

October 14, 2016

Report to the Special Committee on Electoral Reform

To the Special Committee on Electoral Reform,

Our office conducted a broad survey of Richmond Centre constituents. Feedback was solicited through Canada Post (via a Householder submission that was mailed to every residence in Richmond Centre), via telephone, and electronic (Internet) submissions. Through each medium, we asked constituents whether they supported holding a referendum to obtain the approval of Canadians before changing the voting system, in addition to other questions concerning electoral reform.

Our office did not elect to hold a “town hall” as we sought to engage as many constituents as possible instead of holding a single event at a single location.

We obtained approximately 1,800 submissions through our solicitations of feedback on electoral reform.

On being asked whether a referendum should be held on electoral reform before changing the way MPs are elected:

89% supported holding a referendum;
9% did not support holding a referendum;
2% were undecided or had no opinion.

Other observations:

In general, the people that supported a referendum were mixed in favour of maintaining the existing system and in favour of changing the system from the existing first-past-the-post system, but both groups desired public ratification via referendum to confirm their desired option.

The people that expressed opposition to a referendum generally cited two reasons: one was the cost of holding a referendum, the other was concerns that a referendum would result in a “Brexit”-type fear.

Recommendation:

The constituents of Richmond Centre are overwhelmingly in favour of holding a referendum before any changes to the electoral system are enacted.

Sincerely,

Hon. Alice Wong, P.C., M.P.
Richmond Centre