

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

BURNABY PUBLIC HEARING DATED
5 MAY 2004 AT HOLIDAY INN METROTOWN

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.

Patrick McMullen

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

An historic opportunity to examine all elements of our democratic process and ask some fundamental questions. The Citizens Assembly could find options in structures and processes that more reflect our geography and times.

KEY THEMES

The presenter expressed the need to reinvigorate participation in the political process via electoral reform.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The presenter recommended that voters be allowed to cast multiple ballots (possibly at a minimal cost for successive votes); variable voting times with legalized gambling on the proceedings in order to finance the cost of the current, and future, elections; and ridings that reflect the geography of BC, possibly with large multi-member rural ridings and suburban sub-ridings within these and metropolitan ridings that reflect historic, geographic and economic realities; transparency in election financing.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

- Q Are you thinking of basing the ridings on geographical features such as watersheds?
- A Yes, but not just watersheds, unique ecologies may be more taken care of if ridings are drawn up on this basis, and more interest taken in them in government.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

- Q What do you mean by extending the electoral period?
- A India had an election that lasted three weeks, and in my mind it would be a way of reinvigorating the interest of the electorate. I think that you could go to the point of people having more than one vote with only the last one counting.

Politicians over for example a two week period may shoot themselves in the foot and you have the opportunity to change your vote. Going further, I think that we could set up a gambling book on the election, it may provide another way to reinvigorate the electorate. Politics is a blood-sport and a gamble and if we ignore that we are making a big mistake.

Q You aren't proposing any particular system?

A No, I just feel that FPTP has to go.

Q Were you proposing that the ridings be proposed on a geographical basis regardless of population?

A The number of constituents has to be taken into account, but we don't have one vote one value now. Representation may not need to reflect equal votes, it may reflect other qualities.