

# PRESENTATION SUMMARY

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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.

# David Truman

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## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

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I will present arguments in favour of returning to the system of electing two members per riding.

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## KEY THEMES

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Mr. Truman discussed the objectives of electoral reform including improved proportionality. The presenter discussed the need for seats to more accurately reflect votes cast and for the problem of “wrong winners” to be eliminated. Mr. Truman went on to note the need for the improved representation of minor parties to provide a viable third or fourth option for voters, that is, to prevent wasted votes. The presenter expressed the desire to retain certain elements of the current FPTP system including the election of a specific candidate, not a party list, and having members tied geographically to constituencies. The presenter also stated the undesirability of moving to a system that perpetually produces minority governments, potentially enabling small parties to wield influence in excess of their popular support in the electorate. Mr. Truman discussed the advantage of stability that majority government provides. The need for a simple electoral system was also mentioned, particularly in reference to ballot design. Mr. Truman also expressed his opposition to any form of preferential system.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Truman recommended the amalgamation of the 54 urban ridings into two member districts, while maintaining rural districts as they currently stand. The presenter supported a system in which the party may run two candidates in each dual member riding; however, the voter may only cast a single ballot. Mr. Truman argued that this would preclude the production of lopsided results and exaggerated majorities that occur under the current system. The presenter also argued for the preclusion of “wrong winners” by instituting the ability of parties to introduce members at large to make up the difference.

Mr. Truman argued that the party leader should be able to appoint these members at large. Under this system small parties would gain representation as each party that achieved a minimum requirement of votes would be allocated a number of seats depending on the level of the popular vote they garnered. Mr. Truman advocated that such members also be appointed by the respective party leaders. If the appointment of such members resulted in the production of a minority government then the system should enable the appointment of further members to the party who gained a majority of votes in the electorate.

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QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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Q How are the “members at large” elected under your system?

A There are two ways you can get members at large, if the party that wins a majority of the vote does not have a plurality of seats they would be appointed the number of seats required to give them a majority in the legislature. The second way is that there would be a benchmark beyond which minor parties would be guaranteed representation.

Q Have you thought about keeping your system within the 79 seat system?

A No, I don't think 79 is a magic number. No one wants to give up their local members so it is much easier to add members, so if we could add about five I'm sure we could find them salaries and somewhere to sit.

Q Do you see a maximum number of MLAs?

A In theory you could have a very large number, if a party got a huge popular vote and not many seats. But I think that you would be looking at little more than 8 or 9 top-up seats, and usually less than that. To put a cap on it would preclude the effective operation of the system.

Q You suggested combining the urban areas into two; are you saying that there would be 27 ridings?

A Yes that's right, and rural voters would continue to vote exactly as they do now.

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QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

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Q Are you saying that you don't support two or three minor parties coming together and forming a coalition government?

A I have no comment on coalition governments. They are not a common occurrence in Canada. A minority can always become a majority coalition.

Q Under the current system if we elect a representative we have someone that we can go to, who would the members at large represent?

A Under my proposal you would still have a local representative to go to. The members at large would not represent a specific set of constituents in a district. However, they would be able to represent those people uncomfortable with dealing with their local members, perhaps on the grounds of party affiliation.

Q Would candidates run as a party slate or as individuals?

A They would run as individuals. That is the whole point of this system. And parties may not want to run two candidates in a district they may only want to run one and avoid splitting the vote.