

“ELECTORAL REFORM CONSULATION” – MP Brown

Mr. Brown;

While I usually do not feel you nor your party represent our personal perspectives on many (but not all) issues of national import, your recent householder did present a less partisan (and therefore more informative) overview of the choices facing us regarding reform of our current FPTP elections.

I often ask WHY? when someone says they want to change something. And if they can tell me it's broken and how, then I agree that changes to improve it are needed. In this case, it has been clear for decades that our House of Commons using the FPTP is broken, grossly disproportional, and therefore not democratically representative of many electors who cast their votes for any party – including for yours. And this is true in every election – even those which elect a “majority” governing party – as there will be tens of thousands in dozens of ridings whose “votes didn't count”. So yes, the voting system and how it results in “winners” (aka MPs) must be changed to make our future elected governments more representative, more democratic, and more “legitimate” in the minds of all participating electors.

The question is WHAT CHANGE(s)? will accomplish most of those objectives. I've studied options over the past couple of decades, and your document lays out only four of them – the first two are essentially not going to result in any change beyond the status quo (as ranked ballots are still a form of FPTP).

The PR and MMP options move us closer to achieving the above 3 objectives, but they are going to be difficult to understand for most folks who are working, studying, raising families, etc. ... and who don't have a lot of time to invest in weighing these options. As these changes would also be susceptible to excessive partisan manipulation (yes that does occur, and has occurred in other jurisdictions including Ontario with previous electoral improvement proposals)... especially by opposing ‘vested interests’.

The one option which most likely can achieve the 3 above objectives ...with the least modification in existing election voting mechanics ...is not even described in your document. (To be fair to you and most other MPs, it hasn't gotten much coverage elsewhere, although the UK and other reform-minded countries are considering it as a legitimate “real” proportional electoral improvement.)

That option goes by the name of **\*\*Single Member Party Proportional or SMPP\*\***.

May I please ask you (or your support staff) to research this option... and since you do not have to report back to the Committee before mid-October, could you please send out press releases, another Communicator, and use social media, etc. to give this legitimate voting option the exposure it deserves – so that electors and MPs can make more-fully informed choices -- as we all move forward to legitimize a better, more representative, more democratic and fairer way to elect our future governments.

Thank you for your consideration (and for your follow-on comments if you wish to reply by email);

Toby Stewart

Cc: Members of the Committee

References:

SMPP requires no seating change in the House of Commons nor in electoral boundaries. As with MMP, it meets the seven principles set out by the Special Parliamentary Electoral Reform Committee.

- **Governmental Policies** will better reflect the wishes of the voters and the broad policy swings of the past will be less likely to occur (Knutsen, 2011, p. 86).
- **Ethnic and gender diversity** representation in parliament tends to increase with a PR voting system (Studlar, 1999, p.129).
- **Voter Turnout** will increase as voters realize that their vote will always count (Blais & Aarts, 2006, p.191).

\*\*A similar system proposed in the UK is called Direct Party and Representative Voting or DPR (see <http://www.dprvoting.org>). (a very informative, non-partisan website)