

# PRESENTATION SUMMARY

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DUNCAN PUBLIC HEARING DATED  
8 JUNE 2004 AT THE TRAVELODGE  
SILVER BRIDGE

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.

# Gordon Thomas

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## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

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A comment on the desirability of proportional representation and the need for the proportionality representatives to be selected from the defeated candidates with the highest proportion of the vote in their constituency. A suggested methodology for the implementation of the above.

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## KEY THEMES

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Gordon Thomas argued that extreme policy swings between governments in British Columbia have demonstrated the need for proportional representation. He explained that these major shifts in policy have been counter-productive because they require significant restructuring, create uncertainty and result in long-term instability. He predicted that proportional representation would result in a larger number of views being heard in the legislature, resulting in governments which are politically fragile and therefore more moderate. Mr Thomas supported the introduction of a mixed system where fifty per cent of the legislature is filled on the present first past the post basis and the remaining fifty per cent of seats is allocated to political parties according to the proportion of the popular vote they receive. He proposed that the number of seats in the legislature be increased by approximately one third, and the number of constituencies be reduced by one third.

Mr Thomas told the hearing that he believed that members of the legislature should be selected by voters rather than party leaders or officials. For this reason, he advocated a system where the MLAs selected to fill the proportionally allocated seats in the legislature should be candidates who have been narrowly defeated in the constituencies. In this way, the proportionally elected MLAs would not come from party lists but would be selected from the losing constituency candidates who came closest to winning in their riding or those who won the highest proportion of votes in their riding. Mr Thomas argued that this system would ensure that all MLAs were selected by the electorate rather than by party officials.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Gordon Thomas recommended the introduction of a mixed electoral system, with fifty per cent of MLAs elected using FPP in single-member ridings, and the remaining 50 per cent of MLAs elected according to the proportion of votes received by each political party. This second group of MLAs should not be selected from party lists but should be narrowly defeated constituency candidates.

*Quote: "Any provision that results in proportional representatives being selected from a party list rather than narrowly defeated candidates is not only undemocratic but may well result in the concept of proportional representation being rejected by voters should they be asked to choose."*

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## QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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

Q	My question is about the fifty-fifty split, how would you distribute that around the province?
A	Well my proposal involves decreasing the number of constituencies by one third, and increasing the number of seats by one third. But there would still be a connection between the proportionally elected MLAs and constituencies because they would all stand for election in the constituencies.
Q	Let's say we've got Prince George and we combine it with the three ridings closest to it. Would all of those MLAs end up being based in Prince George?
A	No, my proposal would involve reducing those three constituencies to two, so you would have two MLAs elected as they are now. But you would also have two additional MLAs elected to make the legislature proportional.

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

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

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There were no questions or comments from the audience.

**SUBMISSION: YES**

**SUBMISSION ID# TO FOLLOW**