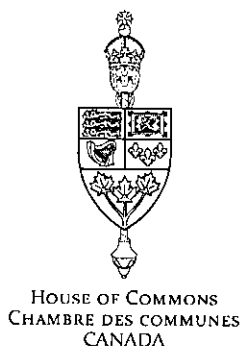


COLIN FRASER  
WEST NOVA

TOWN HALL REPORT  
ON ELECTORAL REFORM  
PUBLIC CONSULTATION



COLIN FRASER  
NOVA-OUEST

RAPPORT SUR LES CONSULTATIONS  
PUBLIQUES SUR LA RÉFORME  
ÉLECTORALE

CONSULTATION(S)			
Date of the Meeting	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 6, 2016	6:30 – 8:30 p.m.	Yarmouth Lions Club, 87 Parade Street, Yarmouth, Nova Scotia	25
<b>Form:</b> <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><b>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)</b></p> <p>Generally, participants were evenly divided when discussing the current system for electing Members of Parliaments. On the one hand, some participants felt that the current system is what Canadians know best and are comfortable with, all while recognizing that the current system does not accurately reflect the outcome of an election when multiple parties are on the ballot. On the other hand, some participants did not feel that their votes were fairly translated as the current system results in an underrepresentation of smaller political parties in the House of Commons.</p> <p>Despite divergences in some of the views expressed by participants during the discussion, there was a general consensus that voters should have the ability to vote for their preferred candidate and party, and not feel as if they are wasting their vote.</p>

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](mailto:ERRE@parl.gc.ca)

Deadline: Friday, October 14, 2016

**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)**

All alternatives to the current system that were included in the Library of Parliament's presentation deck were discussed during the town hall meeting (i.e. alternative vote, list proportional representation, mixed member proportional and single transferable vote).

After discussion of the various methods being proposed, it became very clear that local representation and legitimacy of Members of Parliament mattered most to meeting participants. The vast majority of those in attendance felt that it was very important for their community to have a local Member of Parliament representing their area. The attachment to an identifiable person representing a specific geographical area and its residents, and to someone who knows the area and its people, was considered of very high value and should be maintained should an alternate voting system to the current one be chosen.

In discussing the mixed member proportional voting system, many participants, while in favour of the intention of the idea, feared that Members of Parliament with expanded riding boundaries would have a territory too large to reasonably represent them well. Some participants also highlighted that there could be financial costs associated with the geographical expansion of ridings, as Members of Parliament would require a larger budget to provide additional staffing resources and for additional offices to adequately cover the territory.

Additionally, having the possibility of two types of Members of Parliaments, some having been elected in a riding and others having been chosen off a list, gave concern to the idea that some Members of Parliament may be more legitimate than others.

There was general consensus in the room that the alternative vote system with the same ridings as we have now was the preferred voting method, as it resolves some of the inherent issues raised with the current first-past-the-vote system, all while remaining fairly simple for voters to understand.

At the meeting, proponents of proportional systems recognized the educational efforts that would be required should our voting system become proportional and the risks of nothing having buy-in from a large majority of Canadian voters, indicating that the alternative vote system would be an improvement over the current first-past-the-post system. It should be noted that one person in the group preferred a strict proportional representation system with no ridings (only provincial boundaries would apply), and a couple felt that a mixed member proportional system with larger ridings would work.

**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)**

There was only a very brief discussion during the town hall meetings regarding voter turnout and ways to encourage participation by more Canadians in the electoral process.

Public education programs such as the work previously done by Elections Canada and the need for additional resources to support this excellent work were noted by participants. Participants also suggested that finding ways to make polling stations more accessible, including increasing the number of advanced poll sites, were cited as ways to encourage a higher voter turnout.

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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)**

There was consensus in the room that compulsory voting was not seen as necessary. While compulsory voting may have the benefit of increasing voter turnout, it may also exacerbate negativity towards democratic practices and government in general within apathetic citizens or individuals disinterested with politics and governments by forcing their engagement with these institutions.

If compulsory voting is retained as an option for Canada, at the very least, participants indicated that a "none of the above" choice should be included on the ballot.

**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)**

Town hall participants expressed a desire to maintain current voting practices, as they felt that electronic methods of voting were not yet proven enough to gain their trust during a federal election. Comments about the integrity of the process being susceptible to hacking were raised. Some participants also cited their negative experiences locally with electronic voting during municipal elections as not being worth the risk, with individuals having forcefully persuaded other individuals to vote for a certain candidate or having used other people's personal identification number to cast multiple ballots for the same candidate.

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

N/A

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

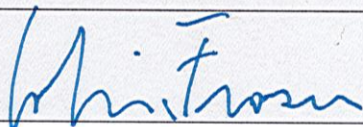
To summarize, the views of the majority of participants attending the town hall meeting were that:

- Voters should have the ability to vote for their preferred candidate and party, and not feel as if they are wasting their vote.
- Of all the alternatives to the first-past-the-post system, the alternate vote was the preferred option while maintaining current ridings.
- In any future voting system, voters must be able to identify with a local Member of Parliament, and that Member of Parliament should not have an excessively large geographical territory to represent.
- Public education programs remain an important tool to allow citizens to better understand our democratic processes and institutions.
- Mandatory and online voting should not be presented as options for Canada's electoral system.

Report submitted to Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)

Date: October 14, 2016

MP's signature:



(Name)

Colin Fraser

**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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