

The Citizens' Assembly
555 West Hastings Street
P0 Box 12118
Vancouver BC V6B 4N6

Chairman Dr. Blaney and Assembly members:

I am in favour of changing the current voting system to a system of Mixed Member Proportional. This system is recommended at the provincial level by Adriane Can (Free Your Vote- Pro Rep Society) and at the federal level by the Law Commission of Canada. I support their recommendations (please see enclosed copy).

Sincerely,

Ruby Buick
11215 Maddock Avenue
Okanagan Centre BC V4V 2J7

Free your vote-Pro Rep Society

Key improvements to Free Your Vote's Proposal for a New Zealand-like MMP voting system in BC

1. Keep 79 MLA seats in BC legislature and change to a ratio of two-thirds constituency seats for all of BC. (See page 7 for an explanation of how the MMP system of constituency and party list seats works.)

Reason: to respond to the concern of people in rural BC who want reasonably-sized ridings. This model would mean that electoral districts would be only one-third larger than today's. It ensures more local MLAs for rural BDC than a 50-50 ratio of constituency to party list seats would provide, yet still achieves "proportionality" in election outcomes so a party's seat share equals its vote share.

2. Require political parties to run candidates in at least 50% of the constituency seats in order to qualify for list seats.

Reason: to eliminate the possibility of a party being simply a "list party" and not have its candidates grounded in local electoral politics and local public scrutiny.

3. Require political parties by law to select list candidates in a democratic way that grants every party member a say in the selection process and require that they file with Elections BC a detailed description of how their party's selection system works.

Reason: to ensure that "list" candidates are fairly selected by due democratic process and ensure transparency so that the public knows how parties select their candidates.

4. Have flexible lists where a voter can choose either to accept the list as ranked by the party or choose one candidate on a party's list to be placed at the top of the list (as recommended for Canada by the Law Commission of Canada). If a candidate exceeds a threshold of 8% of the party's voters placing that person first, the candidate moves to the top of the list.

Reason: to balance the merits of increased voter choice with the merits of closed lists which give political parties the ability to use their lists to achieve balanced representation for women, minority groups, age groups and geographic regions.

Five Key Recommendations in the Commission's report are:

1. The Law Commission of Canada recommends adding an element of proportionality to Canada's electoral system.
2. The Law Commission of Canada recommends that Canada adopt a mixed member proportional electoral system.
3. A mixed member proportional system should be based on giving voters TWO votes: one for a constituency representative and one for a party list. The party vote should determine who is to be elected from provincial and territorial lists as drawn up by the parties before the election.
4. Two-thirds of the members of the House of Commons should be elected in constituency races using the first-past-the-post method, and the remaining one-third should be elected from provincial or territorial party lists. In addition, one list seat each should be allotted to Nunavut, Northwest Territories, and Yukon.
5. Within the context of a mixed member proportional system, Parliament should adopt a flexible list system that provides voters with the option of either endorsing the party "slate" or "ticket," or of indicating a preference for a candidate within the list.