

# Preferred Ballot is the Truly Democratic Electoral Reform Option and the Best Choice for Canada

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We believe that Canada's first-past-the-post electoral system *should be replaced by a system of **Preferential Ballot***. We supply three reasons why.

## 1. Promoting Consensus

With its requirement of 50% of voter support for each individual candidate, the **Preferential Ballot** electoral reform option promotes broad bands of interest, therefore contributing to consensus building and identification of and with our commonalities as a people and as a nation.

With its minimal requirement of voter support to obtain a presence in the house (e.g. 5% in Germany), the **Proportional Representation** electoral option promotes narrow bands of interest, therefore contributing to divisiveness and the identification of and with differences.

The promotion of divisiveness not only seems inconsistent with the nature and most attractive features of this country, its broad inclusiveness and tolerance, it may be seen to put the country itself at risk, when divergent opinions align with regional interests and advantages. This risk is simply not as great in countries with a single language and smaller, more homogeneous geography—the kind of countries now practicing **Proportional Representation**.

Therefore, *we urge the committee to propose **Preferential Ballot*** because it promotes consensus and will help to strengthen and further build our still-young nation.

## 2. More Truly Democratic

Under **Preferential Ballot**, voters' votes determine the distribution of power between parties. This would seem the very essence of democracy.

**Proportional Representation** at first glance appears democratic, however, under that system negotiations of power take place after the election, in parliament, as parties leverage their votes to secure maximum representation for their supporters.

Not only are the behind-the-scenes negotiations promoted by **Proportional Representation** undemocratic, as there is no assurance that they will align with the intentions of the people as expressed in the vote, these negotiations can also lead to parties with special interest gaining control of matters, national or local, which pertain to that special interest.

If, for example, under **Proportional Representation**, seven percent of Canadians support a new National Intolerance Party, would it be right, through balance of power, to give that party a significant role in immigration policy, a situation they would no doubt use their influence to seek? This outcome would not be democratic.

Therefore, ***we further urge the committee to propose Preferential Ballot***, in which the distribution of power in parliament is determined solely by the voter.

### **3. Less Disruptive and Expensive**

The **Preferential Ballot** system requires no changes to the number and distribution of electoral districts.

In Germany's **Proportional Representation** system, half the seats are awarded through first-past-the-post, and half from party lists. In PEI where we live, the option for a provincial Proportional Representation system suggests two-thirds would be chosen via first-past-the-post and one third from lists.

Canada has 338 electoral districts. If a **Proportional Representation** system is implemented, then Canada might have 676 ridings (similar to the German system) or 457 (if the PEI model were used) or, if it were decided not to increase the number of seats, as many as half or one-third of existing ridings must disappear. Thus, either we greatly increase the cost of government or appear to disenfranchise millions of Canadians.

Therefore, ***we urge the committee to propose Preferential Ballot*** because it will neither cost Canadians significantly more, nor appear to disenfranchise current voters.