

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Please consider my suggestion for a new electoral system to elect the parliament of Canada.

## **GUARANTEED TWO-ROUND VOTING**

### SUMMARY

Drawing on the definitions used in the document, "Electoral Systems and Electoral Reform in Canada and Elsewhere: An Overview", this document will describe how a guaranteed two-round voting system would best serve the needs of Canada.

#### A. THE PROBLEMS WITH THE CURRENT SYSTEM IN CANADA

FPTP has not served us well in the past few decades. Too many people have lost hope and stopped voting because of perceived unfairness.

In the 1990s The reform party was formed out of conservatives who were dissatisfied with a "red Tory" party that was not conservative enough to reflect their views. As a result of this splitting of the vote on the right, the Liberals enjoyed an easy majority for many years.

In the 2000s the conservatives reunited, and the left wing vote was split between the Liberals and the NDP, giving the Conservative Party under Steven Harper an easy majority.

During both reigns, people on the opposition side of the ideological spectrum felt powerless and continually disappointed with their government. This was the real cause of low voter turnout.

Throughout it all, people supporting third, fourth and fifth parties were the most frustrated as they saw their hard work, contributions and votes produce little benefit, election after election.

I believe that the single greatest problem with FPTP is the *co-opting of conscience by fear* that forces people to vote strategically. A couple of examples will illustrate what I mean. The NDP has never formed the government because so many people who wanted to support them felt compelled to vote Liberal to make sure their ideological enemies, the Conservatives, were defeated. The Green Party has never elected more than one MP despite having significant visible and audible support from coast to coast to coast, because many of their well-wishers felt forced to vote strategically when the reality of election day landed on them.

Strategic voting is a negative influence that forces Canadians to abandon their ideals in order to quash the ideals of others. The most important goal of the new electoral system must be to abolish strategic voting. If Canadians believe they can go to the polls and vote their conscience without fear of the consequences, the participation will skyrocket, in both campaigns and voting.

#### B. THE PROBLEMS WITH "FORCED" PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

The first and most obvious solution to the problems of FPTP flowed from simple logic: A party that gets 12% of the votes across Canada should get 12% of the MPs. A party that gets 3% should get 3% of the MPs, etc. I call this forced proportional representation because the electoral commission must force a solution that overrides the voting results in order to be fair to the parties. Here are some problems with that system:

1. The parties have no rights. They are not even named in the Constitution. That is as it should be. The Constitution ascribes rights to individuals, including the right to hold office, the right to associate and the right to elect a representative in Parliament.
2. Awarding non-elected MPs to parties would dilute the power of elected MPs, frustrating their electors.
3. Parties with fringe, extremist, absurd or anarchist intentions would have a chance of providing an MP which would make a mockery of the House of Commons. Granted, this could be limited by imposing a minimum vote count, but where to draw the line presents another argument that would eventually have to be settled by an arbitrary edict that would be seen as favouring those parties above the line and discriminating those below.
4. The non-elected MPs would not be accountable to a constituency.

### C. THE INTRINSIC VALUE OF ELECTING PEOPLE RATHER THAN PARTIES

The original concept of electing one MP to represent each riding in the country is a valuable concept that must be retained and strengthened rather than diluted. In the run-up to every election, people must be encouraged to elect a local candidate who will serve as a good MP. The concept of a Prime Minister as merely the captain of a team, the leader of a 300 member committee rather than an emperor, president or monarch must be widely advertised. The difference between parties, and their importance, must be downplayed. How many politicians can you remember who changed parties over the past fifty years? Were they all hypocrites? Or are parties not so different after all?

We must elect intelligent MPs who reflect our views, not parties and not a dictator or the most attractive figurehead.

### D. GUARANTEED TWO-ROUND VOTING (G2RV)

Two round voting is well described in your reference document. I suggest a modification as follows:

Voters would go to the polls on the first day, see a full slate of candidates and vote for one exactly as they have always done in FPTP. The votes would be counted and published. The two candidates in each riding receiving the highest and second highest number of votes would appear on the second ballot, which voters would see on the second voting day. The winner of the second vote would become the MP for his riding.

Note my modification: The two-round voting described in the reference document would declare a candidate elected as soon as he/she receives a majority of the votes cast. This would force some people to vote strategically, in fear of their least favourite party getting elected. The guaranteed two-round voting system would guarantee all voters a second chance, in order to protect the freedom of the first vote.

In order to reap the benefits of this system, the electoral commission would advise the public that they will have a chance to vote strategically with their second vote if they feel it is necessary, so they should vote their conscience with their first vote.

Let me illustrate the effect this might have had with a real example from the last election. In my riding of Nanaimo-Ladysmith, many people to whom I talked thought that Paul Manly of the Green Party was an excellent candidate and had a good chance of getting elected. Apparently he also had the largest and best organized campaign team. The tide seemed to turn in the last week before the election as a lot of people voted for the party they thought had the best chance of beating the Conservatives. The local riding results were quite

evenly distributed: NDP 33%, Liberal 24%, Conservative 23%, Green 20%. Had guaranteed two-round voting been in effect, many more people might have voted for Paul Manly in the first round, knowing that they would have a second chance to block Steven Harper's party. As a result, Manly might have surfaced as one of the top two candidates going into the second round of voting. And then he would have received all of the anti-Conservative votes. This is an example of how an under-represented party could gain MP representation in the House.

On the other hand, if, given a fair chance by a two-round system, Manly had not survived the first round of voting, I and many of his supporters would have conceded that he lost in a fair contest and happily voted for a second choice on the second day of voting, and felt like part of the process all the way. Even Paul Manly himself could vote for his second choice in the second round and not feel completely cheated out of the democratic process!

Take a few minutes to consider other examples in ridings with which you are familiar. I am confident that you will see one theme emerging: fairness.

## E. THE PROBLEM WITH A SINGLE TRANSFERABLE VOTE

After recognizing the need for two-round voting, many people have proceeded to have the following thoughts: It is too expensive, so how can we do the equivalent on one ballot? Enter the single transferable vote. But it failed to gain acceptance in British Columbia because it was too complicated for people to understand. And when people don't understand something they often jump to wrong conclusions that appeal to their desire for simplicity. Thus, for example, many people would simply vote for one candidate with all of their choices. They might be afraid that indicating anyone else for a second or third choice would get him/her elected over their first choice.

People need simplicity and transparency. They cannot all be expected to make their second and third choices based on a hypothetical scenario in which their first choice is not available. They need to be told: "Vote your conscience today." and on the next day: "Okay, now your first choice did not make it to the second round. Choose your MP from these two."

## IN CONCLUSION

The guaranteed two-round voting system will not guarantee that a party with 3.5% of the popular vote gets 3.5% of the seats. And it should not, because the rights of parties must not supersede the concept of representation by population from each riding. What it will do is eliminate much of the damage done by strategic voting, unite the majority of voters in each riding behind a single candidate, and give every candidate a fair chance to get elected.

The only disadvantage is the increased cost, to which I say:

1. Of all the things government spends money on, what is more important than this?
2. I was a polling station scrutineer at the 2015 election, and I saw firsthand how antiquated the method of voting and counting votes was. I could point out a dozen ways to utilize technology to streamline it. For those who (wisely) fear the potential security breach of using the internet, I suggest that, at the very least, off-line computers be used for voting.

Mandatory voting would not be good for Canada. The votes of people who do not care enough to educate themselves on the issues serve only to inject randomness into the election. We would not choose MPs by

tossing dice or flipping coins. If only 10% of the population know and understand the issues facing our country, it is best that their votes decide the future of the country.

However, adopt guaranteed two-round voting, and there will be no need for mandatory voting. The attention, self-education and participation of the electorate will increase when they perceive that their vote will have an effect.

Thank you for your important contribution to this momentous evolution in Canadian politics.

Yours truly,

Pete Moore