Brief to the Electoral Reform Committee

My name is Jennifer Ross and I'm most definitely writing this as an individual. I work full time in a public accounting office, and have for the last 27 years. I currently hold the position as Treasurer of Fair Vote Canada (FVC) and am a proud Liberal Party member, and serve on the board of the Kitchener Centre Federal Liberal Association. I'm also one of the leaders of FVC's Liberals for Fair Voting Caucus. Oh, yes, and I'm also part of the Fair Vote Canada Waterloo Region Chapter. I'm not good at schmoozing or saying things with great tact. I don't mean anything to be insulting, it is just how I see it. No sugar-coating with me.

Summary

I had been following along with the expert testimony meetings of the ERRE, and want to bring to your attention certain issues and items that I think need either greater attention, or clarification, or downright alternative evidence. These include; expert witness equality, best runners up, votes that count, mandatory voting, and the need to focus on citizen or human sensibilities.

## All Experts are not Created Equal

On occasion I have been bothered by what seems to be an apparent decision to treat every expert witness and their testimony as equal to every other expert witness and testimony. All witnesses heard from at the ERRE deserve the respect and thanks of Canadians and ERRE committee members. But that doesn't make them all equal in terms of expertise and reputation. And it doesn't make all testimony of equal unassailable truth, either.

I'll pick out three examples just to ensure you take the point.

Melanee Thomas said throughout her presentation that "there is no evidence to suggest" proportional representation does anything to garner greater women's representation. Australia uses a proportional system in its upper house, and a majoritarian system in its lower house. Same actual voters, same issues, same time frame—and the Senate elects far more women. That is pretty in-your-face evidence, right there. However, if you want a study to confirm it, you can look

here: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14662040701317519 where you will eventually find this: this difference in the rates of female representation in Australia's parliament can only be accounted for by the different electoral systems used for each house. She made some good points, but that theme wasn't one of them.

Then there's the fact that in the OECD countries where representation of women is tracked, every single country on the bottom of the list uses a majoritarian system and every single country on the top uses a proportional system, and it is so perfect that Australia is the dividing line between proportional and majoritarian, and they use both. Patrice Dutill called it a coincidence.
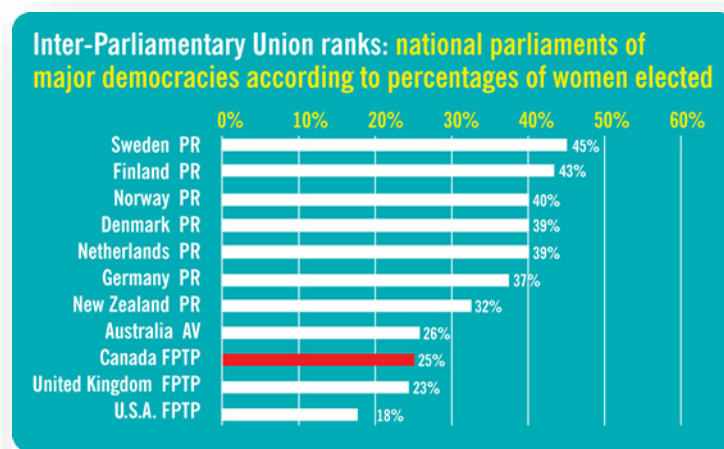
As we know, statistics can be made to say whatever you want, spin doctors are very good at what they do and so on. These two examples are easy for anyone to understand, and are consistent in result.

The third example is about satisfaction, which members of ERRE seem to have relied upon greatly. Professor Andre Blais testified, on July 27th, and said: "The third study is about whether citizens have more positive evaluations of democracy under PR. This was a study with Peter Loewen, . . . This study suggests that if PR is adopted, elections are likely to be perceived to be fairer, **but it is unlikely that people will be more satisfied overall**." Here is a link to the actual study he is citing. http://individual.utoronto.ca/loewen/Research_files/Chapter%203%20-%20Electoral%20Reform.pdf It is interesting and I strongly recommend you read it. But here is a snippet of the conclusion: Most importantly, we have found two consistent and strong effects related to electoral systems. First, we have demonstrated that

disproportionality consistently reduces individuals' assessments of fairness and responsiveness, as well as overall satisfaction. **More proportional systems simply produce more satisfied individuals.**

When a Non-Winner is not a Loser

In a typical First Past the Post election in Canada, three to eight candidates contest to become the sole MP for the riding. In that scenario, there is one winner and up to seven losers. Fair enough.

But in a proportional system, that simply is not the case. If it is MMP and the riding is part of a region that also returns, say, five compensatory MPs, the riding could potentially return the constituency MP and five others. Highly unlikely all compensatory MPs would be from a single riding, and another reason why best-runner-up is a good method for determining the compensatory MPs. That would make it near impossible to have the entire region's top-up MPs from the same riding, since it stands to reason that the best runner up would be taking more of the vote such that the second best runner up wouldn't tend to match the best runner up percentage in another riding.

Easier to see in STV, where the second, third, and fourth "best loser" are part of the quota of MPs allotted to a four-MP district. To put it another way, in our Constitution the only division is by province—the Constitution is silent on ridings, regions, districts. So let's look at that. In Quebec there is allotted 78 MPs. The 'winner' in 2015 was Nicola Di Iorio, who won with 49.89% over his competitor. Does it mean the next MP is the "best loser"? Of course not! This is good because that just happens to be our own dear Committee Chair, Francis Scarpaleggia, and we wouldn't want to call him loser in any sense, particularly when considering what that says about the rest of you from Quebec. No, all 78 of you are 'winners' since that is the number mandated to be returned. The same would be the case with any multi-member area.

Votes that Don't Count

Votes, even under STV which gives voter intention the most expression, do not indicate 'rejection' of a candidate although that would be tempting to surmise if every candidate except one was ranked on an STV ballot. But it could also have

been an oversight. Even in the last election where there were several ABC Campaigns, one cannot surmise that a vote for other than the Conservative candidate was a rejection of that candidate. It just wasn't a vote *for* that candidate. To my mind, the idea of 'rejected' candidates is a dangerous one for an MP to put forth, since so many of you were therefore 'rejected' by the majority of your riding's voters, even though you won the election! But this could be because you **aren't counting** those votes, perhaps unconsciously, or you wouldn't bring 'rejected' candidates up.

Elections Canada has a lovely report, "Candidates who **received the most votes** on election night" which can be downloaded and made into a spreadsheet from here http://enr.elections.ca/ElectoralDistricts.aspx?lang=e as I have done, concentrating only on Quebec. (See pages seven and eight). It cuts right to the chase, removing all the noise. You won the election because you had more votes than the next runner up in your riding. You may note that in the Di Iorio example above, I did not use the percentage of the vote to calculate his 'winningness'. That is because, in the very definition of First Past the Post, it is the candidate with the most votes who wins. You can have 32% of the vote and win, and you can have 32% of the vote and lose. It is the percentage over the next guy that **counts** because the rest of the vote is completely immaterial. So immaterial other candidates are not even on this report. Those other votes Just. Don't. Count. They just don't! And, while the votes for the competitor counted in the sense that it was the bar to surpass, those votes were completely useless in the sense of getting the representative of the voters' choice in Parliament—the purpose of the election in a Representative Democracy.

Mandatory Voting

I began this process dead-set against mandatory voting. I thought it was silly to force someone to vote when they hadn't paid any attention to the candidates, parties, policies, platform. This way would dilute the votes of those of us paying great attention, and just be an annoyance to those who aren't.

However, it has been impressed upon me that I was thinking with a First Past the Post or status quo mindset. Canadians would very likely pay more attention *if more attention were paid to them* as they would when **nobody,** no matter where

they live or how small their net worth, could be written off or taken for granted by parties and candidates.

Certainly, I have no problem with requiring Canadians to do their duty, it is the very least we can do for the very great privilege of living in this most wonderful country. Things like jury duty, completing the census, filing a tax return—I approve of the mandatory nature of them all. Why not voting? At least, as long as there is a "none of the above" or similar method to not actually vote for any of the candidates on offer. Choosing none in some way would be essential to my mind.

I wouldn't worry so much about the punishment, although you might put some consequence in the legislation at the discretion of whoever it is that you don't give the money to enforce. Combined with making it mandatory, I think it would be good to lower the age to 16, simply so that the kids can learn while in school some basic political/election understanding. Then they can teach their parents.

The other option that could work to increase voter turnout is returning to the enumeration system. But yeah, that is extremely expensive and time consuming and impractical. But I do think it might be worthwhile to look into enumerating all the people missed by the tax return process, at least every decade or so.

For the Love of Humanity

Finally, I know, at least with the testimony you heard in Ottawa, that you have been given truly great insights into the studies, analysis, consequences and values of electoral reform. What was missing was the emotion and I'm not sure your roadshow has given you that most important component of decision making done by human beings. I shall attempt to rectify that, based on things I've been told over the last several years.

Over half of Canadians may feel shut out of our Representative Democracy. Because, they are.

Are you kidding me? How Dare You! The right to vote in a democracy must mean more than the ability to make a mark on a ballot. They do that in North Korea! This isn't some esoteric discussion point, it is MY acceptance of being governed.

Imposing laws on me while simultaneously ignoring my viewpoint on what those laws ought to be sounds a lot more like a tin-pot dictatorship than a democracy.

This is hilarious! So, the major parties with "experience" and "know-how" to govern can't get the job done without giving themselves extra seats? Well, that explains the deficit, income inequality, lack of jobs, and everything else that's wrong. You can't cheat your way through governing like you can with an election.

Oh, what's the point? My vote does nothing and there's nothing I can do to change anything. I'm better off watching Dancing with the Stars.

Fair Vote Canada is a democratic (we use STV for our elections), multi-partisan, National in scope organization that has been around for 16 years now. We have no foundation behind us, there is no taxpayer-funded "reward" for our donors, we have virtually no corporations and next to no union backing—we run on the generosity of some of our over 65,000 supporters, who are individual citizens of Canada. And why would supporters keep us afloat for 16 years? **Because PR is the right thing to do.** You have seen some of us at various Town Halls and at your hearings. We are, contrary to mainstream media opinion, not invisible and what we have in common is our passion for our country and making it the best it can be.

But I would like to make mention that we can advocate like this, because our overall system of governance is arguably the very best of the best. Our institutions are second to none, be it the Independent Boundaries Commission, Elections Canada, our Supreme Court and others. We are simply talking about choosing who our Parliamentarians are in a better, more inclusive and democratic, more fair way. And while I'm aware this is a Liberal talking point, it is something I believe in fiercely.

This is Canada, and in Canada, we can always do better!

Thanks for hearing me.

Jennifer Ross

The Report of Candidates Who Received the Most Votes on Election Night (Quebec)

78 MPs to be elected	Candidate who received the most votes	Number of votes cast	Candidate who received the second-most votes	Number of votes cast	Total number of valid votes cast in the electoral district	Variance between first and second place (number of votes)	Variance (percentage)
1	Nicola Di Iorio	28,826	Rosannie Filato	6,611	44,531	**22,215**	**49.89%**
2	Francis Scarpaleggia	39,965	Eric Girard	10,857	62,312	**29,108**	**46.71%**
3	Stéphane Dion	24,832	Jimmy Yu	7,867	40,330	**16,965**	**42.07%**
4	Pablo Rodriguez	29,211	Paulina Ayala	8,478	51,658	**20,733**	**40.14%**
5	Frank Baylis	34,319	Valérie Assoulin	11,694	58,505	**22,625**	**38.67%**
6	Emmanuel Dubourg	22,234	Gilles Léveillé	7,049	41,129	**15,185**	**36.92%**
7	Maxime Bernier	32,910	Adam Veilleux	12,442	55,882	**20,468**	**36.63%**
8	Marc Garneau	29,755	James Hughes	11,229	51,593	**18,526**	**35.91%**
9	Anju Dhillon	29,974	Isabelle Morin	11,769	54,605	**18,205**	**33.34%**
10	William Amos	34,154	Mathieu Ravignat	14,090	62,625	**20,064**	**32.04%**
11	Steven Blaney	31,872	Jacques Turgeon	12,961	62,598	**18,911**	**30.21%**
12	Gérard Deltell	32,637	Youri Rousseau	13,852	64,683	**18,785**	**29.04%**
13	Jacques Gourde	31,357	Claude Boucher	13,562	62,588	**17,795**	**28.43%**
14	Alexandre Boulerice	28,672	Claude André	12,283	58,335	**16,389**	**28.09%**
15	Fayçal El-Khoury	25,857	François Pilon	10,710	54,205	**15,147**	**27.94%**
16	Marc Miller	25,491	Allison Turner	11,757	50,164	**13,734**	**27.38%**
17	Steven MacKinnon	31,076	Françoise Boivin	15,352	57,800	**15,724**	**27.20%**
18	Justin Trudeau	26,391	Anne Lagacé Do	13,132	50,770	**13,259**	**26.12%**
19	Alexandra Mendès	28,818	Hoang Mai	14,075	57,260	**14,743**	**25.75%**
20	Eva Nassif	25,082	France Duhamel	11,391	54,343	**13,691**	**25.19%**
21	Peter Schiefke	30,550	Jamie Nicholls	14,627	65,528	**15,923**	**24.30%**
22	Joël Godin	27,290	Élaine Michaud	13,686	62,059	**13,604**	**21.92%**
23	François-Philippe Char	24,475	Jean-Yves Trembla	12,245	58,947	**12,230**	**20.75%**
24	Angelo Iacono	24,557	Rosane Doré Lef	13,225	55,169	**11,332**	**20.54%**
25	Greg Fergus	28,478	Nycole Turmel	17,472	55,440	**11,006**	**19.85%**
26	Denis Paradis	25,744	Catherine Lusson	14,383	58,675	**11,361**	**19.36%**
27	Pierre Paul-Hus	24,608	Jean Côté	13,525	58,256	**11,083**	**19.02%**
28	Rémi Massé	14,378	Kédina Fleury-Sa	7,641	36,356	**6,737**	**18.53%**
29	Stéphane Lauzon	22,093	Chantal Crête	12,650	51,066	**9,443**	**18.49%**
30	Yves Robillard	22,323	Marie-Josée Len	12,827	54,525	**9,496**	**17.42%**
31	Mélanie Joly	26,026	Maria Mourani	16,684	55,567	**9,342**	**16.81%**
32	Ruth Ellen Brosseau	22,942	Yves Perron	14,037	54,406	**8,905**	**16.37%**
33	Louis Plamondon	20,871	Claude Carpentier	12,666	52,205	**8,205**	**15.72%**
34	Pierre Breton	22,957	Claire Mailhot	13,945	58,920	**9,012**	**15.30%**
35	Guy Caron	19,374	Pierre Cadieux	12,594	44,946	**6,780**	**15.08%**

36 David Lametti	23,603	Héllène LeBlanc	15,566	53,763	**8,037**	**14.95%**
37 Brenda Shanahan	20,245	Sophie Stanké	12,615	51,782	**7,630**	**14.73%**
38 Anthony Housefather	24,187	Robert Libman	18,201	48,051	**5,986**	**12.46%**
39 Marilène Gill	17,338	Mario Tremblay	12,343	42,030	**4,995**	**11.88%**
40 Christine Moore	20,636	Claude Thibault	14,733	49,729	**5,903**	**11.87%**
41 Tom Mulcair	19,242	Rachel Bendayan	14,597	43,619	**4,645**	**10.65%**
42 Jean-Claude Poissant	20,993	Christian Picard	15,107	57,572	**5,886**	**10.22%**
43 Hélène Laverdière	20,929	Gilles Duceppe	15,699	54,681	**5,230**	**9.56%**
44 Marie-Claude Bibeau	20,582	Jean Rousseau	15,300	55,811	**5,282**	**9.46%**
45 Luc Thériault	19,405	Louis-Charles Thou	14,484	53,009	**4,921**	**9.28%**
46 Sherry Romanado	18,301	Philippe Cloutier	13,974	51,707	**4,327**	**8.37%**
47 Joël Lightbound	21,516	Jean-Pierre Asselin	16,789	61,744	**4,727**	**7.66%**
48 Pierre-Luc Dusseault	21,410	Thomas "Tom" All	17,071	57,300	**4,339**	**7.57%**
49 Monique Pauzé	22,618	Adriana Dudas	17,798	65,211	**4,820**	**7.39%**
50 Luc Berthold	16,749	David Berthiaume	13,308	47,287	**3,441**	**7.28%**
51 Alain Rayes	18,505	Marc Desmarais	14,463	58,617	**4,042**	**6.90%**
52 Sylvie Boucher	16,903	Jean-Roger Vignea	13,556	50,456	**3,347**	**6.63%**
53 Diane Lebouthillier	15,345	Philip Toone	12,885	39,617	**2,460**	**6.21%**
54 Ramez Ayoub	18,281	Alain Marginean	15,238	56,248	**3,043**	**5.41%**
55 Alupa Clarke	15,461	Raymond Côté	12,881	50,558	**2,580**	**5.10%**
56 Gabriel Ste-Marie	18,875	Michel Bourgeois	15,995	56,689	**2,880**	**5.08%**
57 Mario Beaulieu	18,545	Marie-Chantale Si	15,777	55,226	**2,768**	**5.01%**
58 Michel Boudrias	19,238	Michèle Audette	16,316	58,284	**2,922**	**5.01%**
59 Romeo Saganash	12,778	Pierre Dufour	11,094	34,518	**1,684**	**4.88%**
60 Denis Lebel	18,393	Gisèle Dallaire	15,735	55,279	**2,658**	**4.81%**
61 Michel Picard	18,848	Catherine Fournie	16,460	57,917	**2,388**	**4.12%**
62 Jean Rioux	20,022	Hans Marotte	17,555	60,386	**2,467**	**4.09%**
63 François Choquette	15,833	Pierre Côté	13,793	51,979	**2,040**	**3.92%**
64 Linda Lapointe	18,787	Laurin Liu	17,111	58,046	**1,676**	**2.89%**
65 David Graham	20,277	Johanne Régimb	18,792	63,173	**1,485**	**2.35%**
66 Rhéal Fortin	18,157	Pierre Dionne Labe	17,077	56,657	**1,080**	**1.91%**
67 Jean-Yves Duclos	15,566	Annick Papillon	14,566	53,867	**1,000**	**1.86%**
68 Matthew Dubé	20,641	Karine Desjardins	19,494	66,438	**1,147**	**1.73%**
69 Robert Aubin	19,193	Yvon Boivin	18,224	60,289	**969**	**1.61%**
70 Simon Marcil	18,710	Mylène Freeman	17,873	59,418	**837**	**1.41%**
71 Denis Lemieux	13,619	Dany Morin	13,019	43,805	**600**	**1.37%**
72 Anne Minh-Thu Quach	18,726	Robert Sauvé	17,955	61,535	**771**	**1.25%**
73 Pierre Nantel	18,171	Michael O'Grady	17,468	58,199	**703**	**1.21%**
74 Brigitte Sansoucy	15,578	René Vincelette	14,980	54,369	**598**	**1.10%**
75 Marjolaine Boutin-Swee	16,034	Marwah Rizqy	15,534	51,904	**500**	**0.96%**
76 Karine Trudel	14,039	Marc Pettersen	13,700	48,103	**339**	**0.70%**
77 Bernard Généreux	14,274	Marie-Josée Nor	14,002	49,243	**272**	**0.55%**
78 Xavier Barsalou-Duval	17,007	Lucie Gagnon	16,794	59,390	**213**	**0.36%**