

DEB SCHULTE, MP
KING-VAUGHAN

TOWN HALL REPORT
ON ELECTORAL REFORM
PUBLIC CONSULTATION



HOUSE OF COMMONS
 CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
 CANADA

DEB SCHULTE DÉPUTÉ (E)
KING-VAUGHAN

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)
October 12, 2016	7:00 – 9:00 pm	Vaughan City Hall, Vaughan, ON	68
Form: Use of the Library of Parliament’s visual presentation – some parts of it Presentation from the MP’s office - Yes Open microphone - Yes Question and answer session - Yes Guest speaker - Yes Other (please specify): Use of Infolib’s visual presentation - Yes			
SUBJECTS DISCUSSED (summary)			
Voting systems: - X	Replacement of the current voting system: - X	Voter turnout: xx	Accessibility and inclusiveness: <input type="checkbox"/>
Mandatory voting: - X	Online voting: - X	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>The current system creates stability, reduces voter fatigue, creates a more unified vision and direction for country. It is easy to understand, more accountable to constituents, it is not corrupt, tabulating system is secure and it creates stability and allows majority governments to make tough decisions. Reduces frequent elections under minority governments. Constituents know who their representative is and they have easy access. It represents the opinion of those who take the time to vote.</p> <p>The flaws of this system - there is less representation of minor parties, there is fear of distortion of votes and skewed representation. Results can be significantly altered by money. This system encourages strategic voting and it does not allow for votes to be fairly represented. When one party dominates, it allows for less accountability, it creates voter apathy and low voter turnout.</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)

Proportional representation and ranked voting system were discussed.

They would like an electoral system that is easy to understand, allows every vote to be counted and is not costly.

We did not hear an overwhelming desire for change. Participants identified some of the weaknesses and challenges with each of the systems but noted the options are not really better than our existing system. There was a general feeling that this government has more important things to focus on than this.

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)

A general acknowledgement that voter turnout is an issue was vocalized with limited discussion on this issue taking place.

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

We definitely had two strong camps on this issue. Those who were against mandatory voting voiced a view that voting is a freedom of choice – forcing the vote removes the freedom; it is not the democratic way. There are concerns that it might not be effective in the sense that when one is forced to vote there might not be a conscious decision made but rather just going through the motions because they have to. The question of effectiveness in terms of voter engagement was questioned – does raising the number of voters really increase the informed choices or simply increase the numbers ticked off on a voter registration sheet.

Those speaking in favour of mandatory voting cited their belief that it is a civil responsibility for everyone to have an interest in who runs the country. They suggested that the better informed voters would increase if there was an option to `non-vote`; i.e. spoil or refuse ballot.

There seemed to be little support for a financial penalty of those not voting, nor a financial incentive for those who do vote.

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)

A strong sense of negativity around on-line voting pervaded the room with the caveat that if there was some way to increase the security of the vote then perhaps on-line might work. Suggestion of using fingerprints to vote was tabled. Most of the participants expressed concern around the vulnerability of the on-line systems in place today.

Positive outcomes of the potential of on-line voting were discussed. Notably, it might be a good way to connect with you while being more inclusive and accessible, especially given Canada's weather issues.

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

Referendum was raised by some participants. They are against a referendum because they feel the general public is not informed enough to be making a decision on electoral systems. It should be elected officials that come up with some alternatives that can be implemented.

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

Participants' main comments are that they would like to see an electoral system that represents the true wishes of the people. They would like to see smaller parties better represented. They are concerned about voter apathy and low voter turnout. They want a system that will hold the government accountable. Some are concerned that changing the present system might cause added confusion. Some participants recommend that if the system is to be changed, that decision should be made by elected officials as the general public is not informed enough.

It is important that as society evolves, we consider the efficacy of our democratic processes.

Report submitted to Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)

Date: October 13, 2016

MP's signature:

**Deb Schulte
(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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