

**TERRY BEECH
BURNABY NORTH-SEYMOUR**

**TOWN HALL REPORT
ON ELECTORAL REFORM
PUBLIC CONSULTATION**



**HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA**

**TERRY BEECH
BURNABY NORTH-SEYMOUR**

**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. Oct 13, 2016	6:30pm – 8:30pm	Brentwood Presbyterian Church – 1600 Delta St, Burnaby	Constituents – 21 Speakers – 2 Staff/Volunteers/MP - 6
2.			
3.			
4.			
Form: <input type="checkbox"/> Use of the Library of Parliament’s visual presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation from the MP’s office <input type="checkbox"/> Open microphone <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Question and answer session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Guest speaker <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): Guest speaker’s presentation			
SUBJECTS DISCUSSED (summary)			
Voting systems: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Replacement of the current voting system: <input type="checkbox"/>	Voter turnout: <input type="checkbox"/>	Accessibility and inclusiveness: <input type="checkbox"/>
Mandatory voting: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Online voting: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Local representation: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Other (please specify and describe below) <input type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
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)
Current system - FLAWS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most participants believe the current system is unfair, and are not in favor of it. - The current system creates artificial majorities – for example, a party with 40% of the vote gets to impose their will on 100% of the electorate. - Some participants believe that the current system is not useful because many people are excluded. Current system – BENEFITS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One participant noted that the current system is simple and easy to understand. - One participant noted that while the current system isn’t working, some form of democracy is better than none.

Please return to:

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

Deadline: Friday, October 14, 2016

Current system – If votes are being fairly translated

- Most participants felt that the votes are not fairly translated and that many people do not get a representative that speaks on their behalf.
- Several participants noted that there should be a correlation between votes and seats in Parliament

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)

Which alternatives to the current system were discussed: Alternate Vote, STV, MMP

- Most participants prefer MMP or STV to FPTP and believe that proportional representation is the most important priority. If this is achieved, then that would remove strategic voting.
- Participants who do not have a preference yet for a new system agree that proportional representation is the most important priority.
- Other issues mentioned include: citizen rather than party control is important, open lists are preferred.

Specific features that are important :

- Proportionality – Parliament should be a fair representation of the electorate both in the overall seat percentage for each party and in regional distribution
- Local Representation – constituents like knowing their local MLA/MP
- Simplicity
- Voter equality
- Legitimacy is achieved when a system is proportional, there's local representation, and its simple
- Removing need for strategic voting

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)

Why people chose not to engage:

- People do not feel well represented and subsequently believe that their vote does not matter.
- The government has not tried to involve people with the process, other than voting and the politics of elections. The parties running for office should focus on honest discussions of issues + ideology.
- The choices provided on a ballot are too simple and require strategic voting to have an impact.
- Not everyone is interested in politics and/or believes in the importance of voting.
- People may have insufficient knowledge of the voting process, and hence are not motivated to vote.
- Polarization is a big turnoff
- People do not see the direct impacts or changes that voting has on improving their quality of life.

Suggestions on how to encourage participation:

- The majority of participants suggested that education was key to encouraging people to vote. Examples included having educational sessions available in the workplace, at community centres or on national programming. Townhalls or roundtables were also an option provided.
- The majority of participants feel strongly that youth involvement is essential: going to schools to talk to students about voting, encouraging political (non-partisan) clubs in schools and listening to young voters and acknowledging their concerns.
- Participants also suggested lowering the voting age to 16 or 17 years of age.
- Some participants said that if there was an electoral system in place that allowed for proportional representation that would be an incentive in itself to encourage people to vote.

Please return to:

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

Did participants feel that it should be mandatory to cast a ballot? (Can include spoiling a ballot.) (suggested limit: 500 words)

Feedback from participants who were against mandatory voting:

- If mandatory voting was enforced, people would have their freedom of rights (freedom to vote or not) taken away from them.
- Forcing people to vote who don't want to would not be valuable
- There should be an option to spoil the ballot
- If the electoral system was changed to be more proportional, many people believed that mandatory voting wouldn't be necessary and people would want to vote.

Feedback from participants who would like to see mandatory voting:

- Most participants who said yes to mandatory voting advised that it was conditional – some of these conditions included an option to spoil the ballot, exempting those with accessibility issues (e.g., seniors), or if it allowed flexibility for people who could not physically get to the polls.
- Some participants said that while they were open to the idea of mandatory voting, it wasn't a priority to them.
- One participant advised that they would be in favor of mandatory voting as it would save parties the trouble of identifying voters and getting them to the polling station

Feedback from participants who were neutral or undecided about mandatory voting:

- Mandatory voting was not a priority in general.
- Mandatory voting was not a priority until proportional representation is in place.
- The system appears to have worked in other countries (for example, Australia).

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)

Feedback from participants who would not be in favor of online voting:

- The majority of participants who are not in favor of online voting said that they do not think the process could ever be 100% secure (the system could be susceptible to hackers, etc). Paper ballots ensure that results are transparent and can be audited in case of tampering.
- Participants who were not in favor noted that the only exception or reason for online voting would be that people who had difficulty getting to a physical polling location would have more options.

Feedback from participants who are in favor of online voting:

- Online voting should be added as an option, but current practices should still be maintained.
- Convenience and accessibility would provide more incentive for people to vote.
- Support for online voting is conditional on the system being completely secure.
- Online voting is a good option but is not a priority.

Feedback from participants who are undecided or neutral about online voting:

- Some participants are neutral to the idea of having online voting and said there is room for both online voting and physical voting.
- Some participants liked the community aspect of going to a physical polling station to vote and prefer that system.

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

Other feedback provided by participants included:

- If there is no referendum, how would the results be enforced.
- MPs should be less partisan – they should be able to vote in the House based on what their constituents want, not what their party wants.

Please return to:

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

- It is not fair that votes in swing ridings are more important than votes in safe ridings.
- It has been shown that voter turnout is generally higher in countries that have proportional representation. The more voters that turn out, the more voices that are heard from real Canadians.
- Voters who did not vote in previous elections chose to vote in the 2015 election because there was talk about changing the current system.
- Countries that have proportional voting in place are more likely to have more females and visible minorities in legislature. This is important as it makes the MP more relatable.

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

The overall consensus is that the current system is not fair, and that a new electoral system needs to be implemented. There is a fairly equal split between participants who like MMP and STV, but many agreed that a proportional system is very important. Participants all agreed that they wanted their votes to count, and that strategic voting should not be necessary.

Most participants want to see more educational programs in place, where the government actively engages the public in helping to make informed decisions in terms of what system would work best for Canadians. With proper education on the voting system—and on the importance of voting—people will be more motivated to vote.

Most participants also believe that youth engagement is crucial. The government needs to focus on youth outreach to educate Canadians at a younger age, so that they are more likely to be involved and interested in politics.

Report submitted to Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)

Date: October 14

MP's signature:



Terry Beech

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.

Please return to:

**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