

## Mississauga Community Dialogue, August 22, 2016

### Hosted by Peel Region Action Team of Fair Vote Canada (“Fair Vote Peel”)

A Community Dialogue was held in a local restaurant, Studio89, which donated space and use of a TV screen. It was organized by Patricia McGrail of Fair Vote Peel. Twenty people attended the event which was advertised in local media and online (Eventbrite, Facebook, Twitter). The Mississauga News also printed an [article](#).

The [template](#) provided by Democratic Institutions Canada was used. The powerpoint slides for the meeting are attached. A [short video](#) on STV was incorporated into the presentation. Unfortunately, the smart TV did not work well for the slides. So they were not all presented as intended.

A couple pictures from the event are also attached.

Participants were divided up into groups and moved to another group for each question. One person from each group summarized comments and notes were taken.

#### ***1. General - What do you think could be done to help Canadians feel more interested and involved in democracy?***

Comments:

- Change civics courses
- National voting day
- Open society and schools (people should feel free to discuss politics)
- Electronic voting
- Compulsory voting for first-time voters
- Compulsory town halls for all MPs
- Much cynicism, people are uninformed, MPs follow party lines
- Students need to be engaged in civics at school
- Lower voting age to 16
- Make their vote count
- More education at school
- See the benefit of voting (participating)
- Make it easy to vote (internet)
- Proportional representation

## Mississauga Community Dialogue, August 22, 2016

**2. Democratic principles and values** For this question, a attached handout on the *How the Guiding Principles of the Electoral Reform Committee are Fulfilled by PR* was provided as a resource.

***Of the guiding principles for Canadian federal electoral reform (effectiveness and legitimacy, engagement, accessibility and inclusiveness, integrity and local representation):***

- a. What principle or principles are most important to you? Why?***
- b. What principle or principles are least important to you? Why?***
- c. Are there any principle(s) that you feel are missing? Why?***

Comments:

- Local rep not as important to some but important to others
- Moral compass, honesty
- Effective & legitimacy
- Many feel they have no voice; no communication with MPs; MPs do not return calls, emails
- We lack ERRE principles (all are important)
- Cooperation with PR
- The best ideas come from those we disagree with most
- The PMO needs to be addressed
- Fear

### **3. Canadian Electoral Reforms**

***Are there electoral systems other than our current federal electoral system that you have heard about?***

- a. If so, what have you heard?***
- b. Are there things that you like about these alternatives? If so, what?***
- c. Are there concerns you have about these alternatives? If so, what?***

Comments:

- STV
- MMP
- Referendum, plebiscite
- PR: some countries have a threshold of 2% - it should be 5% - should be per riding
- Prefers MMP – ½ rep riding, ½ rep party – regional MP
- Everything is on one ballot in MMP – straightforward

## Mississauga Community Dialogue, August 22, 2016

- See FV videos
- Education for a new system will be difficult
- Internet voting- income tax never hacked
- Big misconceptions – internet is only way of voting electronically
- Scantron machines for counting faster
- Possible variation of internet voting: multiple small votes online would gauge Canadians' feelings
- Dots on video helped understanding
- Advantages of PR - more representative; more continuity; focus on issues instead of personalities e.g. rail lines, assisted suicide; much more productive conversations
- Engaging, informative, politicians not needed for learning & discussion
- Last election, politicians didn't talk about issues that public wanted to hear
- Accept that progress means change
- More meetings

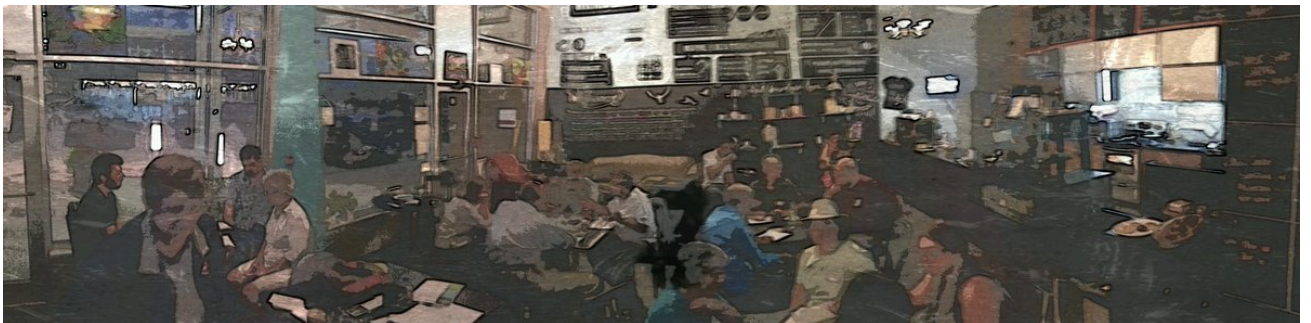
### **4. Additional feedback**

***What are you taking away from today's dialogue on Canadian federal electoral reform?***

#### Comments:

- Diversity of this group indicates that much more open dialogue is needed about electoral reform
- So many people are unhappy with government but afraid of change
- Saying no to change is easy , change is scary
- Came into dialogue with preconceptions, leaving smarter than before
- Nice to know principles of committee
- Hopeful – neat that ERRE is doing this
- More impressive than I thought
- This is great – we should do it regularly
- Safe environment, good size of meeting to be comfy
- Not as simple as I thought
- General public doesn't talk politics – this is good for us
- Slides are too text-heavy, too info heavy
- Outline what we will cover at the beginning
- Clarify instructions for activities (have questions on slide show)
- Could this be done as a webinar? In a high school?

Mississauga Electoral Reform Community Dialogue Aug 22/16 at Studio89



Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada

# ELECTORAL REFORM

Community dialogue

Hosted by:  
Pat McGrail  
Peel Region Action Team of Fair Vote Canada  
[fairvotepeel@gmail.com](mailto:fairvotepeel@gmail.com)  
[www.fairvote.ca](http://www.fairvote.ca)



canada.ca/democracy 

## Canadian federal electoral reform

Federal electoral reform is part of the Government's commitment to change. Canada has a strong and deeply rooted democracy. One way to protect our democratic values is by continuously seeking to improve the functioning of our democratic institutions—including our voting system.

4 [canada.ca/democracy](http://canada.ca/democracy) #EngagedinER

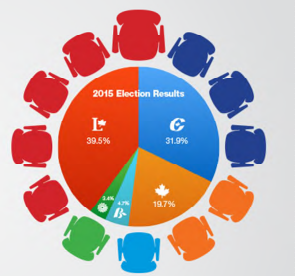
## Housekeeping

Insert any items you wish to cover (agenda, refreshments, washroom location etc.)

Donations.

2 [canada.ca/democracy](http://canada.ca/democracy) #EngagedinER

Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)



- Chair: Francis Scarpaleggia, Liberal
- Vice-Chair: Scott Reid, Conservative
- Vice-Chair: Nathan Cullen, NDP
- 3 women
- NB-1; QU-5; ON-2; AB-1; BC-3;

5

## Thank you for participating in the national dialogue on electoral reform

Canadians expect greater inclusion, transparency, meaningful engagement and modernization from their public institutions. Federal electoral reform is part of the Government's stronger democracy agenda.

3 [canada.ca/democracy](http://canada.ca/democracy) #EngagedinER

## Guiding principles

The following five guiding principles may help you think about what you want from federal elections, your Member of Parliament (MP) and your federal government.

They can help you decide what is important to you when it comes to potential changes to our democracy at the federal level.

6 [canada.ca/democracy](http://canada.ca/democracy) #EngagedinER

## Guiding principles

- Restore the **effectiveness** and **legitimacy** of the voting by reducing distortions and strengthening the link between voter intention and the electoral result.
- Encourage greater **engagement** and participation in the democratic process, including inclusion of underrepresented groups.
- Support **accessibility** and **inclusiveness** to all eligible voters, and avoiding undue complexity in the voting process.
- Safeguarding the **integrity** of our voting process.
- Preserve the accountability of **local representation**.

7

canada.ca/democracy #EngagedinER



Fair Representation  
Vote équitable  
Canada au Canada

STV Video

<http://www.stvforcanada.com/>

10

## Dialogue agreements

- Listen carefully and with respect.
- Give everyone the opportunity to speak.
- Speak for yourself and participate as equals.
- Respect others' opinions.
- Agree to disagree—with ideas, not people.
- Silence cell phones.

8

canada.ca/democracy #EngagedinER

Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada



canada.ca/democracy

Canada



## What is Fair Vote Canada

- National, non-profit organization
  - Not affiliated with any political party
  - Run by volunteers
- Advocate for Proportional Representation (PR)
  - Our current system...
    - does NOT reflect the wishes of voters
    - results in a parliament that does NOT adequately represent voters
    - discourages cooperation
    - Results in regional polarization

9

## Ice breaker

Why have you decided to join us today?

12

canada.ca/democracy #EngagedinER

# Q1

---

**What do you think could be done to help Canadians feel more interested and involved in democracy?**

13

canada.ca/democracy #EngagedinER

# Q2 (cont'd)

---

**a. What principle or principles are most important to you? Why?**

**b. What principle or principles are least important to you? Why?**

**c. Are there any principle(s) that you feel are missing? Why?**

16

canada.ca/democracy #EngagedinER

# Group dialogue

---

7:25- 7:50  
25 minutes

14

canada.ca/democracy #EngagedinER

# Group dialogue

---

7:50-8:10  
(20 minutes)

17

canada.ca/democracy #EngagedinER

# Q2

---

**Of the guiding principles for Canadian federal electoral reform (effectiveness and legitimacy, engagement, accessibility and inclusiveness, integrity and local representation):**

15

canada.ca/democracy #EngagedinER

# Q3

---

**Are there electoral systems other than our current federal electoral system that you have heard about?**

18

canada.ca/democracy #EngagedinER

## Q3 (Cont'd)

- a. If so, what have you heard?
- b. Are there things that you like about these alternatives? If so, what?
- c. Are there concerns you have about these alternatives? If so, what?

19

canada.ca/democracy #EngagedinER

## Reflection

*What are you taking away from today's dialogue on Canadian federal electoral reform?*

8:35-8:50  
(15 minutes)

22

canada.ca/democracy #EngagedinER

## Group dialogue

8:10-8:35  
(25 minutes)

20

canada.ca/democracy #EngagedinER

## Stay connected

canada.ca/democracy

@CdnDemocracy

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/Committees/en/ERRE>

#ERRE #Q

23

canada.ca/democracy #EngagedinER

**2 Families of Voting Systems**

MAJORITARIAN (winner-take-all)	PROPORTIONAL
False Majorities (39%) Single-member district 1/2 of Votes unrepresented	Seats proportional to votes Multi-member district Provides representation for most voters
First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) Alternative Vote* (AV/IRV)	Mixed-Member-Proportional* (MMP) Single-Transferable Vote* (STV) List PR*
<p>*CAN or DOES INCLUDE A RANKED BALLOT TO SELECT CANDIDATES: ranked ballots can be used in both families</p> <p>*CAN USE OPEN LISTS: where all candidates face the voter (not appointed)</p>	


21

## Thank you

24

canada.ca/democracy #EngagedinER






### Alternative Vote (Single-Member)

- Uses a ranked ballot
- When counted, the candidate with the least votes is dropped and those ballots redistributed to the next ranked candidate. Repeat until someone has 50%+1.
- **Winner-take-all**

Rank one or more candidates in your order of preference

Rank candidate	1	2	3	4	5
Candidate	Carrie Cohn (Conservative)	Gary Gronau (Green)	Izzy Imlay (Independent)	Lily Laverty (Liberal)	Norman Nabers (New Democrat)

25



### Mixed Member Proportional (option 2)


Indicate your choice of MP for your riding.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Carrie Cohn (Conservative)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gary Gronau (Green)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Izzy Imlay (Independent)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lily Laverty (Liberal)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Norman Nabers (New Democrat)

Rank one or more candidates in your order of preference

Conservative	Liberal
<input type="checkbox"/> Carrie Cohn	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Logan Long
<input type="checkbox"/> Charles Cooper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lily Laverty
<input type="checkbox"/> Caleb Chong	<input type="checkbox"/> Lisa Lawson
Green	New Democrat
<input type="checkbox"/> Gary Gronau	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Norman Nabers
<input type="checkbox"/> Greta Gill	<input type="checkbox"/> Nicole Noble
Independent	<input type="checkbox"/> Nina Nunn
<input type="checkbox"/> Izzy Imlay	

28




### Multi-Member Systems – PR-STV

Many ways to fairly count ballots Many ways to fairly count ballots to arrive at ten winners.

Rank one or more candidates in your order of preference

Conservative	Liberal
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carrie Cohn	<input type="checkbox"/> Logan Long
<input type="checkbox"/> Charles Cooper	<input type="checkbox"/> Lily Laverty
<input type="checkbox"/> Caleb Chong	<input type="checkbox"/> Lisa Lawson
Green	New Democrat
<input type="checkbox"/> Gary Gronau	<input type="checkbox"/> Norman Nabers
<input type="checkbox"/> Greta Gill	<input type="checkbox"/> Nicole Noble
Independent	<input type="checkbox"/> Nina Nunn
<input type="checkbox"/> Izzy Imlay	

26



### Mixed Member Proportional (option 1)

- Everyone has two votes:
  - Local riding
  - Region

Indicate your choice of MP for your riding.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Carrie Cohn (Conservative)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gary Gronau (Green)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Izzy Imlay (Independent)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lily Laverty (Liberal)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Norman Nabers (New Democrat)

Indicate your choice of party for your region.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Conservative
<input type="checkbox"/>	Green
<input type="checkbox"/>	Independent
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Liberal
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Democrat

27

# How the Guiding Principles of the Electoral Reform Committee are Fulfilled by PR

## The five ERRE principles

The five guiding principles of the Electoral Reform Committee are included in the motion that created the Committee and that are included in [its mandate](#). In brief:

1. Effectiveness and legitimacy,
2. Voter engagement,
3. Accessibility and inclusiveness,
4. Integrity, and
5. Local representation.

Fair Vote Canada has no qualms about any of these principles, but would like to elaborate on them to help the committee and the voting public assess whether different reform proposals live up to Canadian values.

### Principle 1: Effectiveness and legitimacy

*“that the proposed measure would increase public confidence among Canadians that their democratic will, as expressed by their votes, will be fairly translated and that the proposed measure reduces distortion and strengthens the link between voter intention and the election of representatives;”*

A democratic electoral system must offer equality, fairness, effectiveness and choice in equal measure, and any proposal’s legitimacy will hinge on whether or not it satisfies these criteria.

**Equality:** Voter equality is fundamental to democracy. Our new electoral system should ensure, as much as possible, that the vote of each citizen counts equally. Voters for certain parties and voters in certain parts of the country should not be advantaged or disadvantaged because of who they vote for or where they live. Neighbours should not be divided into winners and losers. Our new electoral system should create a level playing field for all.

**Fairness:** The democratic legitimacy of our legislature and our laws depend on the extent to which voters’ choices are reflected in the composition of our legislature. Under a PR electoral system, it would no longer be possible for a Prime Minister whose party wins 39 percent of the vote to obtain 54 percent of the seats in the House of Commons and 100 percent of the political power.

**Effectiveness:** An effective electoral system provides voters with a real chance to elect representatives who share their political views and understand their interests, regardless of where they live.

**Choice:** A reformed electoral system should make it easier for voters to hold representatives accountable and reduce the number of “safe seats” where there is no real voter choice. It should enable voters to vote freely for the candidates and parties they prefer, rather than voting strategically.

## **Principle 2: Voter engagement**

*“the proposed measure (should) encourage voting and participation in the democratic process, foster greater civility and collaboration in politics, enhance social cohesion and offer opportunities for inclusion of underrepresented groups in the political process.”*

In a sense, this describes the result of effective votes for all. However, this list is not complete, and should include the values of accountable, stable and effective government. Here are our comments on a number of “downstream results:”

**Voter Participation:** As we have seen, there are good reasons to expect increased voter participation under a PR system. This is so not only because all votes count, but as well because of greater satisfaction with the more collaborative political culture that can be expected to emerge.

**Consensus, Collaboration and Social cohesion:** Our electoral system should respect the diverse ideas Canadians have to offer. The goal is to find solutions that are in the best interest of the whole, through a process that generates widespread levels of participation and agreement. The coalition-building that occurs in PR systems will require a cultural shift towards greater cooperation and consensus-building in Parliament..

**Inclusiveness:** Canadians recognize our diversity as a source of strength. Our new electoral system should build on that strength. Members of groups that are now under-represented in our legislature -- women, multi-cultural groups, linguistic minorities, First Nations and others – should find it easier to elect representatives under our new electoral system. That system should also produce a House of Commons which reflects the diversity of opinion in Canada, including a place for popular independent candidates..

**Regional balance:** Equal votes for all would ensure that rural and urban voters in every province, territory and regional community are represented in both government and opposition. A more balanced electoral system would not favour regional parties with shallow national support over parties with strong national support.

**Accountability:** Our new electoral system should ensure that voters are governed by laws approved by a majority of legislators representing a majority of voters. Under a PR system, if no one party is able to garner majority support, it will have to work with other parties. As Prof. Dennis Pilon has said “Canadians keen to rein in the power of the PMO’s office should look no further than PR. Only by introducing some

form of PR can we hope to make our executive branch more accountable to Parliament.”

**Stable and Effective Government:** Citizens and Government deserve long-term stability and policy continuity. Ineffective wild swings between successive governments that occur under winner-take-all systems undermine stability, public confidence, expectations and social license to pursue policies and enact legislation.

Majoritarian Voting systems create short-term thinking on policy, since they force parties to focus their policy decisions on four-year electoral cycles or less, with constant campaigning aimed at winning the next 39% majority. This creates a climate in which long-term solutions are sidelined in favour of inaction or quick fixes. Winner-take-all systems also create an inefficient cycle of policy lurch, where a new government reverses the policies of the previous government.

### **Principle 3: Accessibility and inclusiveness**

*“that the proposed measure would avoid undue complexity in the voting process, while respecting the other principles, and that it would support access by all eligible voters regardless of physical or social condition;”*

Principle 3 draws attention to the need for simplicity in the voting process. We would like to point out that voting under a PR system is something that citizens all over the world manage with no particular difficulties. While PR ballots require something more than a single X as is the case in our current system, there is nothing simpler than voting with one’s heart for one’s preferred candidate(s), and nothing more difficult than agonizing about the need to vote strategically.

### **Principle 4: Integrity**

*“that the proposed measure can be implemented while safeguarding public trust in the election process, by ensuring reliable and verifiable results obtained through an effective and objective process that is secure and preserves vote secrecy for individual Canadians;”*

Principle 4 appears to have been included as a consideration when contemplating on-line voting, which is part of the Committee’s writ.

However the concept of electoral integrity is broader than that, and we would like to point the ERRE committee to results from Harvard University’s recent [Electoral Integrity Project](#). This was a comparative research project that looked at “all national parliamentary and presidential elections held in independent nation-states (with a population of more than 100,000) over an eighteen month period from 1 July 2012 to 31 December 2013.” It covered 73 elections in 66 countries.

What emerges from this research that strikes our attention when considering PR as an option is that PR countries performed particularly well under this criterion. To quote the project’s report (p. 10):

“The top ranking elections are all held in affluent post-industrial societies, with a long succession of democratic contests experienced over many decades or

even centuries, as well as having stable states and effective public sector governance. These countries usually scored exceptionally well ... for electoral procedures, characterized by effective and efficient voter registration and vote tabulation processes. All these regimes have power-sharing institutions and coalition governments, providing multiple checks and balances on the executive branch. **Contests in these countries have inclusive parliaments and a fairly level playing field for party competition, based on either Proportional Representation or Mixed Member Proportional electoral systems"** (our emphasis).

#### **Principle 5: Local representation**

*“that the proposed measure would ensure accountability and recognize the value that Canadians attach to community, to Members of Parliament understanding local conditions and advancing local needs at the national level, and to having access to Members of Parliament to facilitate resolution of their concerns and participation in the democratic process;”*

Fair Vote Canada believes that our representatives must be directly accountable to voters, not to party hierarchies. This means that voters should feel a local connection to their representatives, as suggested by principle 5. Furthermore, the selection of candidates by parties should be open, transparent and democratic, not dictated by party “insiders” or party leaders (see section on democratic nominations below). We therefore see principle 5 as a ***sine qua non*** of any reform under consideration.