

**NAME OF RUBY SAHOTA,
BRAMPTON NORTH**

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



**NOM DU (DE LA) RUBY SAHOTA
BRAMPTON DU NORD**

**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. August 21, 2016	2 Hours	Century Gardens Rec Centre, 340 Vodden St. E., Brampton, ON, L6V 2N2	6 employees assisted with the event. 30 participants
2. October 11, 2016	2 hours	Loafer's Lake Rec Centre 30 Loafers Lake Ln, Brampton, ON L6Z 1X9	7 employees/volunteers assisted. 70 participants.
Form: <input type="checkbox"/> Use of the Library of Parliament's visual presentation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Presentation from the MP's office <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open microphone <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Question and answer session <input type="checkbox"/> Guest speaker <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):			
SUBJECTS DISCUSSED (summary)			
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: <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>The majority of participants in both consultations believed the current First Past the Post System (FPTP) is not truly representative as the governing party's share of the votes and their representation in the House doesn't relatively match. However, participants expressed that our current system is easier to understand from familiarity; therefore, if a new system is implemented, extensive education will be needed for a new system.</p> <p>A few participants mentioned the important point that: last election, 50% of the votes cast elected nobody. This will not be fixed by ranked ballots or mandatory voting.</p> <p>Some said leave as current system but make it compulsory voting and Election day as a holiday.</p>

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 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

Many participants believed people don't want to vote in an ineffective system, that affects voter turnout. Plus the system doesn't address diversity and women in politics.

One example provided: thirty-six million people into 338 MPs is 104,000 people per riding. Should there be one representative for each 104,000 people, or should there be more than one representative? Can every opinion among those 104,000 be represented? It is unlikely, but we can try our utmost to have the majority of people per riding represented.

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)

AV

For those in favour of ranked ballots, they preferred it because if the candidate gets 50% from the second and third choices, that system is good.

Opposed to AV, one person said a winner-take-all ranked ballots would make FPTP even worse as we would have even more false majorities and no accountability. People do not want to see a repeat of the false majority from last time.

Another perspective was that we must be informed when making this decision. It is important to look at where AV/ranked ballots are used, for how many years, and whether the results are representative. One person believed AV needs to be made more simplistic.

Proportional Representation

One person said PR makes sense as the only decent and simple option. In the second consultation, many people said they are in favour of PR with a couple saying Ranked Ballots and PR together. There was more favour for PR in general during second consultation.

Against PR, one person mentioned that when using PR, we get more fringe parties and another said that in the ON and BC referendums, people voted re-soundly against PR.

Mixed Member Proportional

In favour of MMP, one person said it is best because its features are a compromise of different types of systems that Open List and Closed List are both good and this system would incorporate both. Another person said that a country as wide and dispersed needs fitting local representatives, but should also be based on a party's vote share. Perhaps MMP will provide checks and balances for these.

Another benefit of MMP highlighted was that elected representatives will collaborate to provide consensus on policy and think about more than just their own party's vision. MMP would be representative of Canada, said another person.

One person mentioned that parties try and be inclusive in their candidates search but not all caucus members elected are representative of Canada. Therefore, if a Party typically only elects urban representatives, they could include rural or northern under the MMP system.

Lastly, one person reminder the group that MMP was recommended by the Law commission. Another said MMP with ranked ballots. But a couple of people said MMP is bad policy choice.

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)

The biggest challenge according to one participant is voter apathy. We need to work better on voter

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participation and education, said a few people.

We need to educate regarding this civic duty from kindergarten. We pretend politics is not important. We don't talk about religion, politics or sex in school—we need to discuss politics with our children. In the USA, grades 1 and 2 onwards, children bring home information about politics and voting (as stated by a constituent but needs verification on USA education structure).

Most of the participants in the second consultation stated mandatory voting should exist, regardless of changing the system. A couple noted even financial incentive would be helpful. There was a strong debate for online voting, with a few saying its unsecure and dangerous.

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

In favour of mandatory voting, a few people said that if it is mandatory for all people to vote, we will have true representation of all the parties. Another mentioned that mandatory voting would change how the parties behave.

We have only a few civic duties so mandatory voting is fair. In other jurisdictions, people have to serve in the army, voting is not much to ask of our citizens. Second consultations had most participants advocating for mandatory voting regardless of electoral system we have next election.

Against mandatory voting, one person said we are treating the symptoms not the disease. We are not solving any problem by forcing people to vote, instead we are hiding the problem because you can show really high voter turnout but don't know how effective it was. Forcing someone to pick from options they don't like will not make them like their options any more than they do. Another person said that we should trust a small sample of educated people, not a large sample of forced people.

If we were to institute mandatory voting, there were other suggestions. For example, if we have mandatory voting, we should have a “none of the above” option. We also need to have adequate resources, training and education, said many. It is undemocratic to force voting without this.”

If compulsory voting happens, some said election day should be a federal holiday. People are not able to work because of difficult work environments, said one participant.

Another person said that like in Australia, you could be fined for not voting or it could have another implication on your income tax.

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 in favour of electronic and online voting, one person said there would be fewer cases of voter and polling clerk errors, and we would save money since the expense around training voting clerks is “insane.” Voting online would be efficient, results could be calculated faster.

A participant was of the opinion that online voting is working in other countries so we should do it if it is secure. One person did mention is the government going to make it open source code so people can see how the government has designed the system, an effort to be transparent.

One person mentioned that our current PM was partly selected using online voting.

One strategy would be to start using online voting in remote communities where voting is difficult or could have people apply to be able to vote online if they have difficulties with access.

Opposed to e-voting, one person said it is dangerous and insecure. “What if someone hijacks our

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vote?” The incentive for internal and foreign agents to break the system is too great. There were a couple people who said, there could be undue influence and pressure at home or wherever someone votes if it is online. One major issue people had was current Telecommunications companies don't provide adequate or good internet service, especially in rural areas. Would government look to force costs down as in order to complete civic duty, need proper internet access.

It was brought up that in 2011, there were some issues surrounding the vote yet the government still served its term. What if the result of an online vote is questioned over irregularities with online voting?

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

Many participants expressed the importance of simplicity and proper representation. They said voting needs to be easier, with more options - especially if people are sick or away. One person said the current system should not be automatically excluded just because the PM said it will be.

One person said that senators could be chosen by PR, but Members of Parliament by ranked balloting. If any issues, we can negotiate like in Australia, to pass bills”

Many people agreed we need to incentivize voting, for example by giving people a tax credit or tax break if they or their whole family votes. Some believed straight financial benefit through use of SIN cards would be helpful.

One person believes that as a citizen, you should be given the option to vote ‘none’.

According to two people, we should have had more participation in a discussion as important as this. They said there needs to be greater consultations with Canadians and at all 3 levels, engagement is important. We need to better understand the citizens, build local committees, have more town-halls, and give people some ownership of our democracy. One person felt the government should still allow for FPTP to be a fall back and not a guarantee change.

Another person said that our local representative should have to live in the riding.

One person raised the point that in Brampton, people's financial and economic situation is important to whether or not they get involved and vote.

Another mentioned that lack of free votes in Parliament may affect voter engagement.

The second consultation saw many more people concerned with the learning and teaching a new system to people, the costs associated with this change, how serious the government is and lastly, mandatory voting. One person said, to avoid any “elitism” by government, there should be a referendum. And the most common comment on election day itself was that it becomes a holiday to ensure people can go out to vote without the pressures of work. Plus some people don't work near where they live, therefore their polling stations are far away.

One constituent said there should be free transportation on election day to help those get to polling stations that don't have a car. Eliminate a barrier to voting.

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

To start off, many of the participants agreed that the current system is not representative. However, it is also the simplest system so any change would require a great deal of education and practice.

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According to many participants, if we want to tackle the root causes of the issue, we need to address voter apathy by ensuring active participation in our democratic system. This can be done through means such as more education and information surrounding the elections, education for our youth at an early age, inspiring greater faith in our civic duty. But

There was not a consensus on any one particular system, and many participants were active in providing their opinion for or against each system. However, few supported the current FPTP system as is.

Many of the participants said we need to incentivize voting, either through a rebate or tax break. They also seemed to agree with the idea that election day should be a federal holiday so that there is absolutely no barrier to access because of precarious employment and such. Many believed making it a holiday is essential to give people the best opportunity to vote. Plus provide transportation for people that may not have cars.

The first consultation had mixed feedback regarding whether mandatory voting would improve our system or not. The second one had more pro-mandatory voting advocates to ensure voter compliance and would make parties rethink their strategy and make their policies more all-encompassing rather than strategic to a specific voter base.

The participants seemed to be receptive to online voting as it would provide people with more options and accessibility for voting. It would decrease costs and afford the government to reach more people. Questions were raised on security of online voting, undue influences on voters at home and access to reliable internet.

Report submitted to Special Committee on Electoral Reform (ERRE)	Date:
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MP's signature:	(Name)
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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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