

To the Citizen's Assembly on Electoral Reform:

The results from current "first past the post" clearly has not reflected the electorate's choice if measured by popular vote in either of the last two provincial elections. In 1996, the Liberals suffered from a split with other right wing parties and in 2001, the NDP suffered at the hands of the Green Party. The results of both of those elections were sad for democracy in British Columbia. We deserve and need a better system.

There have been strong suggestions voiced in the media that all, or at least half, of the MLA's be elected by proportional representation (PR). PR would certainly eliminate vote splitting, but the main contention is that the makeup of the legislature will be reflective of the popular vote and therefore it must be the right method to use. PR is also an easy concept to describe and understand. Perhaps that is why it seems to be recommended heavily in the online submissions to date, although the leader of the Green Party has also promoted it heavily ever since the last election (which may indicate who it will favour the most in an election!).

Unfortunately, PR is terribly flawed in two ways:

- Electors will likely not have a local MLA who can represent local interests and the electorate will not know exactly which politicians they are voting for. And should only half of the representatives elected by this method and the rest by the first past the post method, the constituency representatives have the daunting task of responding to twice as many citizens as they do already.
- Governments will (as seen elsewhere) be minorities or coalitions which will result in governments that rely on backroom deals and compromises to get any business done at all. Government will slow to a crawl and pass only marginalized legislation.

I strongly urge you to consider single transferable vote (STV). Although STV is criticized for not being simple for the voter to use or the elections officers to count, Irish voters have figured it out and computer counting eliminates any problem there.

STV has the following advantages:

1. Voters elect constituency representatives to whom they can turn to deal with their issues
2. Voters know who they are voting for
3. Majority governments are likely (although not guaranteed) so that there is opportunity for leadership in managing the economy
4. Vote-splitting is eliminated
5. The make up of the Legislature will still largely reflect the popular vote.

Please give us a chance to improve British Columbia with STV.

Thank you,
Russ Kinghorn
Cranbrook, BC