

**MIKE BOSSIO  
HASTINGS—LENNOX AND  
ADDINGTON**

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



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

<b>CONSULTATION(S)</b>			
<b>Date(s) of the Meeting(s)</b>	<b>Time and Length (start time and end time)</b>	<b>Location of Consultation</b>	<b>Total Number of People in Attendance</b>
18 August	18:00 – 20:00	Bancroft, Ontario	52
20 August	14:00 – 16:00	Bath, Ontario	54
23 August	18:00 – 20:00	Tweed, Ontario	71
To 13 October	n/a	Email, Social Media, Letter	approx. 150
<p><b>Form:</b> (Y) Use of the Library of Parliament’s visual presentation            (Y) Presentation from the MP’s office            (Y) Open microphone            (Y) Question and answer session            (N) Guest speaker            (Y) Other (please specify): We had small group-work sessions, where groups then reported back to the room with an open microphone. MP and staff were on hand to answer questions. We also added a world map of current systems, as well as “features” information about different potential systems. This was based on feedback from the first consultations that asked for a further educational component to the presentation before we got into group work.</p>			
<b>SUBJECTS DISCUSSED (summary)</b>			
Voting systems: YES	Replacement of the current voting system: YES	Voter turnout: YES	Accessibility and inclusiveness: YES
Mandatory voting: YES	Online voting: YES	Local representation: YES	Other (please specify and describe below): NO

<b>DISCUSSION QUESTIONS</b>
<p><b>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)</b></p> <p>There was broad agreement that the strength of the current system is that it is easy to understand, and gives strong local representation, although rural ridings can still sometimes be overly large. Participants also pointed to the long-standing tradition of the current system, the predictability of the election cycle, and the benefit of the anonymous ballot.</p> <p>A strong majority of participants felt that the current system’s weakness was that its result was not</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](mailto:ERRE@parl.gc.ca)

*Deadline: Friday, October 14, 2016*

representative of the voters' wishes. At the third meeting (in Tweed) there were more participants who were satisfied with the current system than at the first two meetings, although they were still in a minority. The most vocal supporters of the status quo engaged on Facebook rather than attending meetings.

Further weaknesses of the current system were identified as: not fostering cooperation within an elected government; not doing enough to discourage negative campaigns; not doing enough to encourage reaching outside of one's own base of supporters; and, being created for a two party system, when in fact our system has multiple parties.

**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)**

The groups discussed the following alternative systems:

- Alternative Vote (AV)
- Two Round Vote (TRV)
- Open List Proportional Representation (OLPR)
- Closed List Proportional Representation (CLPR)
- Single Transferable Vote (STV)
- Mixed Member Proportional Representation (MMP)

We also received a variant of the Mixed Member Proportional Representation from Donna McNeil, which is based on putting a 10% cap on the number of "top-up" MPs, and selecting them from the party's defeated candidates who nevertheless received the highest number of votes. Those looking for the purest forms of PR were skeptical that this was truly proportional; however, those interested in MMP thought the idea worth considering as a potential compromise.

There was virtually no support for CLPR and STV. TRV also did not gain traction. Those who did discuss it felt that having two different voting days was not beneficial.

The alternative systems that did find support (in alphabetical order) were AV, MMP, and OLPR. Participants liked that AV maintained the current number of MPs, thus not increasing costs. They also liked that it potentially encouraged less negative politics, and maintained local representation, which was a guiding principle that all participants supported, particularly since we are in a rural region. Those interested in PR, however, reject AV, since they do not view it as proportional. This opinion was widely voiced at the meetings.

Locally-based contingents of Fair Vote Canada were on hand at all three meetings, and have made other submissions by email and letter, to voice their support for a system that they feel will be truly proportional, be it an OLPR, or MMP. The majority of them were not in favour of AV or the variant of MMP that puts a cap on "top-up" MPs.

**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)**

This was the first question that small work groups approached after the introductory presentation. It was suggested that those who do not vote feel that their vote will not matter, or that their preferred candidate does not actually have an opportunity to win. Also, they suggested that youth are skeptical of the system. It was suggested that there is a lack of trust in the system among those who do not vote, and even for some people who do vote.

Recommendations to improve participation included:

- Implementing a system where "every vote counts," and you do not feel like you have to vote strategically.

*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](mailto:ERRE@parl.gc.ca)

*Deadline: Friday, October 14, 2016*

-Teach young people (including in schools) about the importance of voting.  
-Smaller ridings would make people feel more invested in their vote and their candidates.  
-Implement compulsory voting and/or online voting.  
-Have childcare space available at voting stations.  
-Make it easier for new immigrants and people with disabilities to understand and participate in the system.

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

Although the idea was mooted as a way to increase voter turnout, there was practically no support at all for mandatory voting voiced at any of the meetings. Participants questioned how mandatory voting would be enforced, citing that the justice system was already busy enough. There were also questions of whether it would actually be constitutional.

**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)**

Initially, participants were fairly reluctant to support online or electronic voting. They were not as opposed to this as they were to mandatory voting, but it is safe to say that most people were not in favour of it. Those who were in favour tended to be younger. However, opposition seemed to diminish when one or two participants started voicing reasons for support. One participant drew attention to the fact that online voting had already been used successfully in a municipal election. Also, when it was pointed out that online or electronic voting might be a necessity if the voting system changed to something more complex through a preferential ballot or proportional representation, then there was a noticeable warming to the idea among those who were supportive of these system changes, and yet who had initially seemed reluctant to support online voting. Education and very high security was seen as a key component to any adoption of online or electronic voting.

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

Several participants also requested reform to the funding rules for political parties and elections, with a request that we “get money out of politics”.

There were also some calls for MPs to have more independence, citing that politics had become far too partisan (particularly in Question Period).

A small number individuals, whether online or at a town hall, requested that there be a referendum on any changes to the electoral system.

Participants noted that there must be a very strong educational component to any changes, so that they can be properly understood.

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

Participants from Hastings—Lennox and Addington have the following recommendations:

- Local representation is very important and must be maintained, particularly since rural ridings are already quite large as it is.

*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](mailto:ERRE@parl.gc.ca)

*Deadline: Friday, October 14, 2016*

- There needs to be a very vigorous education campaign to help people understand any changes to the system.
- There is no support for mandatory voting.
- There is support for an alternative system of voting, with potential options including (in alphabetical order) Alternative Vote, Mixed-Member Proportional, and Open List Proportional.
- People need to feel that their vote actually counts and has an impact in order for voter turnout to increase.

**Report submitted to Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)**

**Date: 14 October 2016**

**MP's signature:**



**(Name) Mike Bossio**

**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.*

*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](mailto:ERRE@parl.gc.ca)**

*Deadline: Friday, October 14, 2016*