

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

NORTH VANCOUVER PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 2 JUNE 2004
AT THE LONSDALE QUAY 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.

Chris Shaw

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

I will speak to the mixed member proportional representation option for revising our electoral system as well as the implications for provincial and federal politics, and society.

KEY THEMES

Mr. Shaw discussed the question of whether a crisis in democracy exists, concluding that in fact it does as evidenced by the problems of the current FPTP system, particularly the issue of youth alienation and apathy reflected in falling voter turnout among this demographic. The presenter also expressed concern regarding the power of special interests in the current system as a result of the need of parties to secure financial backers to fund electoral campaigns. According to Mr. Shaw the power of special interests has led to a loss of diversity of voices in the legislature as small parties and independents are often shut out of the system. Mr. Shaw compared the current FPTP system to STV and MMP according to six criteria: expansion of democracy; proportionality; inclusiveness/representation; flexibility; simplicity; and effective government. According to Mr. Shaw FPTP fared poorly on all these measures with the exception of the simplicity rating. STV was rated as performing arguably well on five of the criteria, however, it was deemed to be an overly complex system. Finally MMP was demonstrated to perform well on all fronts however the simplicity of the system was questioned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The presenter recommended adopting a system of MMP as it rated most highly according to the criteria deemed most important by Mr. Shaw. Mr. Shaw advocated a system of MMP under which two-thirds of members would be elected via local constituencies, and one-third via the use of party lists.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

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| Q | Do you have any statistics on declining turnout among youth over the years that would support the contention that we are suffering a crisis? |
| A | No, I don't, but my point would be that we've always had this system so perhaps it has always been this bad, but it is not a good thing when the youth are not voting as they are our future. |