

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

VICTORIA PUBLIC HEARING DATED
10 JUNE 2004 AT THE WESTERN BALLROOM,
HARBOUR TOWERS

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.

Sylvia Korican

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

My presentation has to do with assigning members-at-large and helping to address the problems of smaller parties.

KEY THEMES

Sylvia Korican discussed the distorted election outcomes under the current electoral system and explained that these results had encouraged her to develop a solution to redress these problems. Mrs Korican proposed a mixed system, with most MLAs elected in single member districts using the First Past the Post system, and additional compensatory MLAs to ensure that the number of seats in the legislature held by each party reflects their proportion of the popular vote. She argued that retaining geographical representation is important to give residents in each area a sense that they have a voice in the legislature. She opposed the use of a preferential ballot to elect constituency MLAs on the grounds that voters may not always make rational second choices or may plump their ballot.

Mrs Korican told the hearing that the number of seats in the legislature has increased over the last century, and suggested that there should be no opposition to increasing the number of seats in the legislature by up to ten per cent in order to have some compensatory seats for parties that have not won a number of constituency seats that reflects their share of the vote across the province. She explained that not all compensatory seats would need to be allocated in every election, so the size of the legislature could vary after each election. MLAs selected to fill the compensatory seats would become ‘members at large’. Members at large need not be selected from party lists, but could be made up of candidates who had contested a constituency and had not been initially elected. Mrs Korican provided a hypothetical example of an election in BC to demonstrate how this system could work. She demonstrated that with a mixed compensatory system there would have been fewer majority governments in British Columbia and minor parties would have been more successful at winning seats in the house.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Sylvia Korican recommended the introduction of a mixed system, with most MLAs elected using First Past the Post in single-member districts, and up to ten per cent of seats in the legislature as compensatory seats.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

One member of the panel sought clarification on elements of the presentation.

Q	Is there a way we could get a copy of your presentation?
A	I have mailed it to the committee, but I didn't include a copy of all my research. I am able to leave one copy with you this evening. I sent it by registered mail.

Comment from panel There were no comments from the panel.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

There were no questions or comments from the audience.

SUBMISSION: YES

SUBMISSION ID# TO FOLLOW