

## **Report on the Mount Royal riding meeting on the electoral reform with MP Anthony Housefather (Lib.)**

The meeting took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2016 from 7:30 pm to approximately 9 pm at Irving L. Adesky Community Centre, in Hampstead, QC.

According to the MP's assistants, the invitations to the consultation were sent by email to those on some list. As it happens, the consultation was also announced on the Mr. Housefather's Facebook page on the evening of the 13<sup>th</sup> of September 2016. Unfortunately, none of those communication efforts reached me, in spite of the great interest to the electoral reform that I personally expressed to Mr. Housefather during our previous face to face meeting and in email exchanges. But fortunately, I learnt about this consultation at the very last moment, the same day afternoon, from Fair Vote Canada and was able to attend.

Participants present: MP Mr. Housefather, his two assistants; 14 citizens of which 9 (including the mayor of Hampstead Mr. Steinberg) were invited by organizers and 5 showed up without invitation (informed through Fair Vote Canada).

Media: The Suburban's reporter Joel Goldenberg (not counted here as a participant)

The consultation was dedicated to two questions: electoral reform and official languages. 13 out of 14 people gave priority to the electoral reform.

To my regret that such important issue as an electoral reform was being discussed with so few citizens Mr. Housefather replied that according to his polling the electoral reform did not have importance to the citizens of the Mount Royal riding.

Mr. Housefather gave a presentation about electoral system and its possible reform. Soon became clear Mr. Housefather's bias against Proportional Representation and for single-member riding representation. His explanation of Proportional Representation was confusing and often slipping to false dichotomies between the FPTP and pure Proportional systems.

Of the 14 citizens present, 5 (including the mayor of Hampstead who distributed copies of the motion passed by Hampstead City Council demanding a Canada wide referendum on any proposed change of the voting system) spoke up against an electoral reform in general and in favor of a referendum before adopting any change.

4 persons spoke up in favor of some form of Proportional system tailored for Canadian context. They were frequently interrupted and debated by Mr. Housefather. Coincidentally, the division in opinions about electoral reform was laid between the group invited to the consultation by Mr. Housefather's staff and those who showed up without invitation.

Conclusion: In the riding with over 100,000 population and 74,000 eligible voters such quasi-clandestine consultation with a dozen people raises question about its legitimacy and the MP's intentions. The organization of the meeting and information provided to the citizens were extremely bad. No efforts to educate constituency on the problems of the current system and advantages of solutions proposed by the experts were ever made. No references to the multiple sources available including the ERRE Committee's hearings were offered. One would expect from MPs and their offices who have resources and responsibility to do a better job in engaging citizens in important political issues and providing them with fare information.

I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the Committee for your most important work!

Sincerely Yours,

Alexandre Gorchkov, citizen, Cote St-Luc, QC (Mount Royal riding)