

CHANDRA ARYA
NEPEAN

TOWN HALL REPORT
ON ELECTORAL REFORM
PUBLIC CONSULTATION



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

CHANDRA ARYA
NEPEAN

RAPPORT SUR LES CONSULTATIONS
PUBLIQUES SUR LA RÉFORME
ÉLECTORALE

CONSULTATION(S)			
Date(s) of the Meeting(s)	Time and Length (start time and end time)	Location of Consultation	Total Number of People in Attendance (you may indicate the number of volunteers and employees who assisted with the meeting)
1. 19/08/16	17:00-19:00	225 McClellan Rd, Nepean, ON K2H 8N5	175
2.			
3.			
4.			
Form: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use of the Library of Parliament's visual presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation from the MP's office <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open microphone <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Question and answer session <input type="checkbox"/> Guest speaker <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):			
SUBJECTS DISCUSSED (summary)			
Voting systems: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Replacement of the current voting system: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Voter turnout: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Accessibility and inclusiveness: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mandatory voting: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Online voting: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Local representation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify and describe below) <input type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
<p>What did participants say about the current system for electing Members of Parliament (benefits/flaws)? Did participants feel that their votes are fairly translated? (suggested limit: 500 words)</p> <p>There was a general consensus that our current system of First Past the Post is a flawed system and that some form of electoral change needs to take place. First Past the Post was characterized as an imbalanced and unfair electoral system. The number of votes a party receives in totality does not accurately reflect the representation within the house. Additionally, First Past the Post does not work in a multi-party system and candidates will repeatedly get elected with less than 50% of the vote.</p> <p>However the consensus was not all unanimous. There were individuals that while not particularly satisfied with our current system, believed it were still preferable to the alternatives systems</p>

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Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)
131, rue Queen Street, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
Tel./tél.: 613-992-3150 Fax/télécopieur: 613-947-3089 ERRE@parl.gc.ca

Deadline: Friday, October 14, 2016

proposed. While there are some obvious flaws within our current system, several constituents felt that an alternative electoral system would bring with it its own assortment of challenges.

Which alternatives to the current system were discussed? Did participants identify specific features that are important to them in an electoral system (for example local representation, proportionality, simplicity, legitimacy etc.)? (suggested limit: 500 words)

The alternative systems proposed by the Library of Parliament were presented to the attendees during this meeting.

The Alternative Vote system, as used in Australia, was first presented. Some constituents felt that an Alternative Vote system would increase voter turnout as more less votes would be wasted. Alternative vote would also produce a candidate with a majority of the electorate voting for them.

The Single Transferable Vote was discussed. Some constituents felt that the results of the voting system results in a much more accurate representation of the voters intention. However there were concerns of its more complicated voting requirements as well as how the winner(s) are determined. Some constituents felt that the possibility of having multiple MP's per riding could be beneficial, in particular those from different parties, allowing constituents to visit their preferred Member. However it was noted that MP's serve all of their constituents equally regardless of party affiliation.

Proportional Representation in one form or another was the most frequently talked about in regards to being a preferred method for constituents. Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) was the most commonly supported proportional electoral system addressed by constituents. MMP was categorized as a good way to address the concerns in the current system. Constituents would still have local direct representation through their local MP, however, the House would also be representative of the votes cast by Canadians through the "Top-Up M.P's."

There were concerns about how the potential party list would be created. Some constituents preferred an open list where they would vote for all candidates across the country on election day; others preferred a closed list in order to keep voting simple. However that the list would need to be scrutinized. Discussion of the proliferation of small single issue parties was also addressed. While no there was no concrete solution generated, it was generally agreed upon that the threshold would have to be high enough to not allow those parties to be awarded seats, but not too high as to exclude legitimate parties.

The Straight Proportional Representation was also discussed. The concern was that no direct representation would be troublesome for constituents who are seeking assistance. MP's chosen to represent constituents would not be directly accountable to those in their riding. Rather, they would be accountable to the party which chose their rank on the party list.

Did participants discuss why they feel many Canadians choose not to engage in the democratic process? Did they suggest ways to encourage participation? (suggested limit: 500 words)

Education was a recurring theme in regards to encouraging voter participation in the democratic process. Many constituents felt that a lack of understanding of the electoral process was a contributory factor in low-voter turnout.

In addition, there was a perception that the reason why many voters may not choose to participate is a result of their reasoning that their vote is not worth much. Changing the electoral system may assist in reducing voter apathy and encourage more voter turnout.

Did participants feel that it should it be mandatory to cast a ballot? (Can include spoiling a

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ballot.) (suggested limit: 500 words)

Mandatory voting was a split issue at the town hall. Some constituents feel voting should be mandatory for all eligible Canadians, and that this should be enforced. This could be completed either by imposing a penalty for not voting, or providing a tax benefit in return for voting. As enfranchisement for all has long been fought for, it should be used by all those who are eligible to vote.

Others, rather that mandatory voting is not necessary. That in a free and democratic society the government should not encroach on the right to cast a ballot. That a person chooses not to participate they have made their voice clear that they are not satisfied with the current system or current crop of candidates. If forcing people to vote against their wishes does not further the spirit of engaging all to be involved in the political process. Rather than many individuals will be making uninformed decisions out of necessity.

Did participants discuss online voting? Did they express a desire to maintain current voting practices? (i.e. presenting themselves at a polling station, vote secrecy etc.) (suggested limit: 500 words)

The possibility of using an online voting system had mixed opinions at the town hall meeting. Some constituents believed it was the future of voting, and if there were to be increased voter participation (in particular for younger voters) we must pursue online voting.

There were concerns over the security and privacy of online voting. The technology may not be mature enough yet to ensure that votes are recorded and tabulated accurately without errors. The secrecy of the ballot was also a concern. Where everything that a person does on the internet can be tracked, voter secrecy becomes a real concern.

Were any other major topics raised by the participants? (i.e. referendum, women/minority representation, accessibility, voter turnout etc.) (suggested limit: 500 words)

The issue of educating the electorate became a recurring theme. Whether in the current system or another, voter education of politics as a whole should be made a priority the ensure voters are making a well informed decision.

The need for a referendum on electoral reform also came up as a concern. Some constituents felt that a decision this important should be put to the electorate as a whole. Others felt that as it was a major platform of the Liberal's in the 2015 election there is already support shown for a change in the electoral system.

SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS (suggested limit: 1000 words)

There was certainly no consensus on which if any electoral system should be chosen over our current electoral system. While most constituents present at the town hall agreed that there are issues with the first past the post system, who should replace it became far less concrete.

The primary feedback received from constituents was on their opinions of which electoral system they preferred to replace the current First Past The Post. The most popular choice was a the Mixed

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Member Proportional system. The simplicity of the voting procedure is similar to our current version under First Past The Post, while correcting the imbalance between the number of elected officials and the popular vote was presented as a viable option. The issue as to the accountability of party list MP's was brought up as a concern.

Single Transferable Vote was less popular but still garnered support from many constituents. Allowing votes to be transferred to second and third preference choices would mean all votes would be allocated to winning candidates. The more complicated voting procedures and the determination of a threshold of votes needed to win was not well received.

Alternative vote was not mentioned much by constituents, however it remained the preference for a few attendees. The ranked ballot would allow for the winner to receive a majority of the votes of his electorate when elected.

Education on politics/policies/elections etc was a common theme as a way to encourage people to vote. Currently, may feel as though their vote is not worth much, however if they are made aware of the impact voting makes, an increase in voter turnout may occur.

There was a mixed opinion in regards to mandatory voting. While some feel that practicing ones enfranchisement should be mandatory, others feel that in a free country you can choose to not cast a ballot to voice your displeasure with the current system.

Report submitted to Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)

Date: Oct 14, 2016

MP's signature:



(Name): Chandra Arya

Reports must be submitted to the Clerks of the Committee no later than Friday, October 14, 2016 in both official languages.

Please note that this document is for illustrative purposes only and can be modified or adapted to your needs. The report will be published on the Committee's web site.

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