

# PRESENTATION SUMMARY

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GRAND FORKS PUBLIC HEARING  
DATED 10 MAY 2004  
AT SELKIRK COLLEGE

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.

# Andre Carrel

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## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

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A presentation on the role, validity and contribution by citizens' petitions and referenda as a companion tool to elections in democratic governance.

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## KEY THEMES

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Mr. Carrel expressed the opinion that electoral reform is not enough to strengthen the democratic credentials of broad public policy decisions made and implemented by government. The presenter stated the need for elections to be coupled with referenda to engage the citizenry in the political process. The issue of campaigning as marketing rather than debating was raised. Mr. Carrel also expressed his concern regarding retrospective campaigning as it precludes legislatures from reflecting the citizenry's vision for the future. The presenter felt that public policy cannot be clearly reflected by groupings such as political parties, therefore, necessitating the use of the referendum as a legitimate public policy formation tool. Furthermore, Mr. Carrel felt that introducing a referendum process separate to elections would enable the separation of issues and personality.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Carrel recommended that the Citizens' Assembly interpret its mandate broadly and consider a recommendation that the British Columbia legislature amend the Recall and Initiative Act as follows:

1. Sever part 2 (Legislative Initiatives) from the Act and establish that part as a separate statute;
2. Amend section 7(1) in Division 1 (Initiative Petition) of Part 2 to require the support of ten per cent of voters province-wide for a successful initiative rather than the current requirement of ten per cent in each electoral district.

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## QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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Q            Would you like to see referendums between elections?

A            Yes, the options for them yes.

Q            Is there any particular electoral system you are leaning towards?

A            Anything but FPTP.

