

Canada Electoral Reform 2016 Brief

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Introduction

I want to take this opportunity to thank the electoral reform board for looking at this brief.

Canada is a unique federation that was founded on the basis of regional, political, cultural, and religious and language differences but still held together by a set of core values based among other things on a democratic system that is fair and transparent. Our FPTP system has been around for nearly 200 years. During this time we have experienced many instances where these afford-mentioned differences has created huge differences between popular vote percentage for a particular federal party and actual seats won by that party in an election. The last two elections in 2011 and 2015 support that fact. In both these cases less than 40% of the popular vote still resulted in a majority government. We have to ask ourselves as a diverse, multi-cultural country: is this fair?

Any defence of the FPTP system would have to mention that a simple majority win of 50% plus one vote in an election was very acceptable and fair in the early days of our confederation. There were mainly only two major parties running for election that had any chance of forming a majority government. In the early 1900's we started to witness some problems on a voting process that was originally intended for a two party electoral system. As more parties entered the election process it soon became apparent that FPTP had some equality of vote problems. But governing parties did not want to upset the apple cart by attempting to change the FPTP system fearing that their party would lose seats because of those changes.

FPTP voting is very acceptable in municipal elections and with other organizations across Canada mainly because people do not expect a majority win by any one individual. If an election has 5 candidates running for office a popular vote greater than 20% could win the election and people have no problem accepting those types of less than a majority value for the win. Based on this, the FPTP model is not such a bad system for current Canadian elections which often see four or five candidates running for election in the one riding. This is democracy at its finest at the

local riding level within a particular region or with followers of a particular political ideology. A winner earning say 30% of the popular vote and still winning the riding is very acceptable and correct on the local riding level. The problem with a sole FPTP system which produces a majority government with less than 40% of popular vote is that the remaining 60% of Canadians have little say in government policy decisions via their elected MPs. Canadians are now in a place in time where the status quo is no longer tenable. We accept our regional and ideology differences but we want a fairer electoral system.

Proposed New Canadian Voting System

This brief will offer a unique Canadian electoral reform solution that respects our historical political past by continuing with local riding FPTP elected MPs having one vote in HOC and addresses country- wide proportional vote fairness with a Proportional Popular Vote Value Multiplier [PPVVM]. The PPVVM offers a proportional vote multiplier to MPs whose party received less than their fair share of seats in HOC based on that party's nation popular vote. Recognized federal parties would need to win at least one seat in the HOCs in order to qualify for the vote value multiplier. MPs elected as independents, MPs leaving their party caucus and MPs crossing the floor would only retain their basic one vote status; the PPVVM process would not apply to those MPs and their vote value would remain at one. A national political party not getting enough local riding support to elect at least one local MP would not be recognized in the HOC for the PPVVM adjustment. This might seem unfair but the PPVVM system needs at least one seat by a national party to qualify for the PPVVM process.

I have included with this brief three hand-written figures [Fig: 1-1, 1-2 & 1-3] that shows how the calculation of the vote multiplier works. Again, as mentioned in the note included with Figures 1-1, 1-2 & 1-3, I apologize for the hand written inclusions. I am sure that the committee's clerical staff will be able to type up Figures 1-1, 1-2 and 1-3 in an acceptable format prior to distribution of those Figures.

The PPVVM process entails a very simple calculation. All you need to do is divide the ideal seat count for a party based on country-wide popular vote by the actual seat count for that party at the local riding level. If that figure is less than 1.0 or just 1.0, then the party has a PPVVM of 1.0 which gives their vote a value of 1.0 in the HOC. If that PPVVM figure is greater than 1.0 then

that vote multiplier is used for HOC votes. For example, if a party has 3 MPs with a vote multiplier of 4.5 then their vote count on a HOC motion or bill would be 14 votes [$3 \times 4.5 = 13.5$ which rounds out to 14]. The smaller parties and parties with high popular votes that did not materialize into actual FPTP seats can end up with a huge vote multiplier.

For this brief let us have a closer look at the last federal election in 2015 which is highlighted in Figure 1-3. The Liberals would lose their majority if the PPVVM model was in effect for that election because the total votes for all MPs works out to 387 votes [from 338 MPs] with the Liberals [a PPVVM of 1.0] needing at least 194 votes to pass a piece of legislation but only having 184 votes. The CPC [a PPVVM of 1.1] would increase their seat count from 99 to 109 seats; the NDP [a PPVVM of 1.5] would increase from 44 to 66; the Bloc [a PPVVM of 1.6] would increase from 10 seats to 16; and the Green Party with a PPVVM of 12.0 would go from 1 seat to 12 seats. This is an excellent example of how country-wide proportional representation would enhance the current FPTP system and making Canada's electoral process fairer for all parties and voters. In this example either the Liberals or CPC could form a minority government.

In fact if you look at the majority wins from 1974, 1980, 1993, 2011 and 2015, this new electoral process would take away the majority win via FPTP from the winning party. In 1953 and 1984 the winning majorities acquired over 50% of the popular vote and the PPVVM model did not change the FPTP majorities of the winning party. In the 1979 election the PPVVM model would drastically change the dynamics of that minority government whereby the NDP would offer their support to either the PC's or Liberals to form a minority government.

The PPVVM process is very simple to initiate; it does not require any major changes to our current voting process just to the computer system; it is very simple and straightforward and based on the KISS philosophy [KISS, meaning keep it simple and straightforward]; it is very easy to understand by the ordinary voter; it offers speedy computation of vote totals during a HOC vote; and can be easily tweeted say after 2 or 3 elections. It is then, after several elections, that the referendum suggested by some Canadians could be held. People across Canada would then have a good idea of the PPVVM system and could see first-hand how it satisfies our need to change from the current electoral process of FPTP.

I respectfully ask all MPs serving on the Electoral Reform Committee to remove their partisan hats and put on their “what’s best for Canada hats”. I am confident that if you do so you will come to like the “PPVVM used with the FPTP election model. I firmly believe that this model fits the current electoral reform needs of the country and can be easily introduced throughout the country.

I thank you all for your time and consideration. If you need to talk to me or get a first-hand explanation you can contact me at the co-ordinates below.

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