

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.

John West

Caretaker Movement C.O.U.

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

The purpose, principles and program of the None of the Above (NOTA) option will be explained and, since it appears philosophically seamless and simple common sense it will find growing popular support.

KEY THEMES

Mr. West discussed his long-standing attempts at electoral reform in Canada. The presenter expressed the belief that the political system has become corrupt as elected officials are no longer representative of the people. Mr. West argued that political parties need not constitute an integral part of politics. The presenter proposed an alternative system where voters who do not like any of the parties or any of the candidates could register a protest vote by casting a ballot for 'None of the Above.' According to the presenter, this system will promote participatory democracy. Mr. West stated that this system should result in the selection of one man and one woman who would serve for approximately two year terms and meet in men's and women's circles to discuss policy and legislative proposals. Public debate around vital issues would then take place in an environment that is not adversarial, but cooperative. Mr. West stated that politicians have become focused on staying in power rather than representing the people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The presenter recommended adapting the current ballot paper to include a 'None of the Above' option. Additional MLAs could be randomly selected from a pool of all people who have voted for None of the Above. Mr. West argued that one of the primary benefits of the NOTA option lies in its simplicity.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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| Q | If the NOTA option was put on the ballot, how would you like to see votes translated into seats? |
| A | It would be under a plurality system. Individuals would be randomly chosen who had voted for the NOTA option. |
| Q | How would you avoid the tendency of the strong people taking control of government? |
| A | In addition to regular polls, any changes in legislation affecting the structure of government |

would need to go to the people for referendum. Small changes may be decided internally, but large changes must be taken to the people.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q Is the NOTA system in place anywhere else?

A Not that I am aware of. But it does fit the template, and it is philosophically seamless, it is a very simple addition to the ballot.

Q I think that random selection is not within the mandate of the Assembly. An example of random selection is the Athenian rule, they randomly selected legislators and bureaucrats for a whole range of purposes. What would you think of having an Assembly in which everyone is the government, possibly over the internet, they would form and decide legislation?

A I think that is totally appropriate, but unfortunately it does not fit within the very narrow mandate of the Assembly.

SUBMISSION: YES SUBMISSION ID# 0010 0066