

Office of the Papineau Riding
Member of Parliament: The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
529 Jarry Street East, Suite 302
Montreal, Quebec
H2P 1V4

Results of the public consultation on electoral reform in the Papineau riding

1. *What kind of dialogue took place?*

Complementary dialogue

Informal discussion

➤ Community discussion

General meeting

Other

2. *When did the dialogue take place?*

Thursday, October 6, 2016

3. *Where did the dialogue take place?*

Centre Lajeunesse, 7378 Lajeunesse Street, Suite 111

Montreal (Quebec)

H2R 2H8

4. *Who organized the activity?*

The Papineau riding office

5. *Approximately how many people participated in the activity?*

40

6. *Briefly describe the activity:*

The Prime Minister made a brief introduction of the evening. Member of Parliament Mark Holland then facilitated the public consultation. He began by presenting the various types of voting systems and how they work. He then mentioned that mandatory voting, electronic voting, and lowering the legal voting age to 16 for federal elections are all options the government will consider during electoral reform.

A question-and-answer period followed, with comments made by neighbourhood residents, to which MP Holland responded.

General Information

1. *Did you engage in a dialogue on electoral reform and on democratic reform in general?* **Yes**

a. *If so, what were the highlights of the dialogue?*

A number of questions and comments were raised.

- Question: How can "party dictatorship" be avoided?
- Question: Why make this change now?
- Question: In a system where a riding has a number of members of parliament, one citizen was wondering to whom people should address requests for help from their MP.
- Comment: Proposal to extend the voting period, make it more flexible, perhaps allow for voting on the weekend or by electronic methods.
- Question: Why not eliminate the party line?
- Comment: Proposal that parties no longer exist.
- Comment/Question: One citizen was in favour of lowering the legal voting age to 16. He mentioned in particular that it is difficult for young people to vote at universities, and that they should be learning how to go about it at a younger age.
- On the other hand, another citizen said that lowering the legal voting age to 16 would not improve anything. He thinks, however, that the key to getting young people involved and concerned with voting is to better educate them regarding this issue, thus ensuring that they will vote once they turn 18. He especially emphasized that at 16, not many people know who to vote for since they are not well enough informed to do so.
- Comment: Minority groups should be better represented in the House of Commons. One citizen mentioned that in Bangladesh, a certain percentage of seats are reserved for a specific minority group to ensure that minority groups are well represented in parliament.
- Question: Would a national referendum be held on the question of electoral reform?
- Comment: One citizen said that he doesn't want too many parties in the House of Commons, he wants the government to be able to "do what it needs to get done". He feels that a referendum would be dangerous, especially considering the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords.
- Question: What would be the government's approach to enforcement of mandatory voting (financial, coercive, reward-based, etc.)?
- Comment: Mandatory voting is not a good idea because it's illogical that people would go to the polls for no reason, i.e. to not vote for anyone. This citizen feels that a culture should be developed that encourages people to get out and vote.
- Comment: A proposal was made whereby people would be subject to fiscal penalties for not voting because the right to vote is in fact a duty.

This citizen also feels that the parties should have a financial ceiling in order to avoid creating a situation similar to what happens in the United States.

- Comment: One citizen mentioned being highly favourable to the idea of mandatory voting because it would be a good way to obtain the opinions of all citizens. Also, he is in favour of a mixed proportional or proportional representation system.
- Comment: One citizen likes the idea of a mixed-proportional system. He prefers the notion of voting for ideas rather than for individuals. He feels that politicians need to win back the citizens' faith in democracy because the only image that we have of the House of Commons is that of politicians arguing all the time. He also thinks that each community should have the right to a seat.

Democratic Values and Principles

1. *Did you engage in a dialogue regarding the values and principles that uphold democracy in Canada? Yes.*
 - a. *If so, what were the highlights of the dialogue?*
 - Opinion is mixed regarding mandatory voting. Everyone feels that voting is important, but some people believe that improving education and raising awareness would be more appropriate than making voting mandatory.
 - There was consensus on the role of minority groups. Some proposed that a certain number of seats be reserved for specific communities, while others suggested that each community be given a seat.
 - b. *What principles did the participants consider most important?*
 - The role of minorities and involving everyone in the electoral system.
 - c. *What principles did the participants consider less important?*
 - No one really talked about electronic voting, so it did not appear to be much of a concern.

Electoral reform in Canada

1. *Did you engage in a dialogue about various potential electoral reforms in Canada? Yes.*
 - a. *If so, what were the highlights of the dialogue?*

In general, most were favourable to the idea of a proportional and mixed-proportional voting system.

Other comments

1. *Did the dialogue give rise to any other insights that you would like to share with us?* **No**

Report produced on October 11, 2016

By the Office of the riding of the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau