

# PRESENTATION SUMMARY

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SPARWOOD PUBLIC HEARING DATED  
23 JUNE 2004 AT THE COMMUNITY HALL

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.

# Joan Halverson

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## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

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In favour of representation by population.

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## KEY THEMES

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Joan Halverson introduced herself as a Home Care nurse and active member of the British Columbia Nurses' Union. She cited a survey conducted by the Canada West Foundation in 2001 which found that 76 per cent of British Columbians favour electoral system change, especially a change to a more proportional electoral system. Mrs Halverson made a number of criticisms of the current First Past the Post electoral system, including MLAs being elected with a small percentage of the votes in their riding, votes for non-winning candidates being wasted, declining voter turnout, and disproportional electoral outcomes. She supported the introduction of a Mixed Member Proportional electoral system, because it would make election results more closely reflect the popular vote. Mrs Halverson recommended a model of MMP with a 4-5 per cent electoral threshold, and with two votes, one for the candidate and one for the political party preferred by each voter. She discussed a number of improvements that would occur with a proportional representation electoral system. She argued that PR would make every vote count and make all votes equal, would increase the representation of women and minorities, would create a more balanced and consensus-based government, and by increasing voter turnout.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Joan Halverson recommended the introduction of a Mixed Member Proportional electoral system in British Columbia.

*Quote: "We need to implement a method of voting whereby the results reflect the true picture of what type of Government the people of BC want and vote for."*

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## QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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

Q	Would you be happy to have the proportional side of this determined strictly by parties?
A	I would because I believe that people within the parties would work hard to get on the list.
Q	One of the parties has no citizenship or age requirements for their candidates, so they could end up with a 14 year old non-citizens at the top of the list. How would you feel about that?

A	Well I can see problems with that, but at the same time I do believe that it's important to re-engage young people in the system. Also we've seen successful young politicians, such as Bernard Lord.
Q	What do you think about lowering the voting age to 16?
A	I would be happy with that. I knew who I wanted to vote for when I was 16.
Q	Have you considered that MMP would require larger ridings?
A	I have thought about that, and I've heard the suggestion that the provincial ridings could be similar in size to the federal ridings. Another thing I read was that it would be a good idea to let the rural ridings maintain their geographical area, but obviously you would have to persuade the urban ridings to go along with that.

**Comment from panel**

I just want to clarify that with PR you believe that every vote would count and you believe that more people would vote because of that.

Yes, and I believe that there are statistics to support that.

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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	With your system, if the Liberals had won 58 per cent of the vote in the last election, they would have got 58 per cent of the seats. So, if I was voting for my party of choice, would I be voting for the leader of the legislature?
A	You would have two votes. One would be for a person and one would be for a party. At the end of the day, they would look at the percentage of the party vote and if a party hadn't won enough constituencies then they would be topped up from the party list.
Q	I think it's important that anyone who runs for a position should be a citizen of Canada.

A	(Panel member) This came up in a meeting at Cranbrook when it was pointed out that if you don't control party selection processes there may be some problems with proportionality.
Q	
A	
Q	
A	

***Comment:***

<i>Quote:</i>
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SUBMISSION: YES    NO X

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