



Submission to the Special Committee on Electoral Reform

October 6, 2016

Introduction

For 40 years, North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) has provided programs and services to the North Shore community in Metro Vancouver. The North Shore comprises 5 municipalities including the City of North Vancouver, the District of West Vancouver and the District of North Vancouver and two First Nations – the Squamish and Tlseil-Waututh Nations. The North Shore is home to approximately 200,000 residents.

NSCR's Vision is a thriving North Shore community. Our Mission is to enhance well-being, social connections, empowerment and community participation by designing and delivering programs and services to the North Shore. Our Annual Report provides further details regarding NSCR's programs and services: <http://www.nscr.bc.ca/pdf/NSCR%20annual%20report%20web.pdf>

In 2015, coinciding with the federal election, NSCR created the Democracy Café. Democracy Café's purpose is to encourage North Shore residents and citizens to learn about and participate in democratic life through interactive forums and workshops. In 2015, almost 200 people participated in a series of 3 sessions, Democracy Cafés at five different locations that were focused on learning about the federal government, elections and participating in democratic life beyond elections. Attached to this submission

In 2016, Democracy Café organized three workshops providing citizens and residents with an opportunity to learn about and participate in federal consultations regarding reform of Canada's electoral system. Over 130 people registered and/or participated. We attach our poster for the series of workshops.

Democracy Café 2.0 – Electoral Reform

Our original plan for a Democracy Café on electoral reform was to have a three phase process. The first phase would have been a learning phase to allow local citizens/residents to understand the options. The second phase would have been to convene a North Shore Citizens Panel on Electoral Reform recruiting a representative sample of citizens from the North Shore (age, gender, geographically, ethnically, etc.) to deep dive into the issues to dialogue and deliberate options for electoral reform with a goal of making recommendations. The third phase would have been to publicize those recommendations and make a submission to your Committee.

Despite several applications for funding, NSCR was unable to secure funding for such a process. This reflects a general difficulty in securing funds for projects that are considered “political” even if the initiative or project is “non-partisan” – as is the case with Democracy Café. This is a point worth emphasizing to the Committee. Citizen education and participation involving democratic life requires an investment of time and resources that community based non-profit organizations such as NSCR do not have without government and foundation financial support.

In the alternative, Democracy Café 2.0 became essentially the first phase of this process and focused on providing a non-partisan, dialogue based, interactive learning environment for interested people to learning about electoral reform options. We recruited several graduate students from the Department of Political Science at UBC (one of whom is also an Instructor at Capilano University in North Vancouver) to assist in the design of curriculum, preparation of materials and facilitation of the workshop. Some of these materials are attached as an Appendix to this submission. We note that these individuals – Megan Dias, Daniel Westlake, Spencer MacKay and Conrad King – provided their knowledge, time and expertise *pro bono* to Democracy Café. NSCR is very thankful for their contributions.

NSCR partnered with the West Vancouver Memorial Library, the City of North Vancouver Library, the North Shore Multicultural Society and the North Shore News to promote and stage the event. The North Shore News as Media Partner was invaluable in promoting the event through advertising and news reporting. We prepared an opinion-editorial that was published in the North Shore News: <http://www.nsnews.com/opinion/letters/other-voices-pressing-trudeau-on-his-electoral-reform-pledge-1.2331984>

Participant Feedback

As part of the evaluation of our Democracy Café, we asked participants to fill out an evaluation form. While we are continuing to work through the evaluations, we have received almost universal praise from participants that the workshop was interesting, informative and that they would recommend the workshop to a friend or colleague. Several participants who had participated at one of the Member of Parliament Town Halls or Minister Monsef’s event in Vancouver also commented that Democracy Café provided a deeper learning opportunity to understand options for electoral reform. This may be for two reasons. First, two of our sessions were three hours in length. Second, we did not try to deal with the issues of mandatory voting and online voting, part of the Committee’s mandate.

A further insight into the value of the workshops and the importance of education on electoral system options is from the straw poll we conducted of participants both before and after the workshop. We asked participants to rate their preference for an electoral system according to First-Past-the-Post, Alternative Vote (ie Preferential Ballot) or some form of Proportional Representation (either Mixed-Member Proportional or Single Transferable Vote). In each case, participants clearly shifted their preferences to a different electoral system after the workshop learning sessions. This shift was toward a system of proportional representation. While we don’t claim that these straw polls are scientifically valid or reliable, we do believe that they make a case for the importance of providing meaningful education to citizens about electoral systems in order for them to meaningfully participate in consultations about their preferences.

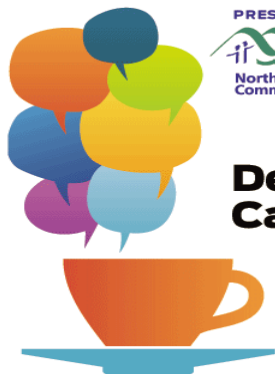
Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the experience of Democracy Café 2.0 – Electoral Reform we recommend:

- 1) The federal government provide funding for non-partisan, community based education programs for citizens regarding information about democracy and nurturing citizen participation in democracy (both voting and public policy conversations).
- 2) In designing future public consultations regarding electoral reform or if there is a decision to change Canada's electoral system, the federal government provide adequate funding for Canadians to learn about and understand their electoral system.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Murray Mollard, Executive Director
North Shore Community Resources
www.nscr.bc.ca



PRESENTED BY



Democracy Café 2.0

Electoral Reform.
Learn. Share. Participate.

EVENT PARTNERS:





Welcome & Introductions

Facilitators:

Murray Mollard, Megan Dias, Conrad King, Daniel Westlake

Why Democracy Café?

Why Focus on Electoral Reform?





Federal Government's "Guiding Principles"

- Restore the **effectiveness** and **legitimacy** of the voting by reducing distortions and strengthening the link between voter intention and the electoral result.
- Encourage greater **engagement** and participation in the democratic process, including inclusion of underrepresented groups.
- Support **accessibility** and **inclusiveness** to all eligible voters, and avoiding undue complexity in the voting process.
- Safeguarding the **integrity** of our voting process.
- Preserve the accountability of **local representation**.





Today's Objectives

1. Introduce Goals/Outcomes for Different Election Systems
2. Review 3 Main Types of Electoral Systems
 - First-Past-the-Post
 - Alternative Vote (Preferential Ballot)
 - Proportional Representation
3. Participate!



Individually:

- Consider these goals and rank the top 3 or 4 that are most important to you.





What do we want from our electoral system?

SIMPLICITY: The ballot is simple and easy to understand

STABILITY: The system produces stable and strong governments (majority vs. minority gov'ts)

LOCAL REPRESENTATION: The system allows you to directly elect MPs who represent your local community

PROPORTIONAL: The system ensures that a political party's seats are proportional to their voting support

RESPONSIBLE: The system makes it easy to get rid of governments that don't reflect voter preference





What do we want from our electoral system?

REPRESENTATIVE: The system ensures that more of voters' first preferences are reflected in Parliament

DIVERSITY: The system makes it easier to elect more women and people from diverse background to Parliament

BROAD-BASED APPEAL: The system encourages political parties to reach beyond their most loyal supporters and appeal to other party's voters

ACCESSIBLE: The system provides opportunities for independent candidates (not running for a political party) to be elected

REPRESENTATIVE PARTIES: The system favours the creation of a small number of large parties vs. the system allows for the creation of a larger number of medium sized and small parties.





First Past the Post

Introduction and Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7tWHJfhiyo&list=PLD6cLCymz8eSC3IMI-PPI_8jn7eVKtnev

Technical Questions?

Why change FPTP? Which goals does this system achieve and not achieve?





Alternative Vote / Preferential Ballot

Introduction and Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Y3jE3B8HsE&index=2&list=PLD6cLCymz8eSC3IMI-PPI_8jn7eVKtnev

Technical Questions?

What electoral system goals does AV provide? How does it compare to FPTP?





Proportional Representation

Introduction and Overview

Dennis Pilon Video on MMP:

<https://youtu.be/D3guVBhKmDc?t=45s>

Video on Single Transferable Vote:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8XOZJkoziI>

Discuss: How does MMP and STV compare to each other and to other systems?



Your View

What election system outcomes/goals are most important to you?

How do you compare the systems given possible outcomes and goals?

Do you have a preferred electoral system? Why?





Democratic Values

- SIMPLICITY
- STABILITY
- LOCAL REPRESENTATION
- PROPORTIONAL
- RESPONSIBLE

Democratic Values

- REPRESENTATIVE
- DIVERSITY
- BROAD-BASED APPEAL
- ACCESSIBLE
- REPRESENTATIVE PARTIES



Have Your Say

Share your views with our Government (see your materials package:

- Write a Submission and/or Participate in a Survey (by 9 am Friday, October 7)
- Email Minister Monsef
- Share your views with your local MPs:

Terry Beech, Jonathan Wilkinson, Pamela Goldsmith-Jones

- Contact Other Political Parties



□ Video Comparing the Results of Last Election:

□ <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/grenier-preferential-ballot-1.3332566>



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Community Resources

**Democracy
Café 2.0**

**Electoral Reform.
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EVENT PARTNERS:



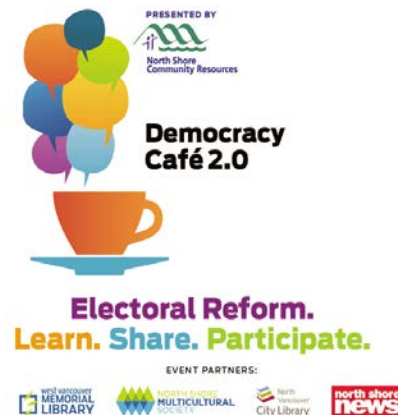
Wrap Up

Thanks to Facilitators!

Thanks to Event Partners!

Thanks to You for Participating!

**Please share your thoughts on
electoral reform with government**





Electoral Reform.
Learn. Share. Participate.

EVENT PARTNERS:



**Have Your Say: How to Share Your Views on Electoral Reform
with the Government of Canada and Other Political Parties**

1. Write a Submission and/or Participate in a Survey (by 9 am Friday, October 7, 2016):

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/Committees/en/ERRE/StudyActivity?studyActivityId=9013025>

2. Contact the Minister: The Honourable Maryam Monsef, Minister for Democratic Institutions

By Email: CDNdemocracy-democratieCDN@pco-bcp.gc.ca

By Mail:

Privy Council Office
General Enquiries
c/o Minister Monsef
Room 1000
85 Sparks Street
Ottawa, Canada K1A 0A3

3. Contact your local MPs:

Terry Beech, MP, North Burnaby-Seymour

House of Commons (no postage req'd)
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Terry.Beech@parl.gc.ca

3906 Hastings Street (Main Office)
Burnaby BC V5C 6C1

Jonathan Wilkinson, MP, North Vancouver

House of Commons (no postage req'd)
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

102 - 3rd Street West (Main Office)
North Vancouver BC V7M 1E8

Jonathan.Wilkinson@parl.gc.ca

Pamela Goldsmith-Jones, MP, West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky

House of Commons (no postage req'd)
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

6367 Bruce Street West (Main Office)
West Vancouver BC V7W 2B8

Pam.Goldsmith-Jones@parl.gc.ca

4. Contact Other Political Parties Critics

Scott Reid, MP, Conservative Critic for Democratic Institutions

House of Commons (no postage req'd)
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

224 Bridge Street (Main Office)
Carleton Place ON N7G 3J1

scott.reid@parl.gc.ca

Nathan Cullen, MP, NDP Critic for Democratic Reform

House of Commons (no postage req'd)
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Suite 100 - 3891 - 1st Avenue (Main Office)
Smithers BC V0J 2N0

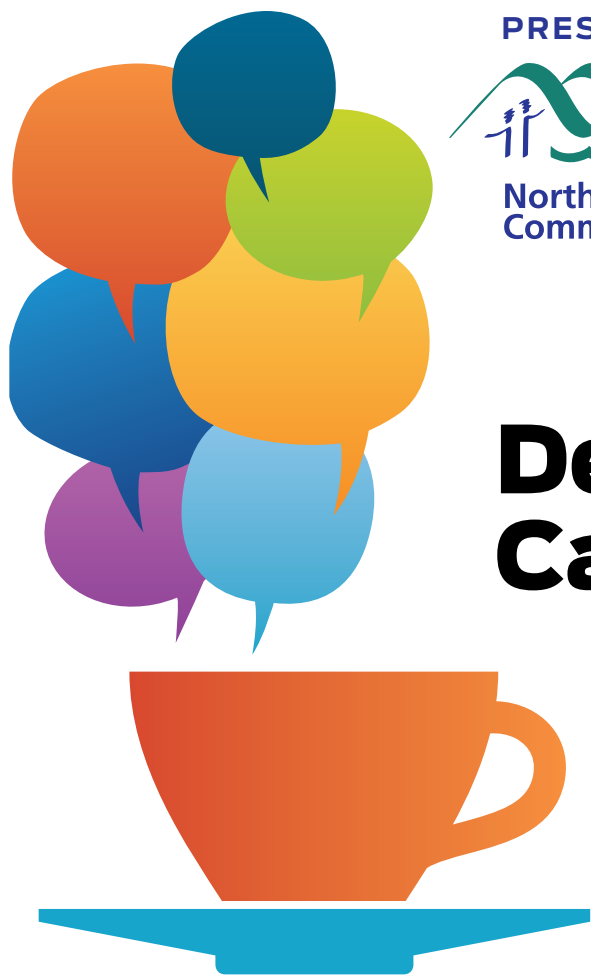
nathan.cullen@parl.gc.ca

Elizabeth May, MP, Leader of the Green Party of Canada

House of Commons (no postage req'd)
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Suite 1 - 3891 - 9711 Fourth Street (Main Office)
Sidney BC V8L 2Y8

Elizabeth.May@parl.gc.ca



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Democracy Café 2.0

Electoral Reform. Learn. Share. Participate.

The federal government has promised to change the way we elect our representatives in Ottawa. Join us for an interactive dialogue on the options for change.

Saturday, September 10 10:30am - 1:30pm

West Vancouver Memorial Library
1950 Marine Drive (light lunch)

Saturday, September 17 9:30am - 12:30pm

North Vancouver City Library
120 West 14th Street (refreshments)

Thursday, September 22 11:30am - 1:00pm

Capilano University
Library Room 321 (refreshments)

Pre-register by phone or visit www.nscr.bc.ca/nscr/democracy_cafe.html for a seat. Join the online conversation! #NSDemocracyCafe

***Because our election system is
too important to leave just to the politicians***

EVENT PARTNERS:

