PRESENTATION SUMMARY

RICHMOND PUBLIC HEARING DATED 4 MAY 2004 AT THE VANCOUVER AIRPORT MARRIOTT HOTEL, RICHMOND

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 BY CLICKING ON "GET INVOLVED". IF SUCH A SUBMISSION IS AVAILABLE, IT WILL BE NOTED AT THE END OF THIS REPORT.

John West

Simplicity. Change on ballot form offering a NOTA option. And the style of the Assembly which would follow.

KEY THEMES

John West argued that the whole political system is corrupt, and that under our current electoral system we are not electing representatives of the people.

He proposed an alternative system where voters who do not like any of the parties or any of the candidates could register a protest vote by casting a vote for 'None of the Above.'

The system Mr Smith proposed will cost nothing apart from a slight change to the ballot paper to add a 'NOTA' option to the bottom of the ballot.

All of the people who cast a vote for NOTA will go into a pool of electors where they can be selected for office by random selection. This system will promote participatory democracy.

Official public opinion polls would be held to guide representatives making decisions in the legislature.

RECOMMENDATIONS

> John West recommends adapting the ballot paper to include a 'None of the Above' option. Additional MLAs could be randomly selected from a pool of all people who have voted for None of the Above.

Quote: *"We need to recognize that Canadians are capable of governing themselves."*

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

There were three members of the panel who sought clarification on elements of the presentation.

Q	Is anybody in the world using this system?
A	No, although Mr Gibson did knock it off from me when he designed the Assembly.

Q	What if somebody did not want to take on the role of an MLA but still wanted to vote for NOTA?
A	Then they would have that option. It would be similar to the jury system.
Q	My understanding is that this is a protest vote, but if people who have conflicting views both cast votes for NOTA and one is selected, how will they represent the views of other protest voters? How will all the factions of the protest vote be represented?
A	All people are equally different. Many people say the government is the oppressor. We need to develop an ethos of respect for each other. We need to recognize that Canadians are capable of governing themselves. We would have regular polls so that representatives knew which way the province wants to go.

Comment from panel

There were no comments from the panel.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

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

Q	If NOTA receives the majority of votes in a riding, and a man and a woman are randomly selected to represent that riding, then that would mean doubling the size of the legislature?
A	Yes, this would produce gender balance. I don't think that we should be restricted to the size of the current legislature. I also think we should adopt an oval table with people from the East sitting on the East.
Q	Do you think that voting should be mandatory?
A	No, I do not like the state forcing itself on me in any way.
Q	How do you determine who enters the pool to be selected when it is a secret ballot?
A	A counterfoil can be added to the ballot paper.

Comment: There were no comments from the audience.

SUBMISSION: YES   **SUBMISSION ID# 0010**