

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

COURTENAY/COMOX PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 26 MAY 2004 AT THE COAST
WESTERLEY HOTEL

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.

Eric Brown

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

I support proportional representation, more specifically one similar to the German model.

KEY THEMES

Eric Brown criticized the current FPP electoral system for failing to represent the views of all citizens. He explained that he supported the introduction of a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) electoral system because it combined local representation at the riding level with proportional representation. Mr Brown addressed concerns that MMP would lead to fractured and unstable governments by clarifying that proportional representation produces cohesion as parties seek support and coalition with other parties. He argued that proportional representation strengthens the legitimacy of government by facilitating the exchange of ideas between parties of all ideologies, and stated that the current lack of minority representation undermines the legitimacy of our political system. Mr Brown explained that the political system needed to reflect the increasing diversity of the province and the increasing complexity of modern policy decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Eric Brown recommended the introduction of MMP in British Columbia.

Quote: "Proportional representation would be good for this province because it would strengthen our democracy and increase our government's legitimacy."

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

There were three members of the panel who sought clarification on elements of the presentation.

Q	As a young person who is obviously interested in politics, I am curious whether you discussed politics at home growing up?
A	Yes I did.
Q	I thought your reflections on the legitimacy of the current system were quite fresh and I was wondering if that is something you would be interested in exploring more? I found your viewpoints very interesting.
A	It's not legitimate if it's a false majority. If people believe that their votes don't count then it loses its legitimacy.

Q	As a young person, are a lot of your friends not voting or strategically voting, and do you think that MMP would bring youth back in to voting? Do you think there's anything else we could do?
A	I hope my friends will be voting. I don't know that MMP targets youth specifically but I think it will include more people because they will feel that their votes count.

Comment from panel: There were no further comments from the panel.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Following this presentation quite a few members of the audience had questions.

Q	I have heard about MMP all evening. Why haven't we heard about other countries where they have straight PR?
A	(Answered by facilitator) All members of the public are welcome to make a presentation at these public hearings.
Q	How are young people looking at this issue?
A	My friends mostly support PR so I think my views are pretty representative.

Comment: There were no further comments from the audience.

SUBMISSION: NO