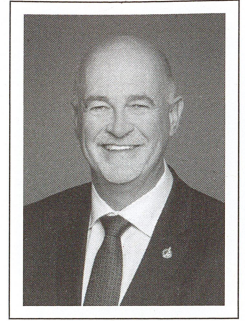**Ken McDonald**

Member of Parliament
Avalon

October 7th, 2016

Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)
131, Queen Street,
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Members:

Please find enclosed, my report pertaining to the Electoral Reform Town Hall that I hosted in Conception Bay South, NL on September 11th, 2016.

It is with great pleasure that I share with you, members of the Special Committee on Electoral Reform, the views and opinions of the people of Avalon. Residents in my riding have demonstrated clearly that electoral reform is extremely important, not only in my riding, but all across Canada.

I will let the report speak for itself, as I believe that it highlights what my constituents desire to see when considering this important, yet complex issue. I trust that as members of the committee, you will seriously consider what is best for all Canadians across the country, and I look forward to following the work of the committee in the coming months.

Sincerely yours,

Ken McDonald, M.P.
Avalon

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Canada

Ken McDonald, Member of Parliament for Avalon (NL)

Report on 2016 Electoral Reform Consultation | Avalon

September 11th 2016

Submitted to the Special Committee on Electoral Reform
10/14/2016

On September 11th, 2016 Ken McDonald, the member of Parliament for the riding of Avalon hosted an Electoral Reform "Town Hall" for the constituents of Avalon to discuss the topic of reforming Canada's electoral system, and its surrounding parameters.

Background on the Riding of Avalon

Avalon is a Riding of 81,500 people taking in a huge portion of the Avalon Peninsula, outside St. John's, Mount Pearl and communities around the north-east Avalon in the province of Newfoundland & Labrador. The majority of the communities in the riding are rural, meaning that easy accessibility is a major barrier to public engagement within the area.

The majority of the riding's population resides within two large communities; Conception Bay South and Paradise, these are also the towns where we found the greatest interest on the topic of Electoral Reform prior to holding our "Town Hall". It is for this reason that the Town of Conception Bay south was chosen as the location of the consultation on Electoral Reform.

Pre-Consultation Preparations

In preparation of the consultation, we recognized how important it was to promote and reach out to our community and relevant stakeholders in order to encourage widespread participation in the consultation process. We decided to take up a strong social media promotions platform and to reach out to individuals who we're publicly involved in educating and informing the people of the province on Electoral Reform.

Pictured below are some examples of the social media tools used to promote and engage our constituents prior to the consultation.
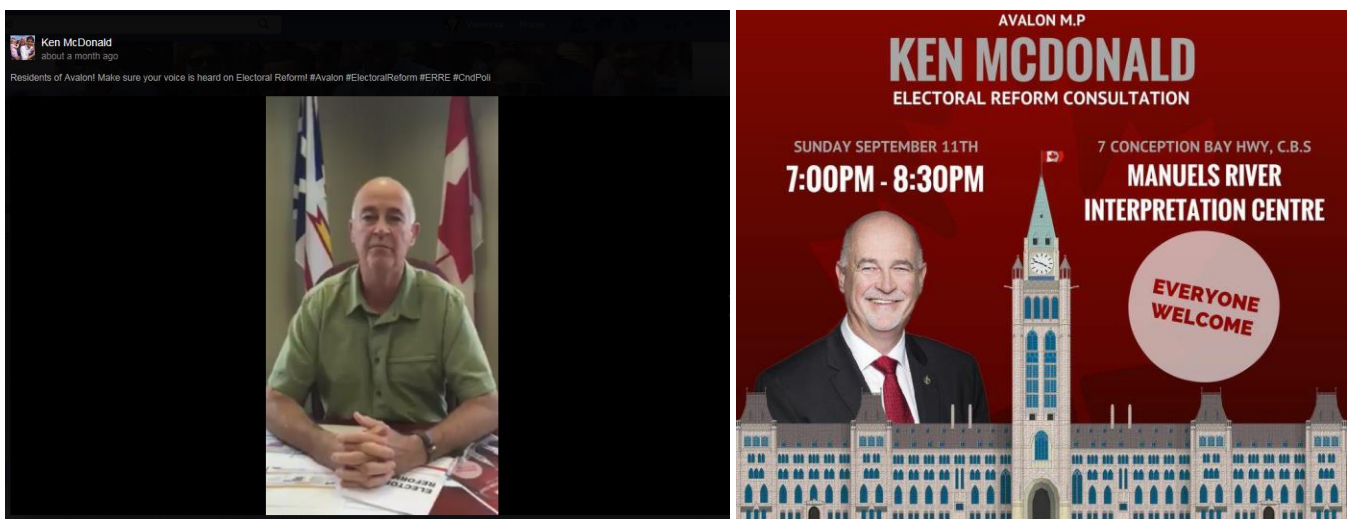

These shareables and videos we're shared on all of our social media platforms; Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in the hopes of targeting various demographics and increasing the turnout at the consultation. The primary messaging used was "here to listen", in an effort to promote openness,

accessibility and transparency, while demonstrating now preference and personal/ political bias in the consultation process.

Various resources were used in preparation for our "Town Hall", including, but not limited to documents such as *The Canadian Electoral System,* Library of Parliament, 2013; *Electoral Systems and Electoral Reform in Canada and Elsewhere: An Overview,* Library of Parliament, 2016; *Your guide to hosting a successful dialogue on Canadian federal electoral reform,* Government of Canada; various other Library resources and some external documents.

Additionally, our office prepared a distribution document for the participants at our "Town Hall" to give them a breif overview of systems and practices that the committee on Electoral Reform has already committee to look at, to provide some preparation of discussion. This handout document also included discussion questions, as suggested within the documents above. Infographics and information for this distribution document was all drawn from the Library of Parliament information as provided.

Pictured below are ssome examples of elements included in the handout document:
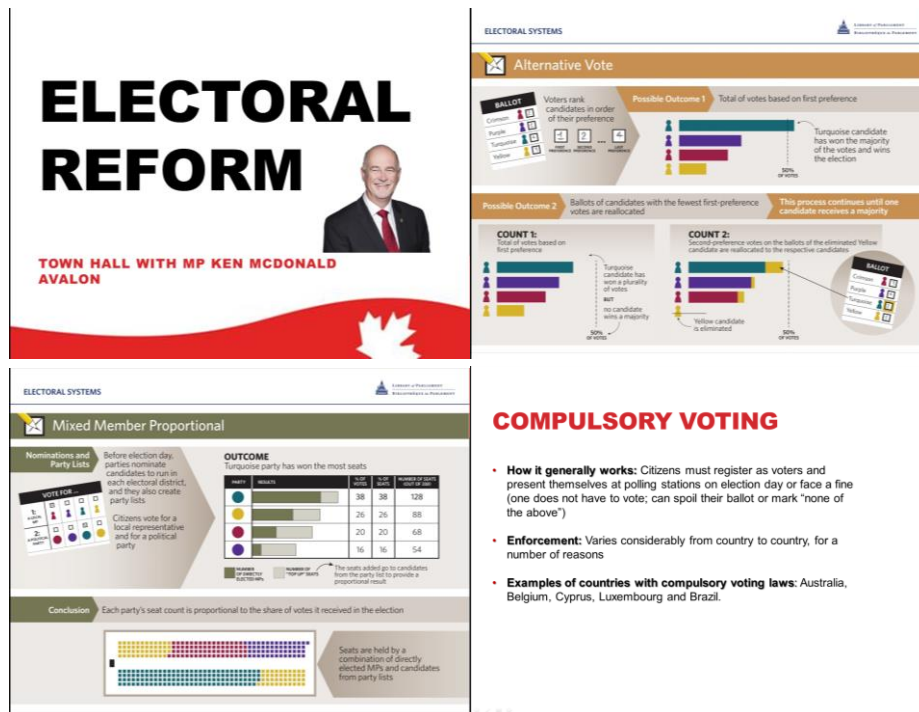
This document proved extremely useful, and participants at the consultation were thankful to have clear and easy-to-understand infographics to explain some of the different systems and electoral elements that are being considered.

Our public outreach spanned wide, from invites to local Mayors and their Municipalities, MHA's, stakeholders, local youth organizations, and constituents that had contacted our office prior to the consultation to express Interest in electoral reform.

Logistics and Participation of Town Hall

The electoral reform consultation was held at the Manuels River Hibernia Interpretation Centre in Conception Bay South on Sept. 11th, 2016. Originally, we had planned to have a moderator for the event, but upon further consideration, we decided that it would be best to have the consultation or "Town Hall" serve as a conversation between the constituents of Avalon and their MP. Ken hosted and moderated the event, which turned out quite well, and it was universally appreciated as a community discussion opportunity.

The turnout for the "Town Hall" was higher than expected, a total of 31 participants including people from different communities in the riding and some representation from the Memorial University of Newfoundland as well.

Discussion around Electoral Reform in Canada

Topics of Discussion:

- First Past the Post
    - Support & Against
- Ranked Ballots in Majority & proportional Systems
- Proportional Representation
    - FPTP Proportional
- Mandatory voting

-
- Alternative vote
- Youth engagement
- Online/ Electronic Voting
- Public engagement if/when electoral reform is commenced
- Current low youth voter turnout

Throughout the discussion, there was one theme that was quite clear, Canada's electoral system is broken, and it's time to make some changes. This narrative did come with some pushback however, with some participants voicing their support for our current system, First Past the Post (FPTP). However, these participants supported initiatives that increased voter turn-out.

The primary argument supporting FPTP recognized that our current system is easy to understand & use, and that it's a tradition that has served the electorate for the past 149 years without fail.

Contrasting this narrative was the majority of support for change. The bulk of participants voiced their suport for changing the electoral system in Canada to better reflect Canadian's votes and to have a higher chance of having their votes count.

On the topic of ranked ballots and relevent systems, the support was quite universal. Participants agreed that ranked ballots and voting thresholds would give voters a greater opportunity to have their vote count towards a winning candidate, whom would ultimately become their representative.

On the topic of manditory voting, support was divided. Participants in favour of manditory voting recognized that like filling out a census or completeing jury duty, voting is a civic duty in Canada and that it may intice people to learn about elections and better understand the platforms and values of the

relavent candidates. Opposition to manditory voting recognized that voting in Canada is a right and a priviledge that not everyone around the globe has. As such, the right to abstain from voting, and consciously choose not to vote would also be a right that Canadians should continue to have.

Many people discussed the enforcement and efficacy of manditory voting, if enforced in Canada, many recognized that it may be costly and unrealistic.

There were several participants at the consultation that strongly supported and were well versed in Proportional Representation. They recognized that PR systems around the world reflect the votes of the electorate, and provide opportunites for more diverse representation in parliaments.

Many PR systems were touched on within this discussion; Mixed member proportional, List Proportional, Single Transferable Vote, and a system that was designed by one of the participants (see attached) Proportional First-Past-the-Post.

It was clear that proportional representation had significant support by a group of the consultation's participants, however it should be noted that the majority of these participants in support of PR systems were not from the riding of Avalon, but still believed that PR would well serve the riding.

Those not in support of PR argued that PR systems are complicated and not easy to understand, especially for new voters and seniors. Nobody would deny that the idea of having proportional representation in parliament is a great idea, but the logistics and efficiency of changing the voting system in that way is the primary deterant.

One of the most popular topics of discussion was youth voter turnouts in Canada but primarily in Newfoundland and Labrador. All participants recognized that youth engagement in politics and in the electoral system is imparartive. A key message that was heard loud and clear was that educational programming in the province should include learning about elections & politics, and that this should be mandatory. Participants recognized that a major barrier for new voters is a lack of information, engagement and apathy. If this was addressed in schools before they became of voting age, that the desire to vote would be greater as knowledge would not be a barrier. It was alos recognized that lowing the voting age would not address low youth voter turnout.

Online voting was an element that was universally supported by participants in the consultation process. Event participants who supported the status-quo agreed that online and electronic voting would prove to be a great tool for all voters, in rural and in urban areas. One participant shared that Stats-Can census returns can prove that online accessibility increases the success rate when it come to voter turn out in more local elections.

Some other topics were addressed such as implementation, cost and success of changing the way we vote, but what was most common amongst all 31 of our participants was that no matter what we do to change the voting system in Canada, it has to be understandable, and the government will have to do everything they can to help all Canadians understand the changes, understand how to vote and keep costs as low as possible in the process.

Participants also wished for the committee to take into great consideration the demographics, and most importantly the geography of each individual riding in Canada. They recognized that changing the electoral system will affect each and every Canadain from coast, to coast, to coast, and that no two ridings are the same in this country. The divide between rural and urban ridings is vast, and the needs differ greatly.

Conculsion- MP's Message

 Overall, I was very pleased by the success of the consultation process in Avalon. It is clear that Canadians are engaged in the electoral reform process, and want some form of change. It was great to see a number of my constituents at the consultation, voicing their opinions and giving me the information I need to bring back to Ottawa. It is clear that choosing a new system will not be easy, but whatever we do, we need to make sure it is what is best for all Canadians, from coast, to coast, to coast. I look forward to all future debate and discussion on the topic of electoral reform, and following the committee in their processes. I trust that whatever we do, it will reflect what Canadians really want and encourage more Canadians, young and old to go to the polls and vote in the future.

Proportional-First-Past-the-Post
A Canadian model of proportional representation
(For further detail see Robert Ring's Master's thesis at pfptp.com)

What it is and why it's needed:

- A simple, candidate-centred "mixed" electoral system designed for Canada.
- Minimizes "top-up" region size without compromising proportionality.
- Uses an easily-understood, **percentage point formula** for allocating "top-up" seats.
- Through the transferring-up of leftover percentage points, virtually all first-choice votes are effective—even in small provinces **and** while maintaining single-member ridings in Labrador, Yukon, Nunavut, and the Northwest Territories.
- No lists required. The system is candidate-centred as "top-up" seats are filled by the most popular candidates not already elected, based on percent of the vote in their own riding.
- No need for artificial thresholds to limit small parties (as in other systems)—only "significant" small parties would be successful as they would have to run candidates in order to receive points.
- Fair to Canadians from all provinces and territories, rural or urban—other electoral systems settle for less-than-ideal outcomes for rural areas and less-populous provinces.
- Increases voter choice and promotes gender equity as parties run two candidates per riding.

How it works:

> *Single-Member Ridings:* half the seats are filled in local, **single-member ridings** by *party plurality*:
  - Parties run two candidates in each riding.
  - The party with the most votes in the riding (**party plurality**) wins the seat.
  - The top candidate from that party is elected.

> *Overlapping Regions:* the remaining seats are filled by members elected to represent **overlapping regions**:
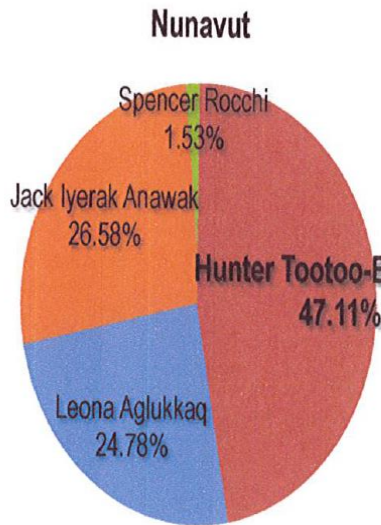 - Overlapping regions encompass 4-6 ridings (such as a small province).

> **Percentage Points and Electing Members in Overlapping Regions**
  - "**Percentage points**" are totalled for each party in every riding (i.e. 1% of the vote in a riding equals 1 percentage point).
  - *The percentage point formula: 1 Seat = 50 percentage points.*
  - Percentage points are transferred and pooled from every single-member riding to its overlapping region.
  - A party that does not win a riding transfers all their percentage points.
  - A party that wins a riding with more than 50% of the vote in a riding, transfers their excess points (excess points = more than 50).
  - A party that wins a riding with less than 50 percent of the votes in a riding transfers a negative number of percentage points.
  - After seats are awarded for every **full 50 points**, instead of rounding, **leftover points are transferred** to a larger, overlapping region (such as Atlantic Canada), the **key** to keeping proportionality high and region size low.

Robert Ring   September 11, 2016

"The North", 2015
Proportional-First-Past-the-Post simulation

Nunavut

Spencer Rocchi
1.53%

Jack Iyerak Anawak
26.58%

Hunter Tootoo-ELECTED
47.11%

Leona Aglukkaq
24.78%

Northwest Territories

John Moore
2.83%

Dennis Fraser Bevington
30.48%

Michael McLeod-ELECTED
48.34%

Floyd Roland
18.35%

Yukon

Frank de Jong
2.57%

Melissa Atkinson
19.44%

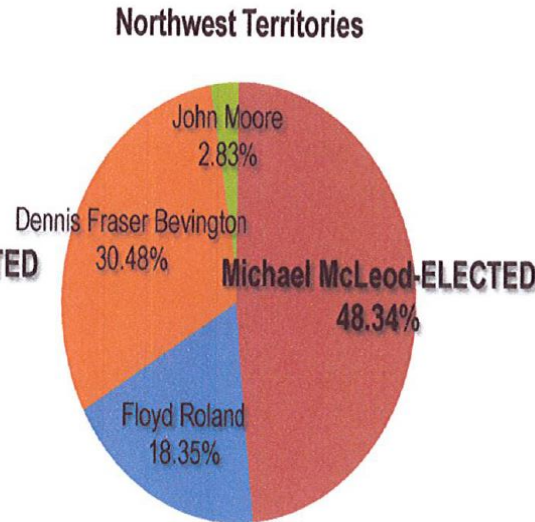Larry Bagnell-ELECTED
53.68%

Ryan Leef
24.30%

Nunavut results:

Liberal: 47.11% (**Hunter Tootoo elected**; -2.89 points)
Conservative: 24.78% (+24.78 points)
NDP: 26.58% (+26.58 points)
Green: 1.53% (+1.53 points)

Northwest Territories results:

Liberal: 48.34% (**Michael McLeod elected**; -1.66 points)
Conservative: 18.35% (+18.35 points)
NDP: 30.48% (+30.48 points)
Green: 2.83% (+2.83 points)

Yukon results:

Liberal: 53.68% (**Larry Bagnell elected**; +3.68 points)
Conservative: 24.30% (+24.30 points)
NDP: 19.44% (+19.44 points)
Green: 2.57% (+2.57 points)

Pooling points in regions:

*Parties win 1 seat for every 50 points.
*Candidate with the highest percentage of votes in their riding wins the region seat.
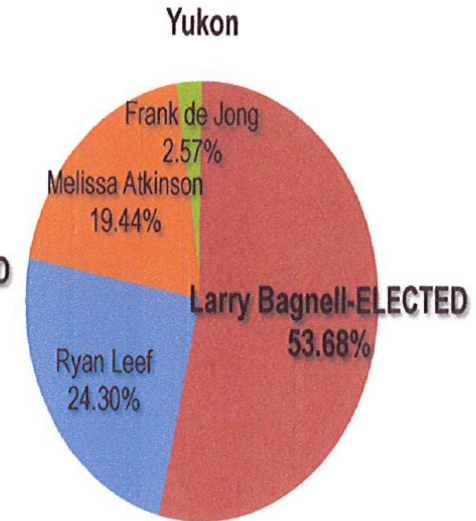*Leftover votes are transferred to the nation-wide region.

"The North" Region results:

NDP: 76.50 = **1 seat** (Dennis Fraser Bevington) + 26.50 points transferred.
Conservative: 67.43 = **1 seat** (Leona Aglukkaq) + 17.43 points transferred.
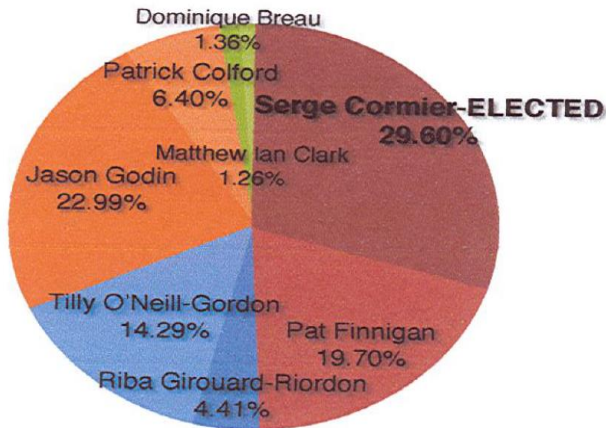Liberal: -0.87 points.
Green: +6.93 points transferred.

*Simulation based on actual 2015 election results. Parties would run **two candidates per riding** and riding seats would be awarded by **party plurality**.

*For further detail see Robert Ring's Master's thesis at pfptp.com

Robert Ring

September 11, 2016

New Brunswick, 2015
Proportional-First-Past-the-Post simulation

Acadie-Bathurst & Mirimichi-Grand Lake

Dominique Breau
1.36%
Patrick Colford
6.40%
Serge Cormier-ELECTED
29.60%
Matthew Ian Clark
1.26%
Jason Godin
22.99%
Tilly O'Neill-Gordon
14.29%
Pat Finnigan
19.70%
Riba Girouard-Riordon
4.41%

Acadie-Bathurst & Mirimichi-Grand Lake results:
Liberal: 49.30 % (**Serge Cormier elected**;
-0.70 points)
Conservative: 18.70% (+18.70 points)
NDP: 22.99% (22.99 points)
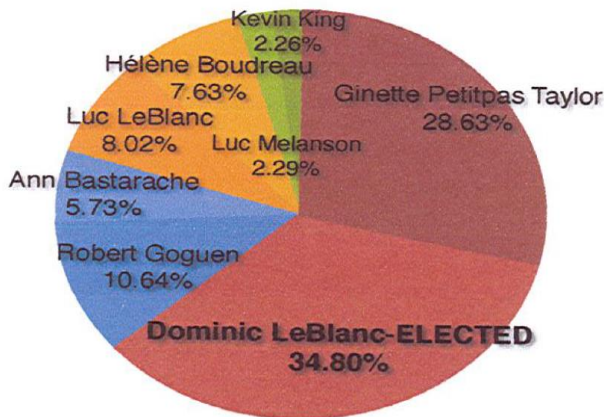Green: 2.62% (+2.62 points)

Madawaska-Restigouche & Tobique-Mactaquac

Françoise Aubin
0.93%
Robert Kitchen
5.72%
René Arseneault-ELECTED
27.44%
Rosaire L'Italien
12.77%
Terry Wishart
2.59%
Richard Bragdon
18.78%
TJ Harvey
23.65%
Bernard Valcourt
8.12%
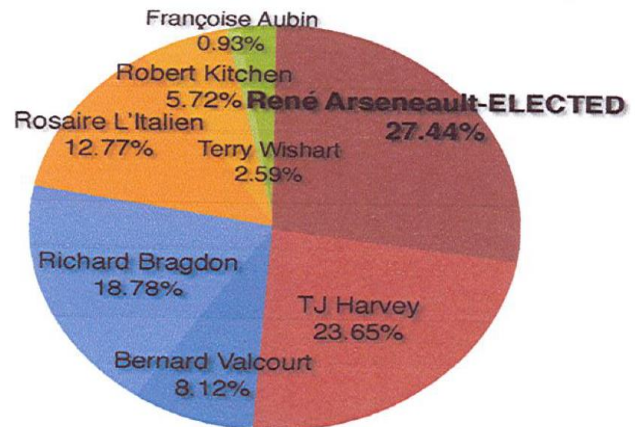
Madawaska-Restigouche & Tobique-Mactaquac results:
Liberal: 51.09% (**René Arseneault elected**;
+1.09 points)
Conservative: 26.90% (+26.90 points)
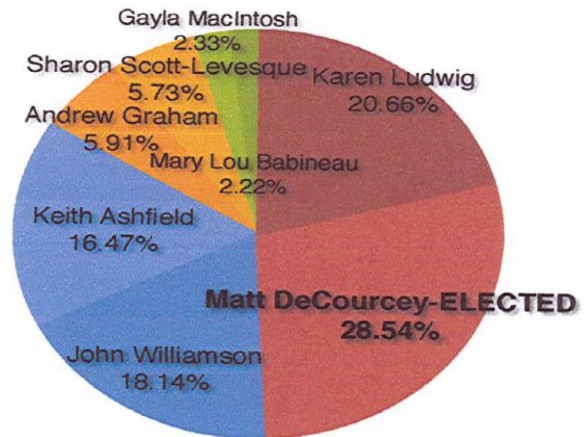NDP: 18.49% (+18.49 points)
Green: 3.52% (+3.52 points)

Moncton-Riverview-Dieppe & Beauséjour

Kevin King
2.26%
Hélène Boudreau
7.63%
Luc LeBlanc
8.02%
Luc Melanson
2.29%
Ginette Petitpas Taylor
28.63%
Ann Bastarache
5.73%
Robert Goguen
10.64%
Dominic LeBlanc-ELECTED
34.80%

Moncton-Riverview-Dieppe & Beauséjour results:
Liberal: 63.43% (**Dominic LeBlanc elected**;
+13.43 points)
Conservative: 16.37% (+16.37 points)
NDP: 15.65% (+15.65 points)
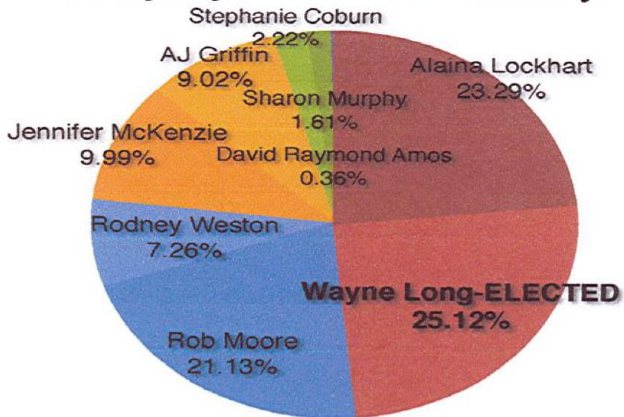Green: 4.55% (+4.55 points)

New Brunwsick Southwest & Fredericton

Gayla MacIntosh
2.33%
Sharon Scott-Levesque
5.73%
Karen Ludwig
20.66%
Andrew Graham
5.91%
Mary Lou Babineau
2.22%
Keith Ashfield
16.47%
Matt DeCourcey-ELECTED
28.54%
John Williamson
18.14%

New Brunswick Southwest & Fredericton results:
Liberal: 49.20% (**Matt DeCourcey elected**;
-0.80 points)
Conservative: 34.61% (+34.61 points)
NDP: 11.64% (11.64 points)
Green: 4.55% (4.55 points)

Robert Ring

September 11, 2016

Fundy Royal & Saint John-Rothesay

Stephanie Coburn
2.22%
AJ Griffin
9.02%
Sharon Murphy
1.61%
Jennifer McKenzie
9.99%
David Raymond Amos
0.36%
Rodney Weston
7.26%
Rob Moore
21.13%
Alaina Lockhart
23.29%
Wayne Long-ELECTED
25.12%

Fundy Royal & Saint John Rothesay results:
Liberal: 48.41% (**Wayne Long elected**;
-1.59 points)
Conservative: 28.39% (28.39 points)
NDP: 19.01% (19.01 points)
Green: 3.83% (3.83 points)

New Brunswick single-member riding winners:

Acadie-Bathurst & Mirimichi-Grand Lake:
• Serge Cormier (Liberal)

Madawaska-Restigouche & Tobique-Mactaquac:
• René Arseneault (Liberal)

Moncton-Riverview-Dieppe & Beauséjour:
• Dominic LeBlanc (Liberal)

New Brunswick Southwest & Fredericton:
• Matt DeCourcey (Liberal)

Fundy Royal & Saint John Rothesay:
• Wayne Long (Liberal)

Pooling points in regions:

*Parties win 1 seat for every 50 points.
*Candidate with the highest percentage of votes in their riding wins the region seat.
*Leftover votes are transferred to the Atlantic Region.
*Since New Brunswick would have 5 single-member ridings, 10 Members of Parliament would be elected from New Brunswick (5 x 2 = 10).

Points transferred to Atlantic Region and nation-wide Region:

• 8 of the 10 seats from New Brunswick have been filled at this point (80% of New Brunswick's seat quota).
• 2 more members of Parliament will be elected from New Brunswick to fill the provincial quota of 10 seats.
• These remaining 2 members from New Brunswick will be elected to represent the Atlantic Region and/ or the nation-wide region.

New Brunswick Region results:

Liberal: +11.43 points transferred

Conservative: 124.97 = **2 seats** (Rob Moore & John Williamson) + 24.97 points transferred.

NDP: 87.78 = **1 seat** (Jason Godin) + 37.78 points transferred.

Green: 19.07 points transferred.

Robert Ring

Note: Simulation based on actual 2015 election results, combining 10 ridings into 5 larger single-member ridings, plus pooled regions—keeping the number of elected members from New Brunswick consistent at 10 members. Parties would run two candidates per riding and riding seats would be awarded by party plurality.

For further detail see Robert Ring's Master's thesis at pfptp.com

September 11, 2016