

NEIL R. ELLIS, MP
BAY OF QUINTE

TOWN HALL REPORT
ON ELECTORAL REFORM
PUBLIC CONSULTATION



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

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)
September 25	11:00am-12:30pm	Belleville, ON	60
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 <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>1. 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>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current system is easily understood • You know who you are dealing with when your MP is elected • Some of the best governments are minorities • Opportunity to get rid of a government that is ineffective or makes unpopular choices – but most often, only at the end of four years • System is straight forward • Efficient- results are known in hours • Comfortable – especially for seasoned voters • Moves Canada forward especially with majority – decisions get made <p>Flaws:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results do not represent the overall voting pattern of Canadians • First past the post is not representative of Canada as a whole • False name – there is no post unless you count 50% of the vote and there is no first pass the post as most candidates win with less than 50% of the vote. Because we have a multi-party system, it is rare that one party gets more than 50% of the vote

- MP does not always reflect the views of the voting member – might not have voted for that MP or party
- Does not always fairly reflect the current government (ie. If you were in the minority)
- Some of the best governments are minorities
- Problems with the First Past the Post system:
 - Wasted votes/lack of representation
 - Impact of depends on voter location
 - Negative voting/distorted election results
 - False majority governments/adversarial politics
 - Campaign priorities focus on a few swing votes in a few swing ridings
 - Safe seat ridings receive little attention
 - Suppression of dissent and minority views
 - Fewer women and ethnic minorities in politics
 - Loss of public confidence and lower voter turnout
 - Party that gains power can have absolute power without the support of a majority of voters
 - The party with a majority government has little incentive to work with our parties toward a consensus
- Anachronistic – most European countries have rid themselves of FPTP long ago
- May waste about half of votes cast
- Encourages voter apathy
- Does not represent gender and minority diversity in Canada

2. 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)

- Most important are local representation and simplicity
- Single transferable vote changes the voting system, but not does not change the layout of the house of commons
- Should continue how it is now with one MP per riding
- Proportional representation would be a good alternative system
- To get people to vote it must be simple and quick, and staff must be well trained so that problems can be fixed quickly
- There should be a system implemented that gives each party representation close to their proportion of the proper vote
- Proportional representation should be used - where 30% of the vote should equal 30% of the seats
- Every voter should be able to elect an MP who reflects his/her needs
- Parliament should reflect our diversity, including the political diversity within each region
- Proportional representation means parties working together, and policies supported by parties representing a majority of voters
- The first-past-the-post voting method does not give a fair representation of the wishes of the country
- A better system would be something more democratic
- Preference would be STV:
 - Minority viewpoints are represented
 - Maximizes number of voters who get their choice
 - Fewer votes “wasted”
 - Increased voter interest
 - Encourages parties to put forth a more diverse slate of candidates
 - Candidate stands on his/her own merit
- Important features of whichever system is chosen: Simplicity for voters, proportionality, local representation, can best of each be blended to make one system?
- Need to have more voter participation – majority of people in attendance at this town hall

Please return to:

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

Deadline: Friday, October 14, 2016

<p>are of the same age/generation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue with the fact that 39% of the vote achieved by the liberal party gave them 100% of power
<p>3. 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)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many people believe their vote does not count – the system has to change so as to change these voters’ minds • People don’t think their vote is important • Many sense they do not have a real chance in affecting the outcome of the vote • Many are cynical about politicians who make promises and do not keep them • Others feel more people are interested in what they can get out of the system than in trying to make the system better for more people • People feel there is no choice under the current system but merely choose to vote for the lesser evil • People don’t feel connected to their local member – whether federal, provincial or municipal <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting early and teaching children in school about the voting systems and importance of voting would change this • MPs should go into public schools and high schools to inform students • Students should be encouraged to do their community service hours for legitimate political parties • Hosting more Town Halls so that people can see and hear their politicians, not just in the media or the campaign period • Make sure to identify which media sources do a good job of getting the issues out to the public and making sure everyone is kept well informed
<p>4. Did participants feel that it should it be mandatory to cast a ballot? (Can include spoiling a ballot.) (suggested limit: 500 words)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People do not like being forced, this might put them off the political process all together • When a person reaches the age of majority they should be automatically added to the voters list. Failure to vote should result in a monetary fine. • People should not be forced to make a simplistic choice when they neither care nor understand what that choice means • Questions around whether or not mandatory voting would be fair – everyone is required to do the census for Statistics Canada, voting could be the same • Issues around if mandatory voting is put in place, will it flaw the outcome of the election if people are voting because it is mandatory but are not educated on each party’s or MPs stance • Mandatory voting could work if there was an option for “none of the above” • People should be encouraged to vote but not forced. Compulsory voting is inherently anti-democratic • Mandatory voting can lead to too many random, uninformed votes • Spoiled ballots may signify that voters are not content about something and that should be explored
<p>5. 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)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online voting should be allowed, especially if it helps to increase the vote, which most

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believe it will

- Online voting should be allowed but must ensure that older individuals that are not able to do it online still have access
- The present voting system of being physically present to receive and mark a ballot is harder to corrupt than other systems such as online voting
- Online voting will increase participation
- Concern about security issues, voter identification, collection of data and reporting
- Electronic ballot must be maintained
- Accessibility would be an issue with online voting – must be aware of each individuals needs and skills
- Some are concerned with votes being exposed to hacking if done online
- Canadians should be able to vote online at all levels – not just municipal
- Current practices would have to be available for those who do not have access to or knowledge about technology

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

- Choice of voting system should not be made using a referendum

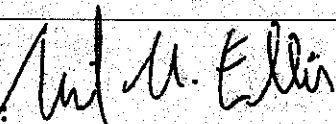
SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS (suggested limit: 1000 words)

- Democracy in Canada has been declining for decades. The voting system is only a symptom of the decline. Making 'every vote count' can be achieved without changing the voting system
- There is a need for electoral reform, no referendum is necessary. The liberal government promised electoral reform and should move forward in a timely manner
- An excellent computer program is needed to facilitate the vote transfer procedure but these exist now
- Education will be required when the system is put in place to avoid too many ballots spoiled by lack of knowledge
- Modern society is too diverse and complicated to be handled by a 2-party system
- It is time to modernize, we are one of 5 countries remaining that still use first past the post system
- People want to see less adversarial and more cooperative behaviour in the House
- It is time for Canada to switch over to a proportional system
- Should count and report spoiled/mismarked ballots as well as actual votes
- A marked paper ballot is more than just a ballot, it is also a permanent record

Report submitted to Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)

Date: Oct 13/16

MP's signature:



(Name)

Neil R. Ellis

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

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