

# PRESENTATION SUMMARY

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KAMLOOPS PUBLIC HEARING  
DATED 17 JUNE 2004  
AT THE COAST CANADIAN INN

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.

# Allison McMillan

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## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

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A presentation highlighting why I personally am for a change to Proportional Representation from the current First Past the Post as an electoral system.

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## KEY THEMES

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Allison McMillan told the hearing that having once been proud to exercise her democratic right to vote, she now feels apathetic and frustrated because it seems that her vote does not count. She argued that a vote only counts if the voter has voted for the winning candidate in a riding. Ms McMillan outlined her major concerns with the current system, including the creation of false or artificial majorities; the lack of any guarantee of a strong and effective opposition; the under-representation of women and minorities; declining participation in our electoral system by the population at large, especially among youth; and the adversarial nature of government. She explained that proportional representation would improve democracy in BC by making every vote count and all votes equal in effect; improving the representation of women and other minorities in our government, creating governments that are more balanced and consensus-based, and increasing voter turnout, especially among youth. She criticized First Past the Post political systems as having the lowest levels of women and minority representation. Ms McMillan predicted that a PR system in BC would produce more effective and representative oppositions, more accountable governments, and comprehensive and respectful debate.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Allison McMillan supported the recommendations made by the British Columbia Nurses' Union.

- 1) That the Citizens' Assembly reject the current model of electing MLAs used in BC.
- 2) That the Citizens' Assembly bring forward the concept of PR as the centerpiece of proposed electoral reform in BC.
- 3) That in-depth consideration be given to the usage of an MMP system of PR in BC.
- 4) That the public be engaged in the Citizens' Assembly review of a possible MMP system of PR that could be used in the province of BC.
- 5) That a reasonable threshold for representation under a BC PR system be utilized.
- 6) That the number of MLA seats under a BC PR system be a fixed number of seats.
- 7) That the Citizens' Assembly recommend that a 50 per cent plus one, or a simple majority, be the measure utilized in the question regarding electoral reform that is put forward to British Columbians on May 17, 2005.

*Quote: "I think British Columbians are dissatisfied with confrontation, black and white, positional political governance. Everyday, common people in every community have to compromise and negotiate challenging and difficult issues. Yet, when we look at our political leaders we do not see thoughtful, genuine and considered debate."*

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

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There were no questions or comments from the members of the panel.

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

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

Q	I don't understand how your mixed representational slate would work. I also don't understand how it would improve the representation of women and minorities.
A	Mixed Member Proportional representation gives people two votes: one for the candidate and one for the party. So 50 per cent of the MLAs would be voted for by the constituents and 50 per cent would come from party lists. It has been shown that there are more women in PR systems.
Q	Do you think your children will vote? The reason I ask is because I'm trying to figure out what we can do to get young people to vote.
A	I'm quite excited about the prospect of proportional representation, and that it will make every vote count. So we'll all have our voices heard.

**Comment:** There were no comments from the audience.

**SUBMISSION: NO**