

# PRESENTATION SUMMARY

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SURREY-SOUTH PUBLIC HEARING  
DATED 8 MAY 2004  
AT THE ASTON PACIFIC 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.

# Benton Mischuk

## Fair Vote Canada

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### DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

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A presentation in support of the adoption of some form of PR as the fairest system for the diversity of contemporary BC. As a member of Fair Vote Canada, I will present its concerns.

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### KEY THEMES

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Mr. Mischuk outlined the objectives of Fair Vote Canada. The presenter went on to discuss the shortcomings of the alternative vote system. Mr. Mischuk stated that the current FPTP system created an unrepresentative legislature as a result of the unfair translation of votes into seats. The presenter advocated PR in order to get more voices into the parliament and promote a consensual style of politics.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The presenter recommended changing the current electoral system to MMP, in order to maintain the simplicity of the current system while introducing an element of proportionality. Mr Mischuk proposed that the constituency member be elected along the lines of federal ridings under FPTP. The presenter felt that the list seats should be compensatory creating a proportional result in the legislature. The format of the list was proposed to be open and organized on a regional basis.

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### QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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Q            What is your view regarding thresholds? Do you see them as necessary and would this drive people outside the political system?

A            A fairly common factor of successful PR systems is a threshold of around four or five person. It is still representative government. It gives you respect by having at least a base of support of four or five percent. It may also encourage the merger of very small parties to work the system to their advantage.

Q            Do you view the open list component as too complex?

A            You could create options where people could rank or vote for the parties, but I still think that it is a fairly simple system. In Germany after only a few

elections, people have understood the system.

Q You argued that STV would be too complicated but wouldn't an education program deal with this just as well for STV as MMP?

A I think that this would be less of step than STV. What if we go to a different proportional system at the federal level? It would be even more confusing. With what I'm proposing the system is based on the federal ridings. STV just adds another level that they don't need

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**QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE**

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Q The open list does make it more complicated, don't you agree?

A You could circumvent this problem by creating a system of primaries to settle the ordering of candidates and then used a closed list system.

Q Do you feel that candidates should be able to run in a constituency and on a party list?

A If a party has particular faith in an individual then they may need to rise to the party list. I don't have anything against that.

Q Does the party have to run in constituency seats, or can it simply field party list candidates?

A They probably should have to run in 10 per cent of ridings just to maintain the connection with geographical representation.