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

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PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

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)
09/14/16	19:00 – 21:00	Stanley Park Community Centre, Kitchener	251
<input checked="" 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 : Maryam Monsef <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 checked="" 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

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)

Electoral systems discussed as alternatives to Single Member Plurality were: Open & Closed List Proportional Representation, Alternative Vote, and Single Transferable Vote. Participants cited proportionality and reduce vote-waste, citing mixed member systems like Single Transferable Vote, as the most important features of an alternative vote system.

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)

Two grievances were cited by every group in discussion of this topic: Vote-waste and lack of civic literacy. Every group discussed the need for our new electoral system to feature some degree of proportionality, either as a direct proportional representation or a mixed-member ranked ballot like Alternative Vote. Involvement and education on the parliamentary system as well as party platforms each election were also frequently cited as inhibitors to participation, because the complexity of the information and lack of accessibility can alienate Canadians. The next most-discussed trait of elections were attack ads – nearly all groups recommended banning attack ads, as these represent politicians in an egotistical, condescending, and cynical way that leaves Canadians feeling disinterested and “turned away” from the political process. There was a lack of consensus on this issue, but the above were themes that emerged in review of group submissions.

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

There were mixed opinions on the subject of mandatory voting. Many constituents expressed their opposition primarily to the idea that there would be a small fine for not voting, and that low voter-turnout was the result of lack of engagement by parties and lack of civic literacy amongst Canadians. Two prevailing sentiments were expressed by nearly every group: that Canadians have the right to vote but also the freedom to abstain, and; that those who abstain do so because they do not have reliable information, thus it is better in that case that they abstain. It was also recommended that countries like Australia and Belgium, which utilize mandatory voting, be studied to better understand their execution of this policy and its effects on civic literacy rates, which emerged as a central concern in this discussion.

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)

Every group of participants cited security and secret ballot integrity as major concerns for online voting. Other concerns surrounded dependability of the software, rural ridings with little internet access, seniors, and families without computers. Participants primarily expressed the preference for maintaining current voting methods, although a significant number were open to the idea of using electronic in-person ballots for the sake of efficiencies and accuracy during counting.

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

Other themes discussed included lowering the voter age to encourage turnout and youth engagement, and the presence of minorities in the House of Commons. The room was overwhelmingly opposed to a referendum. A significant number of constituents expressed that they were opposed to having multiple MPs per riding.

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

Alternative Electoral System Features:

- Closer to proportionality
- Less party-control of candidates (opposition to list proportional)
- Reduce vote-waste by using alternative vote, single transferable vote

Mandatory Voting

- Near 50/50 split on this issue;
- Study mandatory voting effects & logistics from other nations, e.g. Belgium, to better understand its benefits and execution
- Utilize a small tax credit as an incentive to voting, rather than small fine as disincentive

Online Voting

- Many cite security & dependability of software as a key concern
- The effectiveness of this for rural areas with little internet access was questioned

Other Recommendations

- Lower voting age to 16
- Avoid multiple MPs per riding
- Do not have a referendum
- Encourage number of women & minorities in House of Commons

Report submitted to Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)

Date: September 14, 2016



Submitted by:
MP Bryan May
On behalf of:
MP Bardish Chagger
MP Raj Saini
MP Marwan Tabbara

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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