

To the Citizens' Assembly Office
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I think that the MMPR (mixed member proportional representation) is the way to go for BC. And I endorse the recommendations that the Pro Rep Society have provided (www.freeyourvote.bc.ca). The current BC electoral system has resulted in extreme pendulum swings over the past several decades- from right to left, and back again. As a government worker who has worked for the people of BC for over 18 years, I've had a front row seat to the inefficiencies and hardships of this system. A new government gets in, and immediately tears down or renames everything developed by the prior government. There is no building on prior successes and no validation of the previous era for a job well done. People are asked to refute everything they put their heart into for the past decade. And then this process repeats itself over and over again- what a waste of money and time. We need an election structure that serves the long-term public interest- and no longer serves the short-term party interests. We need a system that results in a middle path, putting an end to extreme pendulum swings.

We need an end to the 'them against us' attitude. The "them against us" attitude is immature, obsolete, and does not reflect the reality that we are the "them's" and the "us's" and we belong to the same community! These people are my neighbours! We need to recognise that our community- the community of BC- is made up of a diversity of people. About 30% have views that lean to the right; about 30% have views that lean to the left- and the remainder is so disgusted with our political system they won't vote any more! This percentage appears to be a constant, as shown by actual vote counts of our past elections. We need to accept this diversity and work together as a community. We teach our children to not be bullies- to seek solutions and compromise- to use their words to deal with the issues, and to not personally attack each other. When will this show up in our political systems? When will people sit down together and truly try to work on the issues, to find compromises, and a path in the middle. When will we move forward into the future, accepting, understanding, and trying to incorporate the different viewpoints into how our community- our Province- is run. I hope that time is now. It is time for us to grow up as a society. One of the worst days in Kindergarten is more civil and caring, than one of the best days in parliament!

I had the opportunity of being involved with the Kamloops Land and Resource Management Plan process. It was remarkable to see people from the local community with such diverging views, sit down together, to talk interests not positions- to seek to understand each other, and find solutions. This table was run by consensus. It took a lot of dialogue, sincere efforts, and time- to listen and to understand. Our mantra was to be "Hard on issues, soft on people". The LRMP is a successful example of opposing community members, working together on a middle path of compromise that benefits the community as a whole.

Following the last election over 40% of the voters were without representation under the Liberals. And similarly the two elections prior produced ten years of NDP government

supported by 40% of the voters. No 40% should ever have all the power, nor be completely ignored. The legislature should more accurately reflect how people vote. If this results in a minority government, so be it! I have faith that our political representatives would sincerely try to work things out! As well it would be worthwhile if the so-called minorities had a voice in government (such as the unity and the green parties) and that their interests were also incorporated into how our Province is run.

I think that the vote of rural ridings needs to be heard in balance with the larger populations of greater Vancouver- so that urban areas don't overlook the interests of the larger areas of the remainder of the Province. I also think that having one's own MLA is important. The nomination of candidates and the election of MLAs should depend less on a favourable party standing, and more on being popular among the voters of a particular constituency. Party politics has resulted in a them against us' mentality. My vote will go to the individual who seeks compromises, and a community of BC working together into a brighter future. (But I know I am an idealist by nature.). Thanks for your time!

Sincerely

Judy Steves

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