

YVES ROBILLARD
(MARC-AURÈLE-FORTIN)
FAYÇAL EL-KHOURY
(LAVAL-LES-ÎLES)
ANGELO IACONO
(ALFRED-PELLAN)



HOUSE OF COMMONS
 CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
 CANADA

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TOWN HALL REPORT
ON ELECTORAL REFORM
PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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)
Sept. 13, 2016	7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.	Centre du sablon, Laval	~40 people
Form: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use of the Library of Parliament's visual presentation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Presentation from the MP's office <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open microphone <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Question and answer session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Guest speaker: Francis Scarpaleggia, MP for Lac-Saint-Louis, Chair of the Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)			
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: Voting age Referendum

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>Despite the several dozen residents in attendance, few statements were made, though they were all good ones. Many supported the current system (FPTP), but an equal number rejected it. Some condemned the current system for creating a “democratic deficit” and discouraging people from voting, as their votes are wasted if they intend to vote for a third party.</p> <p>People like FPTP because it produces stable majority governments. All the other systems foster extremist parties that lead to endless negotiations and compromises. The Italian example (a proportional system) was cited; it has had 62 governments since 1945. Greece was another example mentioned.</p> <p>People also argued that the current system works well overall because the MP elected with a</p>

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Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)
 131, rue Queen Street, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
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Deadline: Friday, October 14, 2016

plurality of the vote also represents every constituent in the riding. They said that the elected government, even if it does not win an absolute majority of the vote, reflects the political trend seen in society. As evidence, it was noted that society implicitly accepts the legitimacy of a government elected with a plurality of the vote. Some also said that a government elected under the current system is a responsible government: it cannot enact unfair laws even if it has most of the seats in Parliament. For example, despite its majority in the House, Stephen Harper's Conservative government was unable to pass laws to restrict abortion or restore the death penalty.

People lamented that the government (the executive) also holds legislative power under the current system. MPs (Parliament) should be the only ones to enact laws.

People also emphasized that FPTP does not reflect the will of the majority of voters, penalizes third parties, excludes certain categories of people and discourages citizen involvement.

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)

Two alternatives were discussed: the mixed member proportional (MMP) system and the alternative vote.

Two citizens and the Table de concertation de Laval en condition féminine [Laval women's round table] (see brief in appendix) supported MMP.

The statements supporting the MMP system did not refer to its specific features, and the discussion about the alternative vote came to an end because it is "too complicated."

People argued that MMP offers voters two MPs who could compete. However, people feared that the number of MPs could increase under MMP, costing taxpayers money. They suggested maintaining the number of MPs at its current level, even if the system is made more proportional. People stressed that MPs elected under the proportional component of the system should have different responsibilities from those elected by all voters. Concerns were raised about the lack of a geographical link between MPs elected proportionally and voters.

Despite being invited to do so, no one discussed the specifics of the new voting systems. At most, people said that candidates in an MMP system should obtain at least 50% +1 of the vote.

One citizen said he did not support online voting because voters should be required to go out and perform this important duty. Another mentioned that youth aged 16 and under should not vote. "We have to be consistent. Youth cannot buy alcohol or tobacco before age 18 because they are not mature or responsible enough to do so. Having the right to vote at 16 would be inconsistent with that." In any case, added someone else, "they are no more likely to participate; at that age, they are not interested in politics."

People also suggested having all voters elect the prime minister separately, to make that position more legitimate. Likewise, it was proposed that Cabinet be appointed in order to fully separate the legislative power from the executive power, leaving to MPs the role of passing legislation.

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)

The participants said that voter turnout depends on the issues. In addition, voter turnout is low because people feel that their votes are wasted. One citizen supported online voting, voting by mail or voting at the polling station as soon as the election is called. One person said that voters should not be required to vote.

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Did participants feel that it should be mandatory to cast a ballot? (Can include spoiling a ballot.) (suggested limit: 500 words)	
The Laval women's round table and one citizen recommended mandatory voting. Another citizen argued against it. The Laval women's round table representative expressed support for all possible measures to increase voter turnout, "including binding measures."	
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)	
One citizen spoke in favour of having voters present themselves at polling stations (against online voting). Another supported online voting. Current voting practices were not discussed.	
Were any other major topics raised by the participants? (i.e. referendum, women/minority representation, accessibility, voter turnout etc.) (suggested limit: 500 words)	
Read the brief submitted by the Laval women's round table, which is enclosed. One citizen said he did not support a referendum on reform. He even suggested implementing MMP, testing it at least twice in real elections and then, if need be, holding a referendum to confirm the change of voting system. If a referendum were to be held, a simple majority (50% +1) would be enough to change the voting system.	
SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS (suggested limit: 1000 words)	
Not many people spoke at the town hall, and it was impossible to say whether those in attendance were mostly for or against reform. Those who did speak were also equally divided between the status quo and reform. The attendees may have had a rudimentary knowledge of the other voting systems, so they may have come to the consultation session more to listen and learn more about alternative systems than to express their views. The people who support reform favoured MMP and nothing else. The other voting systems were explained, but did not appear to satisfy anyone. The reformers would like to go straight to MMP without a referendum. The people who support the status quo fear the emergence of extremist third parties. The status quo supporters suggested that all voters elect the prime minister directly. The Laval women's round table called for binding measures to encourage voter turnout and the election of women.	
Report submitted to Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)	Date: 28/09/2016
MP's signature: [signed]	Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin) Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval-les-Îles) Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan)

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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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