

Electoral Reform Town Hall
September 12, 2006 – North Vancouver
Jonathan Wilkinson
Attendance: Approximately 150

Question 1:

What values or principles do you feel are most important and should be taken into account in choosing an electoral system for Canada? Why are these so important?

Specific Comments:

- proportionality, with a reasonable threshold: every part gets a fair chance at receiving votes
- knowledge of candidate; candidates selected locally
- represent number of people equally
- geographically smaller ridings – even with only one rep
- represent geographic diversity federally
- local representation: candidate knows their riding, people, and issues
- representation of the minority and other voices
- stable government
- avoid one-issue parties, such as the Tea Party
- compulsory voting with a “none of the above” option – voting is a civic duty
- ability to vote for your first choice, not worry about vote splitting or voting strategically
- every vote counts, no voting for the least worst option
- have a test run with the new system, then go to a referendum
- access to local representation
- diverse representation: women, cultural diversity, age, etc.
- voter participation and understanding of how the process works
- decrease focus on the leader during the campaign, more focus on local representative
- diversity of parties and candidates
- ability for parties to collaborate
- citizens have a greater say than at town halls in what system is chosen, perhaps a referendum
- equality of riding size
- accessible and easy to understand
- eliminate whipped votes
- 50% minimum threshold for majority government
- a system that engages with all members of the country, not just those who historically vote
- political professionalization

Absolute Number of Comments Raised:

- Proportionality is important – 13
- Local/single member representation is important – 12
- System that produces governments that can be energetic and can create and implement active policy agendas is important – 9
- System that encourages broad voter participation is important – 7
- Do not force voters to vote strategically (need to be able to better express preferences without penalty) – 5
- Encourage diversity of MPs – 3
- Avoid single issue parties – 2
- Represent minorities and other voices – 1

Question 2: Given the values or principles you think are most important, what type of system would prefer to see and why?

Specific comments:

- AV – like the majority
- MMP – addressed most of the values and has a variety, no wasted votes, local representation
- SMP – candidates represent local diversity and choices, stable and effective
- Include preferential voting or ranked ballots (Alternative vote systems)
- STV – right amount of proportionality while allowing for more energetic government, no wasted votes
- Combine SMP and MMP – will strike a better balance of all values
- AV system would allow for better expression of true preferences of votes – ensure everyone's vote actually counts
- We need to also consider what the ballot will look like, will mandatory voting be implemented? How will this work?
- The government is only as good as the electorate: education for electoral systems and overall government and politics needs to be implemented into our public schools in a consistent and mandatory way. This will also address apathy and disengagement
- We need to better understand how lists would work, along with multiple representation
- We should understand the costs of potential changes
- Overall, more education is required. A town hall should have been held per system being proposed. This is far too complicated for the average person to understand and if proper education isn't given it will make it impossible to hold a successful referendum. The absence of a referendum decreased the legitimacy of the process to choose a new system

Absolute Number of Comments Raised:

- **MMP - 10**
- **STV – 9**
- **AV/Preferential Ballot - 5**
- **First Past the Post – 4**
- **Hybrid system with some proportionality + single member local representation - 3**