

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

SURREY PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 31 MAY 2004
AT THE SHERATON GUILDFORD 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.

Rick Benoit

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

Computer polling: setting the agenda of the house by popular computer poll.

KEY THEMES

Mr. Benoit expressed the need for individuals to think outside the box and to look to computers for the future. The presenter discussed the need for individuals to have the right to change their votes; vote for candidates that are not on the ballot; and to be able to vote for or against government legislation through a computer registered system. Under this system, Mr. Benoit stated that we would have government, not by elected representatives or the people, but government by the people through the elected representatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The presenter recommended the use of political mentors who may collate the votes of others. Under this system, the voting power of MLA's in the House is in accordance with how many votes they have collected in the community. Further, Mr. Benoit advocated an online register of the votes cast by representatives in the legislature. The presenter also supported a system in which any individual could propose a law, and all laws proposed would be grouped online so that Canadians can pick and choose among them (Mr. Benoit termed this system "demechracy"). When 63% of Canadians have voted for a proposed piece of legislation on the national polling network then it should go to the floor of the legislature before being put to a referendum.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

- Q What is "demechracy"?
- A Demechracy has two definitions, government by representatives or government by the people, I believe in government by the people through the elected representatives. Definition two, of demechracy involves believing that someone else knows more than you and giving them authority to act on your behalf.