

BRIEF FOR:

The Special Committee on Electoral Reform

FROM:

Jason Hanson

Individual

This is not a professional submission. I do not hold any degrees in Political Studies, nor have I visited foreign countries to get a first-hand look at how electoral systems actually work in other jurisdictions. I don't pretend to understand the complexities inherent in any voting apparatus. What I offer in this brief is based solely on my personal observations of Western electoral systems.

Democracy at its root is about the power of the people. The word literally means that common people (*demos*) rule (*kratia*). To me, this does not imply, but fundamentally states that everyone within a democratic system should have a voice in how they are governed. In my opinion, our current first-past-the-post electoral model fails miserably in this very essential aspect. Often in this system, the *majority* of citizens end up with *no* representation in their governance; the tragic opposite of what many Western politicians regularly tout as the pinnacle of electoral evolution. To paraphrase many of these elected officials, wars have been fought for our freedom to vote for our leaders, and yet in most elections, this "freedom" amounts to a completely wasted ballot. Today in Canada, if thirty-five percent of voters choose a candidate or party and the remaining sixty-five percent scatter their votes for others, the *minority* of citizens end up in fact ruling over the majority. Is this the outcome for which veterans purportedly sacrificed so much?

Mechanical complexities aside, it should be self-evident that any voting system that allows for the complete exclusion of the majority of its citizens is inherently dysfunctional. Some might even suggest it is Orwellian.

Why not instead utilize a system that recognizes every vote and attempts to include all voices and perspectives in the governance of the commons? Should an elected body not reflect as much of the citizenry as possible?

It is my belief that the only honest, moral, and effective method of delivering democracy to a nation-state is proportional representation (PR). Without question, the composition of a government should mirror to as high a degree as possible the constituents that participated in its election, which is to say the citizenry is *represented* in parliament *proportionally* to their voting wishes. PR not only fulfills the meaning of the word "democracy", but it creates a political climate in which nuance and collaboration and compromise are celebrated, not demonized. It acknowledges the fact that while most people rarely agree on everything, they will usually agree on enough to satisfy the majority while always hearing the minority. Messy as this might be, it is decisively better than unquestioned rule by the few.

I cannot begin to suggest exactly what version of PR might be best for Canada, but I will unequivocally say that anything less than some form of PR would be a travesty of your committee's work, and I urge you in the strongest way possible through the written word to advocate for the implementation of PR for Canada's future elections.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jason Hanson
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