

# PRESENTATION SUMMARY

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VERNON PUBLIC HEARING  
DATED 21 JUNE 2004  
AT THE PRESTIGE INN VERNON SALON

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.

# Anthony Plourde

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## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

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A discussion of the idea of a referendum style government.

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## KEY THEMES

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Mr. Plourde discussed the advantages of adopting a referendum style of government. The presenter argued that all democratic forms of government require giving power over to representatives. Mr. Plourde stated that in our modern age of technology this need not be the case. According to Mr. Plourde government may be based upon a continual system of referendums on policy issues.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The presenter recommended the introduction of government by referendum. This could be done electronically via phones, computers, or ATMs. Under this system the government would be composed of administrators and CEOs and would be accountable to the voting public. If they performed their job well they could perform this role for as long as they wished, however, if they are charged and convicted of mismanagement then they will be fired and their job posted and another person hired. Before each referendum, issues of the day would be presented through the media to the public. Only issues generating a minimum level of interest will make it on to the public agenda. Political parties may still exist but they would need public approval instead of mandates. According to Mr. Plourde the cost of the political system will be reduced as government would be financially accountable and the high cost of elections would be reduced as a result of the use of electronic technologies.

*Quote: This system would produce people that are truly qualified to manage their portfolio or departments, and we would also end up with a society that is not left or right but steady as it would be what the majority wants and that's democracy.*

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## QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

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- Q In a referendum system how would you prevent the voter from voting more than once?
- A Just like an ATM or bank machine knows who you are, you will be identified one way or other, either by a number or a fingerprint or a retinal scan, we do have the technology to do this.

Q           Wouldn't this system enable rural interests to be swamped by urban voters?

A           Issues that are concerning to the rural areas, such as gun restrictions, would stimulate turnout.

Q           This system would be a full time job for citizens as they would have to wade through the nitty-gritty of much legislation that never reaches the press as it deals with housekeeping issues. I don't see how the public can be fully informed on all issues. This system appears totally impractical.

A           This is why I say that you would have departments to deal with such issues. All the people have to know is that the department is doing its job and not costing the public money.