

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

PENTICTON PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 23 JUNE 2004
AT PENTICTON LAKESIDE RESORT

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.

David Steele

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

Ballot reform. To force better candidate selections in our elections.

KEY THEMES

Mr. Steele thanked Premier Gordon Campbell for fulfilling his election promise to set up the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform for British Columbia and also thanked the members of the Assembly for volunteering their time and services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The presenter advocated the introduction of a “none of the above” (NOTA) option on the ballot paper. According to Mr. Steele, several reasons exist to justify giving voters the opportunity to vote NOTA. For example, people may not be able to find a candidate with the qualities or the political philosophy sought by the voter, rendering them effectively disenfranchised. Alternatively, the entire slate of candidates may not appear “worthy” of choice. The NOTA mechanism may act as a clear rebuke to the local nominating groups, providing them with an incentive to do a better job at the next election. In addition, Mr. Steele recommended the introduction of proportional representation in order to combat the apathy of the citizenry and to stimulate voter interest in the political system.

Quote: We must do what we can to turn around the trend toward apathy by the electorate.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

- Q What do you see occurring if the NOTA option wins the election?
- A I advocate having part of the seats elected via FPTP and part of them elected by PR. If NOTA wins there would have to be a reelection, and each of the parties would have to nominate a new candidate.