

Brief submitted by: Marjorie Wesche

General points:

- **Electronic voting** should not be considered for the general public unless and until the system can guarantee that there is no possibility for duplicate voting and that there is a full, transparent paper trail for recounts.
- A **referendum** should only be held AFTER several election cycles following adoption of the best system that can be agreed upon via the current consultative & committee process. The current government has the mandate to reform the existing first-past-the-post (FPTP) system without a referendum, as well as the moral obligation to do this in full consultation with all other parties and citizens in a way that is widely seen as fair and thorough.

Proposed voting reforms to our current First-past-the-post system:

- A primary reform objective should be the **reduction of wasted votes** (those that don't contribute to the election of given representatives) from the current half or more of votes cast to a proportion close to zero. [*effectiveness + legitimacy; engagement*]. Canada's winner-take-all system often leads to a minority of votes electing strong majority governments, which after several terms are voted out, resulting in dramatic policy shifts. An "alternative" system (ranked ballot in single member riding) does not address this issue.
- **Party representation** is also important, since political parties have become very essential to the preparation of policy platforms, ongoing policy alliances and the organization of government so that things get done. Strong minority parties in many ridings and thinly spread national groups representing significant sections of the electorate (e.g., indigenous voters, Greens) are consistently under-represented in Parliament. [*effectiveness + legitimacy; engagement*].
- **Proportional representation (PR)** systems, often leading to coalition governments, have in most countries resulted in stable governance over time that is responsive to the diverse populations represented. Parties learn to work together, and sudden, wasteful policy shifts are avoided. **PR** electoral systems also elect a much **higher percentage of women** than either FPTP or Alternative systems. [*effectiveness & legitimacy; engagement*]
- For the above reasons, an appropriate **PR system is strongly preferable** to both FPTP and Alternative systems in terms of representing both voters' choices and their party preferences. * **Any of the three following systems would be significantly more representative of Canadian voters than Canada's current FPTP or an Alternative system, and therefore preferable.** All would provide [*+effectiveness & legitimacy & engagement*] and *integrity* could be ensured, as with our present system.
 1. The **Mixed Member Proportional Representation (MMPR)** system, by which each elector has 2 votes – one for a local MP (FPTP) and the other for a party to be filled from a known list) works well both for local candidates and parties. Germany and New Zealand have this.

2. The **Multiple Member Single Transferable Vote (STV)** system, by which ranked ballots (1 per elector) are used to elect 2 or more representatives per riding, minimizes wasted votes and likely leads to better representation of local issues and voter involvement. It improves party representation but may not achieve the level of MMPR and DMP on this factor. STV works well in small, multimember ridings where candidates are known. It is also administratively straightforward. [*+Accessibility & local representation*]

3. My preferred option is the recently designed Canadian **Dual Member Proportional (DMP)** system combining FPTP and PR features in 2 member ridings, is also effective in dramatically reducing wasted votes, but also ensures proportional representation of parties. Each party can propose 1 or 2 candidates per district, so both the FPTP winner and the 2nd representative chosen can be from the same party. Independents can also run. Voters cast one ballot. The second rep is usually the candidate coming in second, often from a different party. However, as a group, the 2nd representatives have to ensure overall distribution of seats proportional to the total votes for each party in the election so this may occasionally vary. (This system is currently under consideration by PEI: <http://www.yourchoicepei.ca/dual-member-proportional-1> . [*+Accessibility & local representation*])