

**SIMON MARCIL
MIRABEL**

**TOWN HALL REPORT
ON ELECTORAL REFORM
PUBLIC CONSULTATION**



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

**SIMON MARCIL
MIRABEL**

**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. 30, 2016	06:30 pm to 9:00 pm	3014, Chemin d'Oka, Ste-Mathe-sur-le-Lac	29 people present
2.			
3.			
4.			
Form: <input 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 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>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>Following the consultation organized by the office of the M.P. for Mirabel, Simon Marcil, several citizens in attendance wondered about our current voting system. Need I recall that the first past the post system has its share of shortcomings, and offers very little in terms of advantages for a healthy democracy?</p> <p>After different voting systems were presented to the citizens, some started by challenging the representation process arising from our current voting system. On the one hand, they especially questioned the value assigned to a vote in a constituency commonly known as a "stronghold". This is a constituency that has remained in the hands of a particular political party for several election cycles. Citizens here therefore worry about the value of their votes. It should be noted that,</p>

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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

according to those who spoke up at the consultation, the current system appears to be dysfunctional when the total number of votes cast and the number of seats obtained by each party are considered.

On the other hand, there was also the question of so-called “territorial” representation. For several citizens, it is crucial that Members of Parliament be elected in a given constituency, and not merely be designated as part of some list. The same goes for the desire to maintain Quebec’s particular distinctive position in terms of regional political realities.

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)

During the consultation organized by the M.P. for Mirabel, Simon Marcil, many citizens wondered about the material weaknesses in political representation. The issue of proportionality was brought up repeatedly when citizens took to the floor. In this regard, we noted a general bias in favour of proportionality in any future reform of the voting system.

It should be noted that several citizens emphasized their strong desire to maintain the election of a representative in their constituency. Some of the reasons advanced were related to the feeling of belonging between the M.P. and the voters. Others worried about preserving the distinctiveness of certain regions, especially Quebec.

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)

From the outset, some of the citizens at the consultation identified cynicism towards politics and politicians as representing an obstacle to political participation during elections.

In some constituencies, voting for one’s natural political party is inconsequential because the concentration of votes in some areas neutralises the effect of any votes cast for any other than the winning party.

Lastly, it was mentioned that a citizenship education course would be crucial. For some citizens, this would be nothing less than a course aimed at informing new generations called upon to vote. Others also proposed the idea of increasing the forms of popular consultation during the four-year terms. This is a pedagogical, as well as dynamic, tool for increasing the level of participation.

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

Although mandatory voting was not among the issues raised by the citizens in attendance, several requests were made in a bid to raise the general voter turnout. A healthy Quebec democracy demands no less.

In fact, in the words of some of those who spoke during the consultation, the problem of low turnout in past general elections does not augur well for future elections. It was even proposed that citizenship education be introduced in high school curricula, which should improve general knowledge among the newer generations of voters.

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)

During the consultation, the issue of online voting was discussed. Notwithstanding some

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reservations respecting security and confidentiality in the voting process, we noted a degree of openness among the citizens present. An interesting comparison was presented to the assembly. Considering that an increasing number of citizens do their shopping and make payments online, a citizen present wondered about the fear when it comes to electronic voting.

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

A proposal mentioned above deserves closer attention. That is, the proposal made by a citizen who wondered why there were no popular consultations during the four-year term. To that citizen, this is an opportunity to be seized.

Why, therefore, should it take up to four years before the population is consulted? This question is relevant because in the current process, it constitutes a new approach. According to this citizen, the introduction of popular consultations should mobilise, inform, and empower citizens.

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

The recommendations formulated following the consultation organised by the office of the M.P. for Mirabel include:

- Ensure healthy political representation through a more proportional voting system;
- Provide citizens with information on the competing political parties;
- Ensure respect of the distinctive nature of different regions in the territory, especially Quebec;
- Institute a popular consultation process during parliamentary terms to give citizens the opportunity to vote on important issues;
- Encourage citizen education among our youths.

Report submitted to Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)

Date: 13 October 2016

MP's signature:(signed)

Simon Marcil

(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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