

Sep 23, 2016
Donald Allan Gray

Dear Electoral Reform Committee,

Please find the following letter as a personal endorsement of FairVote's submission to the ERRE.

<http://www.fairvote.ca/fvc-submission-to-erre/>

I am a constituent of Winnipeg South-Centre (MP: Jim Carr)

Electoral Reform was one of my top issues in the last election.

I did significant canvassing for two major PR-activist groups: FairVote and LeadNow so I will also add my support to both of them via online canvassing.

I also attended the [pre-election debate in Winnipeg South-Centre](#) and remember our new MP Jim Carr to be well-versed in the subject so I know he will do a great job representing our riding in this matter.

Regrettably, I am now out of the country and unable to contribute more to the process.

WHICH PR SYSTEM?

For me, the choice between STV and MMP comes down to a voter's level of trust towards the political parties.

I came across many voters who have a distrust of the parties and the ability of grassroots movements to gain traction. For those groups, I suspect STV would be the preferred option. To me, STV generally has the result of putting more power in the hands of the individual MPs and their personal beliefs/priorities.

On the other side, many voters feel a strong affiliation towards their own party. Either that or they believe that each party is formed in such a way that they will best represent their values and organize for action appropriately. For that group of voters, MMP is probably the more appropriate system.

OPEN vs CLOSED LISTS

There is one caveat, however, about MMP. It must be an open-list in order to maintain its legitimacy. The strongest objections to PR are made in reference to countries using Closed-List PR systems (ie Israel and Italy). Canada should not consider a Closed-list PR system to be acceptable.

INDEPENDENTS

I believe that both MMP and STV will be more accommodating of independents which will also make a step in the right direction. It is the biggest shortcoming that I can see in Dion's P3 system.

RURAL-PR

Fair-Vote Canada has also outlined a 3rd option, modeled after the systems of Norway and Sweden. It appears to be an attempt at tailoring a system using a combination of STV and PR to better address Canada's specific circumstances.

As I understand that this is on recommendation of former head of Elections Canada, Jean-Pierre Kingsley, I am very much in favour of initiatives that are intended to build a system specifically for Canada's geography and demographics. Such an initiative must be driven by Elections Canada, however. Party intervention into such a process would cast a shadow over its fairness and legitimacy.

MY PREFERENCE

Personally, I am optimistic about the spirit of Canada's political parties (including those that I am not politically aligned with). Therefore, I believe that MMP will provide the best option for our country as it will achieve my top priority of proportionality while serving to keep our major parties united and strong.

I am not opposed to STV and I believe a rural-PR system tailored by Elections Canada would both be very acceptable solutions.

Yours sincerely,
Allan Gray
Winnipeg, Manitoba