

LINDA LAPOINTE, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
FOR
RIVIÈRE-DES-MILLES-ÎLES
&
RAMEZ AYOUB, MEMBER OF
PARLIAMENT FOR THÉRÈSE-DE-BLAINVILLE



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

LINDA LAPOINTE, DÉPUTÉE DE
RIVIÈRE-DES-MILLES-ÎLES
ET
RAMEZ AYOUB, DÉPUTÉ DE
THÉRÈSE-DE-BLAINVILLE

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. 24, 2016	9 a.m. to noon	St. Eustache, QC	30 participants and approximately 20 written responses following the September mass mailing (Rivières-des-Milles-Îles)
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 type="checkbox"/> Open microphone <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Question and answer session <input type="checkbox"/> Guest speaker <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): Round tables with 10 participants hosted by a political attaché			
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 type="checkbox"/>	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>From the outset, participants were very interested in discussing the replacement of the current voting system, but seemed especially concerned about voter turnout. They pointed out several benefits of the current voting system, including the greater likelihood of securing a stable, majority government; it is a voting system that is easy to understand; they appreciate its simplicity. The participants also pointed out several negative aspects, including the inability to vote for their choice of leader and the under-representation of third parties.</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

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)

Three electoral systems were discussed in greater depth: the current system, Mixed Member Proportional and Preferential Vote. The main aspects discussed were the ease of a new system, a civics course in high school, and increasing the legitimacy of the electoral system. Generally speaking, the participants were in favour of Mixed Member Proportional (with a list provided by the party). However, they had concerns about who would be on the list. Would they be candidates who would never have been elected had they not been on the list? Would the people be representative of the constituency they would be elected to represent as MPs? Participants insisted that their MP must be a reflection of their constituents and must be representative of the constituency.

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)

Voter turnout was one of the main concerns expressed during the consultation. According to participants, cynicism prevails and people don't find their vote carries enough weight. Senate scandals were identified as one of the reasons for the rise in political apathy. The participants proposed ways to address this problem, including voting by mail, a civics course in high school, and democracy education and awareness campaigns by Elections Canada. Those present believe that greater participation will enhance Canada's democracy.

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

The vast majority of the participants were opposed to mandatory voting. They felt that coercion has never been the way to deal with the challenge of declining voter turnout. An education campaign on the role of citizens and their duty to vote is important. Several participants said that forcing people to vote will make them even more cynical.

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)

For the majority of the participants, the current voting practices are good and functional. Internet voting was well received, although several concerns were mentioned, including vote secrecy and the possibility of databases being "hacked." Several people pointed out that not everyone would be able to vote online, especially the less fortunate and seniors. Voting by mail and phone voting were also important considerations for those present, as they would allow people with limited mobility to vote more easily. The benefits of Internet voting that were raised included ease of voting from home or from the office, not being at the mercy of bad weather, being able to avoid lineups at polling stations. It would also be an opportunity to get email reminders to vote, etc.

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

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

As mentioned earlier, voter turnout is an important issue for the population. According to the participants, low voter turnout results in poor representation in Parliament. With respect to referendums, many people have said that they would like a referendum to be held to choose the next voting system, and to ask Canadians whether they want the population whether or not Canadians want reform.

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

To summarize, we found that electoral reform is of foremost concern to Canadians. We were very happy with the quality of exchanges during the consultation and with how pleased constituents were to have been given the opportunity to participate in this discussion. There is no doubt that Canadians have a stake in the government's decisions and want to be heard.

Key messages:

Voting systems:

With respect to the various voting systems, the participants said that they need more information. They believe that the government should undertake a broader Canada-wide information campaign. They want to better understand the advantages and disadvantages of each voting system. The key consideration in choosing a new voting system is simplicity: the simpler the voting system, the more people will vote and participate in maintaining healthy democracy.

Replacement of the current voting system:

The government should hold a referendum to replace the current voting system. Many of the participants believe that change is needed because the current voting system is no longer appropriate. In their opinion, it is not proportional, encourages strategic voting and promotes bipartisanship only, at the expense of multi-party plurality. Others would rather stick with the current voting system. Among other things, it was suggested that all parties vote in favour of proceeding with electoral reform and that the information that is disseminated in the media be very clear.

The cost of replacing the current voting system was also a concern for participants.

Voter turnout:

Better voter turnout is needed in Canada. The lack of trust in political leaders is discouraging people from going to the polls. According to the majority of participants, recent media scandals have undermined peoples' desire to exercise their vote. They feel that their vote does not count because of the lack of proportional representation inherent in the current voting system. Furthermore, the participants said that people are disengaged from politics, probably because it is not adequately explained in schools and by elected representatives themselves.

Accessibility and inclusion:

Better dissemination of information is needed to encourage citizens to be more actively engaged in Canadian politics. This information should be available on various platforms adapted to different age groups. Educating young people is the only way to engage future generations in politics.

Mandatory voting:

Most people believe that mandatory voting is not a good idea. Obliging people to vote is not indicative of healthy democracy. Nonetheless, a few participants felt that mandatory voting would ensure that the rest of the population is even more interested in politics, which would lead to more representative election results.

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

Online voting:

Online voting is an option to consider, especially to reach young people and people with limited mobility. The participants feel people should have multiple options for exercising their vote, including the current conventional method, online voting, telephone voting and voting by mail. Although there is some resistance to online voting due to security and confidentiality, many believe it is a viable option. Online voting would reduce line-ups at polling stations.

Report submitted to Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)

Date: October 12, 2016

[signature]

Ramez Ayoub, MP for Therese-De-Blainville

[signature]

Linda Lapointe, MP for Rivière-Des-Milles-Îles

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

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

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