

# PRESENTATION SUMMARY

---

LANGLEY PUBLIC HEARING  
DATED 20 MAY 2004  
AT THE HAMPTON INN

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.

# Katherine Churchill

## BC Nurses Union

---

### DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

---

A presentation outlining why the current voting system needs to change as well as our recommendations regarding the changes we think are important to move towards improved democracy.

---

### KEY THEMES

---

Ms. Churchill expressed her support for the position of the BC Nurses Union. The presenter expressed frustration with the current FPTP system as a result of its production of wrong winners and artificial and exaggerated majorities. Ms. Churchill stated that the operation of the current system has created problems of accountability and a void in local representation. Furthermore, the presenter stated the damaging effect that adversarial politics and party discipline has on factors such as youth engagement in the political process. Ms. Churchill argued that the current “winner-takes-all” system leads to the under-representation of women and minorities. According to the presenter, for democracy to be effective it must be inclusive. In addition, to encourage the engagement of youth, and traditionally marginalized groups, the broad representation of society within the legislature is essential. Ms. Churchill stated that the introduction of proportionality would produce a more inclusive legislature, allow a more diverse range of voices to be heard, and enhance the accountability of MLAs to constituents between elections.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Ms. Churchill recommended:

1. The Citizens’ Assembly rejects the current FPTP electoral system, and instead strives to be more inclusive and provide for a more consensual style of government.
2. The introduction of a form of proportional representation as the centre piece of electoral reform in British Columbia.
3. The Citizens’ Assembly thinks critically about the MMP model of representation for British Columbia. Ms. Churchill advocated the adoption of MMP as it is used in Germany and New Zealand with voters casting two votes, one for the constituency and one for a party list. Local seats may be organized along the boundaries of the current federal system (enabling more regular updating of the electoral roll) and the list seats may be filled on a province wide basis.

4. That the Citizens' Assembly engages the public in a review of possible MMP systems that could be used in British Columbia.
5. That the Citizens' Assembly recommends a fixed number of MLA seats.
6. That the Citizens' Assembly recommends a reasonable threshold of about 4 or 5% of the vote to secure representation, thereby discouraging the emergence of fringe parties.

---

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

---

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Comment | I have read a number of pieces in the literature that suggest that the governments of Israel and Italy have not been unstable, and the stability of the country has not been threatened by the type of government that they have had. |
| Q       | If you feel that local representation is currently ineffective, why would you want to bother with MMP if you could go to a pure PR system such as that in the Netherlands?  |
| A       | I think that anything that encourages choice is better for democracy. I have to advocate a change based on my personal experience; from my experience as a parent.  |