

HON. JUDY M. FOOTE
BONAVISTA-BURIN-TRINITY

TOWN HALL REPORT
ON ELECTORAL REFORM
PUBLIC CONSULTATION



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

HON. JUDY M. FOOTE
BONAVISTA-BURIN-TRINITY

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. Sept 15/16	3:30 – 5:00	Fire Hall South Dildo, NL	12
2.			
3.			
4.			
Form: * Use of the Library of Parliament's visual presentation * Presentation from the MP's office <input type="checkbox"/> Open microphone * Question and answer session <input type="checkbox"/> Guest speaker <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):			
SUBJECTS DISCUSSED (summary)			
Voting systems: *	Replacement of the current voting system: *	Voter turnout:*	Accessibility and inclusiveness: *
Mandatory voting: *	Online voting: *	Local representation: *	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>The participants expressed a mostly positive opinion on the current system for electing Members of Parliament. The benefits include: the voting process is a simple one and secures the privacy of the voter.</p> <p>Some of the flaws referenced: the current system does not reflect the total principle of majority rules; it is an expensive process (such as Elections Canada costs); it limits opportunity for coalitions as seen in Scandinavian and European countries; and voters do not appear to be mentored on the electoral process.</p> <p>Participants shared a view that being able to vote on an issue versus for a candidate might be valuable (plebiscite).</p> <p>Participants discussed the value of discussions with friends, family and co-workers about the effect their vote actually has and if staying away from voting could essentially help their intent or</p>

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

hurt it.

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)

Participants did identify with specific features:

1. Proportionality – participants believe that when voters understand what features are within an electoral system, they would support it. Some wondered how quickly though changes can happen?
2. Legitimacy – Discussion reflected that the process must be transparent. Whatever voting system is used it must be simple for the voter and reflect legitimacy. People will not support a process that is not legitimate.
3. Effectiveness / Simplicity – the participants discussed these features as being extremely important. The electoral system must benefit the voter and not the politician. Participants suggested the choice of what voting process is used should not be decided on by politicians.
4. Inclusiveness – participants believe that all voting must be inclusive to all citizens and measures taken to ensure an ease of voting for all (i.e. disabled population).

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)

Discussions did occur around why Canadians chose not to engage in the democratic process. Participants feel that people's opinions of politics in general severely impact this process and suggested many ways to help engage participants:

1. For the electoral system to be most effective people should be involved in more than casting a vote. The challenge is to find ways for people to be more engaged and contribute in the entire political process (i.e., volunteering in the political process). More engagement will lead to a better democratic system in its entirety.
2. In general, many citizens have lost faith in politics and politicians; this leads to disengagement. The political process should be introduced to youth at an earlier level. Many believe starting this at the elementary level will help Canadians understand the entire political system, including elections, which in turn fosters interest. For example, hosting mock elections in our schools. Some participants believe this should be a mandatory civics course.
3. Mandatory voting – some believed this would help increase participation numbers. This was not unanimous.
4. Subject matter – discussions arose regarding having emphasis placed on issues and policies, rather than parties and how this can assist in better engagement.
5. On electionday many people do not attend because of work commitments, appointments, travel, etc. Advance polling works to increase participation and should be well advertised.

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

The subject of mandatory voting was discussed during the town hall. Views were not unanimous on mandatory voting. Mandatory voting was compared to current mandatory processes which currently exist within our society such as income tax, census, etc. Some participants thought the concept of "mandatory" and "democracy" used in reference to voting could be contradictory. The concept of mandatory should be studied using examples in other countries. This example could be costly an initiative to begin. Therefore, it would be wise to look at other voting options

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that will encourage more participation first and study effectiveness of that. If this does not increase participation then mandatory voting should be considered. An important note of mandatory voting was if someone is forced to do something, does it really give a true sense of their intent?

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)

On-line voting was discussed as a viable option. Some participants countered that it would limit participation of some if this was an only option. Not all Canadians have a computer, access to the internet or want access to a computer.

The issue of privacy and safety of information with on-line voting was discussed. Participants also mentioned how Canadians do other things on line with personal information such as banking, conferencing, shopping, travel, etc., so voting online might be a welcome concept.

If on-line voting were made easy, simple, and secure, the majority of participants felt it would work but only as an option. Some voters will prefer a polling station and the privacy they feel is afforded in a polling station.

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

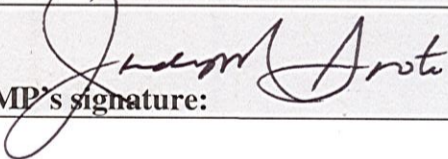
The topic of modernizing and providing a different method of voting should actually help increase participation and engagement of citizens including, new Canadian and young Canadians. The voting system must be fully accessible to all eligible Canadians. This is of the utmost importance. All Canadians including the elderly, disadvantaged and disabled population (mentally or physically) need an easy process to ensure their intent is heard.

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

This session was engaging with informative discussions. One recommendation coming from this discussions was that Canadians and participants of these town halls would benefit from having the Town Hall results available for review as a collective of the opinions and suggestions of those who participated. This could be through a follow-up Town Hall, online or in print.

Report submitted to Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)

Date: October 5, 2016

MP's signature: 

Hon. Judy M. Foote
(Name)

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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