

Bowen Island, October 6 2016

Special Committee on Electoral Reform  
Sixth Floor, 131 Queen Street  
House of Commons  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6  
Canada

**Re: Brief regarding Electoral reform**

Dear Member of the Special Committee on Electoral Reform:

I was born in the Netherlands and I can still remember the day I found a letter from the Netherlands Government addressed to me. The letter arrived shortly after I had turned 18 years. It was a welcome into the circle of voters and it mentioned that I was now automatically registered as a voter and would receive my voting call card for the next upcoming election, and any there after.

Since then I have voted in every election in the Netherlands, and have been represented in the Netherlands parliament by the political parties I voted for. This representation in parliament was not because I voted for the larger parties, often I didn't, it is the electoral system of party list proportional representation ensuring that smaller parties are also represented in parliament ,and few votes are wasted. The voter turnout of 1998 of 73.3% has been the all time low, before and since it has been higher up to 88%.

I moved to Canada in 1999, and have been a landed resident since. My wife is Canadian and she has voted at every election as well, but in contrast to my experience with voting in the Netherlands, she was seldom represented in the House of Commons or provincial legislators. Clearly, I was taken aback when I first was informed about this, but than again I also assumed that all Canadians were bilingual. Due to strategic voting our family is currently represented in the House of Commons, but this representation is not one of our political ideas.

I have been active in helping Canada onto a more democratic path where political party/parties must have more than 50% of the vote to be able to govern and voters are represented in the Canadian parliament.

My drive to help Canada is rooted in the appreciation for the courage and sacrifice of Canadian soldiers during the Liberation of the Netherlands during the Second World War. This sincere appreciation is linked to the understanding I have acquired since moving here, that Canada was able to play this role, because it had access to the 'fruits' of land and resources it had claimed through the colonization of Turtle Island's land and waters.

What I learned about colonization, before and after I moved to Canada, have only strengthened this understanding that a great right to the Netherlands was made possible through a great wrong that was done to the people of Turtle Island, the First Nations of Canada.

I understand and feel this wrong: My mother is one of the few surviving members of a Jewish family, that was decimated by the Nazis. Something very similar happened to the people of Turtle Island. They greatly suffered just because the British and French wanted the land they were living on. Many were murdered and many perished due to European diseases that, at one point were known to be lethal for indigenous people. To this day many still suffer greatly due to a deep rooted racism within Canada's colonial society.

Where this racism comes from, I do not know. But I do know that Canada and its people have a big problem that must be addressed: -Canada never broke or breached the treaties with the nation that did so much wrong to my family and many others, yet Canada and its people

broke and breached many of the treaties it has with the First Nations of Turtle Island and caused so much suffering up to this day.

Appreciation and respect would be expected towards the people who resided on the land that made Canada possible as a colony and colonial society, similar feelings of appreciation and respect I feel for Canada for its role of liberating my country of origin.

Slowly, Canada, its governments and its people, are coming to terms that they have to make right what is so wrong. That the time of exclusion is over and therefore moving away from an electoral system that excludes, is not only symbolic, it is one of the things it must do to liberate this society of its colonialism. Electoral reform is a part in this process of decolonization and reconciliation.

During the last election, a majority of the parties, now represented with a clear majority in the House of Commons, have campaigned on changing the electoral system. The Conservative party didn't and is now asking for a referendum on electoral reform.

Although a clear majority is present, I consider changing the electoral system something that should be supported by all. I sincerely feel that the task you have as committee member, is to lead Canada from being a colonial entity based on exclusion to a democratic society that respects all its residents and is based on inclusion.

I can bother you with all the details of which electoral system works this way or that, but I won't. Instead I have created an Citizen Preparation Form, attached to this brief, that in a number of straight forward questions helps people come to their preferred election system.


The back page of the form would use the same design style and consist of clear, concise and non-biased information(text and illustrations) about different election systems people will be asked to chose from during a possible referendum.

I have created this form not as a static entity of how it must be. No, it is an idea I offer to you to show how something like this could be done, and be helpful and appealing to citizens.

I believe that the electoral reform and the possibility of a referendum provides the opportunity to include many in the decision making. It is an opportunity to educate many about the fundamentals of the democratic process and the election systems that would have their support. We must all stand behind a process that is fundamental to democracy.

Looking forward to your reply, I remain.

Sincerely,



Ir. J.H. Anton van Walraven

PS: Please note that the form is designed to be in colour and therefore I have sent a set of colour copies by regular mail to arrive shortly.

PPS: Many thanks to Mr. Andre Chollat for helping me translate the form into French.

#### Background

Ingenieur degree Industrial Design (7 year Master), Technical University Delft, Netherlands (1984- 1991)  
1992 – 1999 -Graphic design, industrial design and architectural IT consultant.  
2001 – 2009 -Staff forest campaign/volunteer coordination/IT, Wilderness Committee, Vancouver BC  
2009 – present -Howe maker and Howe Sound protector

Attachments: 'Citizen preparation form for the referendum on Electoral Reform' and  
'Formulaire de préparation des citoyens pour le référendum sur la réforme du système électoral.'

# Citizen preparation form for the referendum on Electoral Reform



Parliament of Canada

- This form has been prepared to help you make your choice for the election system you would like the Citizens of Canada to use to elect their Federal Governments.
- We ask you to make your choice before the referendum date. This way, when in the booth, you only have to check your choice on the referendum ballot.

- On the other side of this form you will find detailed information about the proposed Electoral systems. **Please read this information carefully!**
- Once you have made your choice using this form, you may use or bring this form to transfer your choice onto the referendum ballot itself.

## Start here:

This is not your referendum ballot!

Do you vote in elections?

no

yes

Do you think in a democracy a party or parties must have a majority of the vote to govern?

no

yes

Do you think that a party's share of the vote received at an election should be the same as -proportional to- the share of seats it is assigned in parliament?

no

yes

If none of the parties has the majority of the vote, do you think parties should form a coalition to have that majority?

no

yes

Are you happy with the current electoral system called First Past the Post?

yes

no

Do you think it is important that ridings are directly represented by a Member of Parliament, as is currently the case?

no

yes

Are you OK with the borders of ridings redrawn to include more people?

yes

no

To accommodate the current ridings to be represented by a Member of Parliament, while not changing the riding borders, the number of Members of Parliament will have to increase.

Would you vote if:

-the Electoral System is changed?

-voter registration is automatic?

Your choice for the electoral system:

First Past the Post  
Winner takes all

Your choice for the electoral system:

Party List Proportional  
Representation

Your choice for the electoral system:

Mixed Member Proportional  
Representation  
with new riding borders.

Your choice for the electoral system:

Mixed Member Proportional  
Representation  
with current riding borders.

**DRAFT** - Example copy -  
- For information only! -

Submitted by Anton van Walraven to ERRE as part of the consultation period.



# Formulaire de préparation des citoyens pour le référendum sur la réforme électorale



Parlement *du* Canada

- L'intention de ce formulaire est de vous aider dans le choix du système électoral que vous aimeriez voir utilisé par les citoyens du Canada pour l'élection de leur gouvernement fédéral.
- Nous vous demandons de faire votre choix avant la date du référendum, de telle façon à n'avoir, une fois dans l'isoloir, qu'à cocher votre choix sur le bulletin du référendum.
- A l'arrière de ce formulaire vous trouverez une information détaillée des systèmes électoraux proposés.  
**Nous vous prions de lire attentivement cette information!**
- Lorsque vous avez fait votre choix avec l'aide de ce formulaire, vous pouvez vous y référer ou l'apporter avec vous pour faire le transfert de votre choix sur le bulletin du référendum lui-même.

**Commencez ici:**

**Ceci n'est pas votre bulletin du référendum.**

Votez vous lors des élections ?

non

oui

Voteriez vous si :

- Le système électoral était changé ?
- L'inscription des électeurs était automatique ?

Pensez vous que dans une démocratie un parti (ou des partis) doit avoir la majorité des votes pour gouverner ?

non

oui

Pensez-vous que la portion des votes électoraux obtenue par un parti devrait être représentée par la même proportion des sièges au Parlement ?

non

oui

Votre choix de système électoral:

Scrutin uninominal à un tour

Si aucun parti n'obtient la majorité des votes, pensez-vous que des partis devraient faire une coalition pour avoir une majorité ?

non

oui

Etes vous satisfait du système électoral actuel surnommé Scrutin uninominal à un tour ?

oui

non

Votre choix de système électoral:

Représentation proportionnelle par listes de parti.

Pensez vous qu'il soit nécessaire que chaque circonscription soit directement représentée par un député parlementaire comme ça l'est actuellement ?

non

oui

Etes vous en faveur de modifier les limites des circonscriptions pour y inclure plus d'électeurs?

oui

non

Votre choix de système électoral:

Représentation proportionnelle mixte avec des nouvelles limites de circonscription.

Afin de permettre aux circonscriptions actuelles d'être représentées par un député parlementaire tout en ne modifiant pas les limites de circonscription, le nombre de députés parlementaires devra être augmenté.

oui

Votre choix de système électoral:

Représentation proportionnelle mixte avec les limites actuelles des circonscriptions.

**BROUILLON** - Sketch de démonstration -  
- Pour votre information -

Proposé par Anton van Walraven à ERRE dans le contexte de la période de consultation.