RANDEEP SARAI

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

**RAPPORT SUR LES CONSULTATIONS
PUBLIQUES SUR LA RÉFORME
ÉLECTORALE**

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		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)**
13/10/2016	4:00-5:15	Office of Randeep Sarai	19
2.			
3.			
4.			

Form: □ **Use of the Library of Parliament's visual presentation**
  □ Presentation from the MP's office
  □ Open microphone
  □ **Question and answer session**
  □ Guest speaker
  □ **Other (please specify): Town hall completed Virtually via Facetime**

	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) □

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
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)
Many highlighted that the FPTP system creates a two-party system, people are voting for the more 'popular' Prime Minister, strategic voting occurs, accurate voter intention is not being represented, rep-by-pop is ignored and the best MPs are not elected due to party popularity in an area. Some expressed that they like that only Canadian citizens can vote while some felt that not allowing everyone to vote is a form of discrimination. Some liked that there is only one vote determining an election and that it is not done electronically, while some encourage electronic voting as an option

Please return to:

Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)
131, rue Queen Street, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
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Deadline: Friday, October 14, 2016

open to voters.

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)

Proportionality was the biggest concern in the current electoral system, therefore, it needs to be included in an electoral system to best capture voter intention. Preferential voting was also recommended by some of our participants. They also expressed that simplicity of the system is extremely important because it allows for more participation and if we reform our electoral system it must be easily learned and understood by Canadians.

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)

Some constituents felt they are being involved through on-going information updates provided by Liberal Party emails. Others felt there is a disconnect between politicians and the average Canadian because they feel political language can be complex for some to understand. A suggestion to engage more Canadians and increase inclusion in the democratic process would be to simplify political information and the democratic process as much as possible. This idea was expanded by a suggestion to engage and thoroughly educate our youth about the democratic process. Proportional representation was suggested to allow Canadians to feel that their voices are being seen through, which also naturally makes a person feel empowered and want to become more involved in the democratic process. Overall, the most significant motivators for participation expressed was to have continuous opportunity for the public to engage in politics, whether it be through hosting dialogues, creating a youth council, receiving informational email updates and accessibility to meet with their MP.

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

Did not think it should be mandatory if there are consequences associated with not voting, however, one should be rewarded to cast their vote. Spoiling a ballot must be included as an option.

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)

Some feel that the option should be provided to those who prefer this option, while the current voting option should still be available. The concern with online voting was mainly with security and safety, i.e hacking, as well as, ensuring identification of the voter and their honest vote choice.

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

It was expressed that Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities –blind and/or deaf, Seniors visible minorities, intersectional identities, people under voting age fit to vote do not have the same level of inclusion or accessibility that all other Canadians have and encouraged to find ways to

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accommodate these groups according to the challenges they face.

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

A key recommendation our participants shared in their responses in regards to our electoral system, which our current electoral system lacks is capturing voter intention and prefer a system that most accurately selects the candidate(s) that they voted for to represent their riding. In order to encourage participation, the participants expressed that our electoral system and democratic process at large needs to be simple and easily comprehend by Canadians. They feel this will remove the stigma of 'us' verses 'them', and therefore make it a greater level playing field for the average Canadian to get involved and more importantly feel that they are being included. They would like for the government to come up with creative strategies to overcome the challenges that disadvantaged communities and individuals face to allow them alternative options to have their voice heard. In order to achieve this, our participants have suggested providing updated informational material and learning tools that are accessible to all public, but also modified appropriately to accommodate disadvantaged groups and individuals. They also expressed that multi-forms of communication – community dialogues, online-engagement, social media and one-on-one chats with MPs – are all extremely important. In particular, an opportunity that allows them to physically participate such as town halls, roundtables, youth councils, and speaking with their MP directly were regarded as the most important. The idea of offering an option to have online voting was positively received, however, in reality participants felt there are serious safety concerns around its security and our lack of infrastructure to implement this system. Providing concrete strategies and plans, in terms of security and this systems functionality will definitely need to be shared to spark growing interest. Despite the urge to eventually move towards an online system, participants felt paper-based voting should not be removed quite yet.

Report submitted to Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)	Date: 14/10/2016
MP's signature:	Randeep Sarai
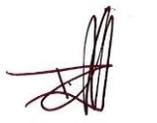
Reports must be submitted to the Clerks of the Committee no later than Friday, October 14, 2016 in both official languages.

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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