	<u>BQ</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>GP</u>	<u>Ind</u>	<u>Lib</u>	<u>Libert</u>	<u>NDP</u>
Edmonton Centre		+1			-1		
Edmonton Mill Woods				+1	-1		
Burnaby North-Seymour			+1		-1		
Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam			+1		-1		
Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon					-1		+1
Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge			+1		-1		
Steveston—Richmond East		+1			-1		
Surrey Centre					-1		+1
Vancouver Granville					-1		+1
Kildonan—St. Paul		+1			-1		
Fundy Royal			+1		-1		
New Brunswick Southwest			+1		-1		
Cambridge			+1		-1		
Davenport					-1		+1
Hamilton East—Stoney Creek					-1		+1
Hastings—Lennox and Addington		+1			-1		
Kenora					-1		+1
Kitchener South—Hespeler		+1			-1		
London West			+1		-1		
Newmarket—Aurora		+1			-1		
Niagara Centre					-1		+1
Nickle Belt					-1		+1
Ottawa Centre			+1		-1		
Parkdale—High Park					-1		+1
Peterborough—Kawartha		+1			-1		
Sault Ste. Marie		+1			-1		
St. Catharines		+1			-1		
Thunder Bay—Rainy River					-1		+1
Thunder Bay—Superior North			+1		-1		
Toronto—Danforth			+1		-1		
Whitby			+1		-1		
York South—Weston					-1	+1	
Alfred-Pellan					-1		+1
Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation					-1		+1
Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia	+1				-1		
Châteauguay—Lacolle					-1		+1
Chicoutimi—Le Fjord					-1		+1
Compton—Stanstead					-1		+1
Gaspésie—Les Iles-de-la-Madeleine					-1		+1
La Prairie	+1				-1		
Lasalle—Emard—Verdun					-1		+1
Laurentides-Labelle	+1				-1		
Longueuil—Charles-Lemoyne	+1				-1		
Louis Hébert					-1		+1
Montarville	+1				-1		
Québec					-1		+1
Rivière-des-Milles-Iles					-1		+1
Saint Jean					-1		+1
Saint-Maurice—Champlain					-1		+1
Shefford					-1		+1
Thérèse-de Blainville	+1				-1		
	+6	+9	+11	+1	-51	+1	+23

#### 4. Selecting a Prime Minister:

- 4.1 The Governor General of Canada must select as prime minister the person most likely to command the confidence of the elected House of Commons; this is typically the leader of the political party that holds the largest number of seats in that chamber (Ref: Wikipedia). In a multiparty, proportional representation system, it is unlikely that one political party will have a majority of the seats and it is quite common for different parties to form coalitions of parties having differing policies and leadership qualities.
- 4.2 This "Mensa Brief" proposes that the Members of Parliament select the prime minister by secret ballot, similar to the protocol which they use for selecting the Speaker of the House. This method would assure the Governor General that the selected prime minister commands the confidence of the majority of the elected House of Commons. This would also make it clear that the prime minister is responsible to Parliament, not vice versa, and would empower the prime minister to select for his or her cabinet competent and experienced people from all parties.

#### 5. Advantages of the "Mensa Brief" Proposal:

- 5.1 No changes or additions are required to the existing electoral districts.
- 5.2 From the perspectives of the voters, no changes or additions are required to the existing ballot forms or to the existing procedures for marking, counting and reporting ballots cast.
- 5.3 This proposal provides literal proportional representation, in which the number of seats to which each political party is entitled is directly proportional to the total number of votes cast for that party by the voters of Canada.
- 5.4 A candidate who has received a plurality of votes in their electoral district, but who is not entitled to a seat in the House of Commons, is replaced by another candidate in the same electoral district, maintaining representation by a person known in the community.
- 5.5 The Governor General is provided with a clear indication of the person who commands the confidence of the majority of the elected House of Commons, to assist in his appointment of the Prime Minister.

Submitted by:

Robert Charles Radford  
Duncan, British Columbia