

# PRESENTATION SUMMARY

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NELSON PUBLIC HEARING  
DATED 11 MAY 2004  
AT THE PRESTIGE LAKESIDE RESORT

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.

# Troy Lanigan

## Canadian Taxpayers Federation

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### DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

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To recommend to the Citizens' Assembly a voting system that will strive to attain better accountability in government.

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### KEY THEMES

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Mr. Lanigan stated that increased accountability in government constitutes the number one priority of citizens. The presenter discussed the requirement for electoral reform in order to combat excessive party discipline, executive dominance, and weak local representation.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Lanigan recommended a mixed system combining the single transferable vote (STV) and the alternative vote (AV). STV would be used predominantly in multi-member urban areas and AV would be used primarily in single-member rural ridings. The presenter stated that this system would temper the power of parties, promote the election of independents, and provide voters with more than one MLA thereby increasing the likelihood that citizens will have a representative of their political persuasion to go to. Furthermore, this system would reduce wasted votes and increase proportionality.

*Quote: Party discipline robs voters of representation. ... Between elections voters cannot count on their representatives to deny governments anything that they want to do.*

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### QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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| Q | How big do you think that your riding could be without compromising geographical representation under STV?  |
| A | You would have to leave the northern ridings as single member districts. There would be anywhere from three to five members in urban and heavily populated areas. |

Q Could you explain how a rural riding would benefit from STV?

A The same way a riding in Vancouver would benefit. It would empower voters to vote for individuals and independents. I don't think it constitutes a rural-urban divide. They get the benefits of being able to rank candidates both between and within parties.

Q We currently have forty one registered parties in BC. If we had forty one parties running candidates in each multi-member district the voter would have to rank forty one or more candidates; wouldn't that make the ballot exceptionally long?

A Yes it would. Parties would still have to get their candidates on the ballot. But the benefits far outweigh the size of the ballot in our view as we are injecting accountability into the system.

Q Do you foresee any problems with STV and ballot counting?

A I don't think so. It works in Ireland it works in Malta. You can have a computer count the ballots. We like the idea of voting for candidates not parties and we worry about how large some of the constituencies would be under MMP.

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QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

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Q Can you explain how you expect people to be informed about individuals under STV if we are not voting for parties?

A Not everyone will get informed. If you vote party you can continue to do that but if you follow politics a little more closely then you are able to rank those candidates according to your preferences.

Q Do you consider it a problem that STV has not promoted the election of women?

A I'm not sure that STV has necessarily inhibited the election of women. Ireland and Malta may be places where culturally women have not stepped forward. Studies have shown that introducing proportionality should enable the increased representation of women in the system.