

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

VANCOUVER1 PUBLIC HEARING DATED
3 MAY 2004 AT MORRIS J. WOSK CENTRE
FOR DIALOGUE

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.

Judy Darcy

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

As a resident of BC who has traveled and worked extensively in all 10 provinces, I believe strongly that we must move to a more representative system of government, one in which governments are far more accountable to the people. Our present first-past-the-post system encourages arrogance, excessive partisanship and divisiveness and discourages citizenship involvement in the political process, especially on the part of youth.

KEY THEMES

The presenter felt that electoral reform was required in order to increase accountability, the representativeness of the legislature, and to combat voter apathy and alienation. Ms Darcy also noted the need to reform campaign financing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The presenter recommended a change to a proportional electoral system combined with an element of local representation to encourage consensus building in BC politics, and to ensure greater representation of women and minorities. Ms Darcy also recommended electoral finance reform in order to enable greater grassroots control and participation in the political process.

Quote: I believe that it's time for us to be bold and creative in developing new forms of citizen participation new forms of accountability for our elected representatives.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

Q What do you mean by local representation, do you mean that one representative represents you?

A No, not necessarily. I don't think we should throw away a system in which people get to vote in a constituency for someone who represents that constituency, but I recognize that there are models that allow constituencies to be represented by multiple members.

Q Would you like a threshold in the system you are suggesting?

A I'd have to study that. There's no doubt that in a mixed system there would be some skewing but I can't tell you what that threshold would be.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q What do you think the value of political parties is? Do they not just represent ideological stems that are out there in the community? I wonder if you have given randomly selected representatives any serious thought?

A I do think there is value to political parties in our society. Political parties are a form of expression of citizens. Their essence is about people coming together because they share common values and beliefs. I think that while there are flaws with how the parties have conducted themselves, I don't think that we should abolish political parties. I think that we should put in place a system that ensures political parties work together and find the common ground when there is common ground to be found.