

# PRESENTATION SUMMARY

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DUNCAN PUBLIC HEARING DATED  
8 JUNE 2004 AT THE TRAVELODGE  
SILVER BRIDGE

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE PRESENTATION TO THE CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON ELECTORAL REFORM. IT ATTEMPTS TO CAPTURE THE KEY ISSUES AND ARGUMENTS THAT WERE PRESENTED AND DISCUSSED DURING THE PUBLIC HEARING. IN SOME INSTANCES, THE PRESENTER HAS ALSO MADE A SUBMISSION TO THE ASSEMBLY AND THIS IS ACCESSIBLE VIA THE WEBSITE AT [WWW.CITIZENSASSEMBLY.BC.CA](http://WWW.CITIZENSASSEMBLY.BC.CA) BY CLICKING ON "GET INVOLVED". IF SUCH A SUBMISSION IS AVAILABLE, IT WILL BE NOTED AT THE END OF THIS REPORT.

# Julian West

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## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

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‘Circuit STV’ (STVC), an enhanced version of STV in which each member represents a geographic ‘circuit’ within the multi-member district. An implementation is given with 21 districts electing between 2 and 6 members.

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## KEY THEMES

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Julian West cited from the Berger Commission Report which was released today and states that “of the various PR based systems reviewed so far by this commission, the STV system may well be the fairest electoral system” for use in the Vancouver City municipal elections. Dr West urged the assembly to consider the ramifications of changing the system, especially the need to regulate the operation of political parties if they are given more power under a proportional electoral system. He explained that people have focused on proportionality as the missing element in our current electoral system, but argued that it is also important to consider voter choice, stable and responsive government, and geographic representation when evaluating any electoral system.

Dr West advocated the introduction of a Single Transferable Vote electoral system because it is generally agreed to have the highest degree of voter choice. He also proposed some modifications to suit the geography of British Columbia and suggested that the district magnitude of constituencies should differ in urban and rural BC, with five member districts in most urban ridings and two or three member districts in northern ridings. He also argued that provincial electoral districts should correspond with municipal and regional district boundaries to harmonize jurisdiction between the two levels of government.

Dr West recommended a modification to the classical STV model in order to divide each electoral district into a number of geographic sections, or circuits, equal to the district magnitude of the riding. This would preserve much of the local representation of the current single-member constituency, although because circuits are not used for electoral purposes that could be distributed unevenly in order to focus representation on more remote areas. He also recommended that parties should not be able to limit the number of party candidates seeking election in each district, to minimize the party leader’s control over candidate selection. Dr West spoke in favour of the creation of a separate electoral list for members of First Nations, with members of the electoral list electing members to the legislature in one three-member province-wide STV electoral district. He clarified that his system, using STV in both rural and urban areas, was superior to the combination of urban STV ridings and rural Alternative Vote ridings because the use of circuits gives all voters a designated local representative, rural ridings gain some proportionality, and it reduces the potential for one party to sweep the rural districts.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Julian West recommended that introduction of the STV electoral system, with modifications to suit the geography of British Columbia.

*Quote: “In contrast to MMP, my circuit-STV proposal leaves the same number of MLA representing similar-size geographic areas in similar places – and even enhances representation in remote areas by allowing for variable-sized circuits.”*

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#### QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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There were no questions or comments from members of the panel.

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#### QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

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Following this presentation quite a few members of the audience had questions.

Q	Can you explain how you see this changing the face of the BC legislature?
A	Well it's a proportional representation system so parties would be represented roughly in proportion to their first preference vote. In a five member riding, the party only needs to get 16 per cent of the vote to be elected, so the Green Party would have succeeded in electing a number of candidates.
Q	How many seats are there in your model?
A	Seventy-nine, the same number of representatives as we have now. I'm also suggesting that if First Nations wanted to vote on a separate voting list there could be three additional seats for First Nations representatives.
Q	In a rural riding you might have voters who elected someone from another circuit. Wouldn't that still be a problem for geographical representation?
A	Yes, that could be a problem. For example, in the Kootenays I have three MLAs elected, and even though the circuits are divided into east, west and central, you might have two of those three representatives elected who live in central Kamloops. I'm hoping under my system that because one of those members would be allocated to east or west Kootenays that they would move there and live within the circuit.
Q	How do you break the Island up on your map?

A	The Capital Regional District is a six member district. Cowichan-Nanaimo is a four member district, and the Northern Regional District grows from 3 to 4 members so that it could also incorporate part of the central coast.
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***Comment:*** There were no comments from the audience.

**SUBMISSION: YES**

**SUBMISSION ID# 0467**