



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

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ELECTORAL REFORM TOWN HALL – COMBINED NOTES
July 20, 2016 & September 24, 2016

Introduction (Mark Holland)

- Elections: Underlying principles, and that each system has its flaws
- Voting options being considered; electronic voting, mandatory voting
- Role of the Committee (note: only committee without a Liberal majority)
- Committee has until Dec. 1 to table recommendation to Parliament
- CBC has a video available on the different systems

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Jim Wiseman

- No referendum (not necessary or desirable)
- Age of voting should be lowered to 16
- Supports electronic ballot, does not support party lists
- Wants ranked ballots, then creating a system with a formula where people who are appointed come from people who ran and got a certain number of votes
- Supports per-vote subsidy, against donations & donation tax credits

Dave

- Doesn't support lowering voting age to 16
- Tax dollars being wasted, wants legal liability for elected Parliament to do best job possible with tax dollars
- Wants expenditures put on ballots next to names

Darcy

- No right for government to make fundamental change unilaterally
- Supports referendum, cites 1980 & 1995 referendum for Quebec sovereignty

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Rob

- Glad to see consultation happening
- Supports PR, often votes NDP/Green and feels vote is wasted

Jack

- Supports referendum, thinks Brexit referendum shows this is important
- Politicians should be told by people how they are to be elected, not other way around
- Either we should have a referendum, or consensus of majority within all 3 major parties agreeing on same system (not majority of Parliament)
- Doesn't think electoral reform and Fair Elections Act were equal in stature
- Trudeau shouldn't have ruled out anything, including staying with FPTP
- Disappointed in poor notice of town hall

Unknown

- No referendum; would be overly influenced by corporate media
- Need representative, not elected, democracy
- Supports PR (makes majorities harder)
- Essay manifesto: *How to Practice a Representative Democracy*

Adrienne Snow

- Ranked ballots: how well-informed are we about our second choices?
- Parliamentary reform, not electoral, will give MPs better voices (less whipped votes etc)

Scott

- Committee should come up with one option and explain it so people can have a say
- Electronic voting not perfect

John Nicholson

- Committee needs simpler guiding principles: why change the system, what are the benefits?
- Against electronic and mandatory voting (too complicated)
- Against ranked ballots (too Liberal-friendly)
- Liberals need to show we're not rigging the system in favour of one party

Brittney

- Political science student
- Need simpler system. Need Canadians to know what systems mean
- Pro referendum; anything else too complicated for such a nuanced change
- Referendum brings media attention, allows people to be better-informed

Alana

- 13 commissions in the past have recommended PR
- Wants PR: will this evidence of the past influence our decision right now?

Peter Morgan

- Supports PR personally
- Could support ranked ballots as part of STV system but not on their own
- Everyone's first vote, not subsequent vote, should count
- Ranked ballots guarantee Liberal government forever and is corrupt as a Liberal recommendation

Gord Gray

- People voted Liberal understanding that meant voting for no more elections under FPTP, we should honour that & fulfill the promise
- Against referendum: too messy. People too uninformed
- Electronic voting will always suffer from bugs, and we shouldn't trust it
- Donations: if you can't vote, you shouldn't be able to donate. The annual donation cap should be affordable to all people, ex. ~\$100 yearly

Antoine Seliva

- Against referendum (no need for it)
- Choose system based on numbers, explain how decision was arrived at (science-based)
- Each candidate should have a scorecard: what promises have you kept, what have you achieved to become MPs
- Supports systems that promote smaller parties

Matthew

- FPTP promotes two-party system, too divisive
- System should support smaller parties
- Should get youth (16-year-olds) involved, educate youth on voting in high school

Kathy Reid

- Non-partisan
- Electorate voted for reform, we should do what they voted for
- PR entrenches parties but doesn't enhance leadership, therefore distances voters
- STV best connects people and their representatives

Adrian

- Supports tweaked FPTP: wants runoff for people who haven't received 50%
- Wants electronic voting and mandatory voting
- Wants ban of election signs on public property
- Look into reducing the voting age
- Ranked ballots are too complicated
- PR is a reward for mediocrity

Unknown

- A lot of people who don't understand the current system
- Need a good simple explanation of current system & its implications
- Need to connect with young voters via town halls in schools

Kevin Donaldson

- Ranked ballots only affect votes 1-2% of the time
- Supports PR with two votes. 1 for local candidate, 1 for party. No party lists
- Seats assigned based on who gets support in a riding but doesn't get elected
- Supports permanent seats for Indigenous representatives

Neskins,

- Voted to get rid of FPTP, we should select best system. No referendum necessary
- If the result the Committee comes to is a system which most benefits the Liberals, we should still support it (this is why we voted for the Liberals)
- Pick the right system, regardless of the public perception of it

Lance James

- Why vote when money is given to other countries?
- Does an MP vote for their constituents or their party? Want MPs to represent residents not parties
- Should be made easier for seniors (esp. in seniors' homes) to vote

Gary

- What is the response to electoral reform for Conservative supporters?
- Supports FPTP
- Wants to revamp the Senate: should be chosen every 5 years, should be proportional

Radakrishna

- Donations should be put into a common pool to be split among all parties

Mike

- MP's link to their community should be stronger, not weaker

Colin

- Electing representatives by lot—pull names out of a hat
- Recall legislation should exist & be used
- Electronic voting and mandatory voting both important
- Voting age should be lowered to 16
- Supports STV-Plus, with de-emphasized parties

Richard

- Keep Voting Simple advocate: supports keeping FPTP

- Clear that Liberals have preference for ranked ballots since no action being taken to prepare for referendum or PR
- Ranked ballots is undemocratic, illegitimate

James McAllister

- FPTP is old-fashioned and exacerbates regionalism
- Likes the fact that Liberals changed from majority on Committee to minority
- Opposed to referendum
- Wants support from opposition on whatever choice is made

Stephanie Brown

- Opposes mandatory voting (not everyone has perfect access to the ballot box; will punish people already disadvantaged for not voting, like seniors)
- Not voting is a legitimate exercise of democratic rights
- Opposes referendum: turns complex questions into simple questions. We don't even have something yet to vote on
- Supports PR, notes that Royal Commissions/NGOs/academics/other countries have positive opinions & recommendations for PR
- Party lists can be used to address equity issues

Denise

- Very opposed to FPTP
- Ranked ballots would also help Conservatives
- Supports PR in principle
- No specific choice, just wants fairer system & more representative seats

Mark

- Opposed to referendum
- Us-and-them relationship between citizens and elected politicians exists
- Process should be citizen-driven, with upfront input (mail out questionnaires), and people should know how their input has counted
- Supports STV

Rex Thomas

- Supports ridings of ~100,000 people, with winners by ~20,000 votes
- Supports runoff voting to ensure true majorities
- Candidates should have spending limits: shouldn't be able to spend more than they personally earn in a year

ELECTORAL REFORM TOWN HALL – COMBINED NOTES
September 24th, 2016,

Introduction (Jennifer O’Connell and Mark Holland)

Doug Moffat

- Referendum should not be done, policy by referendum is not the right choice.
- In Ontario most people didn't know enough about the different systems to make an informed decision for their referendum.

Brian Buckles

- Had some questions regarding the electoral reform committee and whether recommendations will derive from an all-party consensus or just a majority of the parties?

Evelyn Page

- Wanted Mr. Holland to go over the systems and how they would relate to the local ridings or effect local representation?
- She has recently submitted her perspectives online to the ERRE committee
- Believes a referendum must occur

Keith Scott

- Is strongly opposed to proportional representation.
- States that most countries around the world who have this are minority governments. The leads to more uncertainty, less fruitful legislation.
- Wants to know who would decide the list for the mixed representation.
- Does not support online voting because of all of the problems in the US

Reid Wilson

- Has stated that he’s never voted for a party that that won a seat. Would like that to change.
- He cares deeply about climate change but doesn’t feel like he had a system for him

- Proportional representation gives him hope because more elected officials would think about more people - too much strength of parties and partisanship today
- In the US, partisanship is so decisive and tearing it apart
- does not support majority governments because he believes it's power gone crazy
- Supports mixed member prop representation will lead to more cooperation in parliament
- Fair Vote is non-partisan and have been providing good information about the different systems and encouraging people to get engaged

Paul

- Does not support electronic voting
- Showing up to vote is important in proving someone is voting of their own free-will
- Doesn't want larger ridings or more members.
- Important to preserve responsibility if elected by the voter.
- If appointed by the party you're responsible to the party
- Likes ranked ballot because it encourages people to vote because their vote matters

Steven Leahy

- He was the Green Party candidate in the past and they received over 1 million votes but no representation
- Supports the system in Germany
- Does not support mandatory voting, if the system is fixed then more people will vote naturally

Cheryl

How do we encourage more people to vote, especially young people.

- Need that to be a part of any reform -get more people engaged
- There is too much apathy in Canadian politics at all levels
- Young people do a lot on their phones so we can't rule out online voting but find some

creative way to at least engage them to get out in better ways

Bob Davis

- Governments need to turn promises and policies into realities
- How do you balance what you want to do versus what the government can realistically do.
- Had question regarding where the committee recommendations go.
- Does the committee have a commitment from the PM to actually make a change?

Nancy

- Mixed member system seems okay but not sure how it works
- if you add a lot of people to the ballot that no one has heard of, it will add a lot of noise and mix the systems.
- online voting would be good for young people but be careful of the bias for example the poor or seniors who don't have a computer or internet access.
- She thinks this is where it is going anyways so we have to be thoughtful on how it is rolled out

Maggie Twidale

- Youth engagement is important. First past the post isn't very inspiring because who they want to vote for might not win and then their vote is "wasted"
- Does not think a referendum would be the best way to come up with a system

Larry

- Supports Fair Vote Canada
- In the Ontario referendum, people thought that it just meant more representatives and that turned people off. Does not support a referendum because it is too confusing
- Important to talk about how to handle rural representation vs urban

Ted Barris

- Wanted to encourage us to engage young people
- Go to schools to ensure the future voters get excited about their systems

-Young people need to really understand these systems so confronting them with these issues is important.