

# PRESENTATION SUMMARY

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TERRACE PUBLIC HEARING  
DATED 8 JUNE 2004  
AT THE COAST INN OF THE WEST

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.

# John Hart

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## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

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A presentation stressing the need to replace the current FPTP electoral system.

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## KEY THEMES

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Mr. Hart discussed the need to replace the current FPTP system. The presenter argued the need for proportional representation to remedy situations in which the party in power is able to deny party status to elected members depending on an arbitrary number. Mr. Hart argued that local representation constitutes an unrealistic ideal that does not exist in Canada. What we have is a party system dominated by the government in which free votes are denied. Mr. Hart argued that the system is currently undemocratic and local MLAs do not have any power or influence. The presenter stated that gaining a majority within a Westminster system confers absolute power on the winning party, which is both damaging and dangerous.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Hart recommended that the Assembly support the replacement of the current FPTP system and not concern themselves with the issue of local representation as it does not exist. The presenter also argued for the formulation of a clear and concise recommendation that can not be refuted by the government.

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## QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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Q Do you feel there is a system that could make local representation work?

A I'm concerned that the Assembly might feel so strongly about local representation that they will stick with the current system as it offers the best possibility of promoting local representation. Don't let that be a detriment for you to go ahead with reform. I would like local representation but I don't think it is working. I don't think that you could get any less local representation than we have now.

Q You seem to favour proportionality, how much proportionality would you like to see?

A I would like complete PR.

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QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

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Q Do you favour coalition governments?

A I think coalition governments are wonderful. The best government we ever had in Canada was when Lewis was supporting Trudeau, as Trudeau had to work with, and listen to, Lewis. Democracy is not meant to be easy, it is meant to be about people getting in there and having their voices heard and working things through.