

**SALMA ZAHID, MP
SCARBOROUGH CENTRE**

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



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

**SALMA ZAHID, DÉPUTÉ
SCARBOROUGH CENTRE**

**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)
1.9/7/2016	2 hours	Scarborough Civic Centre	40
2.			
3.			
4.			
Form: <input type="checkbox"/> Use of the Library of Parliament's visual presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation from the MP's office <input type="checkbox"/> Open microphone <input type="checkbox"/> Question and answer session <input type="checkbox"/> Guest speaker <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):			
SUBJECTS DISCUSSED (summary)			
Voting systems: <input type="checkbox"/>	Replacement of the current voting system: <input type="checkbox"/>	Voter turnout: <input type="checkbox"/>	Accessibility and inclusiveness: <input type="checkbox"/>
Mandatory voting: <input type="checkbox"/>	Online voting: <input type="checkbox"/>	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>Participants felt the current system is simple and easy to understand, particularly for newcomers, and produces a representative that is directly responsible to the voters of the constituency.</p> <p>Regarding flaws, participants expressed frustration with strategic voting and a desire to vote for an individual instead of a party. Some felt the current system doesn't accurately reflect their votes and doesn't include a clear link between the result and voter intent. It was also felt the system produces a parliament that is not reflective of Canada's gender and ethnic diversity.</p> <p>On a more general front, missing voter cards and a lack of awareness and information about upcoming elections was mentioned, as well as the accessibility of voting locations.</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

A desire was also expressed to not rush through the electoral reform process, but to ensure citizens are aware and engaged in the process.

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)

During the presentation, the mechanics of FPTP and a number of proportional and mixed-proportional systems was outlined to help frame the discussion.

Those favouring mixed or proportional systems rejected the premise that such systems could be confusing to voters, pointing to other jurisdictions that have implemented such systems. It was felt such a system will encourage cross-party cooperation in Parliament. Supporters felt it would lead to a Parliament more reflective of the will of the electorate.

Opponents of proportional systems rejected the importance of favoring proportionality of party choice over other, more important proportionalities such as gender and ethnicity. We can choose to join a party – we can't choose our gender or ethnic group.

Many of those both in favour and opposed to mixed or proportional systems expressed concerns about party lists creating an opportunity for cronyism and members who are not accountable to the electorate. Even those supporting mixed proportional systems felt it important that voters be able to rank party lists directly, or vote directly for members on the lists.

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)

Several mentioned just having one primary voting day as a barrier to turnout, with suggestions including multiple days and weekend voting, as well as online voting. One participant suggested a lottery awarding prizes to randomly-selected voters. Another felt a more “legitimate” system better reflective of voter intent would encourage participation.

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

Most participants that spoke to the topic favoured mandatory voting as a way to increase voter turnout, adding voting is the responsibility of a citizen – as long as a ballot can be left blank or spoiled.

Those opposed felt people forced to vote would not take the process seriously, which could produce “silly” results that would “corrupt the system.”

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)

Those who spoke were split on online voting.

Those supportive of online voting indicated it would increase voter turnout and make it easier for busy people to vote.

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Many of those opposed, including some who worked in the information technology sector, expressed concerns about security. Other concerns included the possibility of voter coercion, particularly for seniors and for those whose primary language is not English or French. Another also felt the advance polls provided sufficient opportunity to go to the polls.

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

Only one participant mentioned a referendum, supporting a two-stage vote similar to New Zealand’s reform process. Several participants though did express a need for a deliberative, non-rushed process that engages citizens in the reform process.

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

- No clear consensus on reform emerged, although a majority did favour a change to the status quo.
- There was broad opposition to a system involving party-chosen lists; any list-system should be ranked or chosen by the general electorate.
- There would be broad support for online voting if the security and integrity of the system can be ensured, and coercion of vulnerable groups addressed.
- Greater engagement with the public, and education on possible voting systems, is desired.

Report submitted to Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)

Date: Sept. 26, 2016

MP’s signature:

(Name) Salma Zahid

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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