

To: Special Committee on Electoral Reform, Yukon.

Dave Brekke's Alternate Proposal for Electoral Reform 2022-01-22

Dear Special Committee on Electoral Reform Members,

We are submitting Dave Brekke's Proposal today as a team who have been helping and learning from Mr. Brekke and the wider Fair Vote Yukon group since 2012.

A Case for Inclusion – Simplify the Choice

Your committee previously commissioned a report titled, *Options for Yukon's Electoral System*, prepared by Dr. Keith Archer and dated October 31, 2021.

This 75-page report presents thorough details on past Yukon elections, electoral system options and their characteristics and challenges on changing electoral systems. Some particularly valuable information was found – examples:

“What are the characteristics of the system that is being offered as an alternative? And, offering many alternatives to voters is a recipe for information overload..... What about the representation of women and minorities, or groups that have been historically under-represented in the legislature?” (pp. 70, 71).

Past unsuccessful electoral reform committees and citizens assemblies have started the electoral change review process with learning about several systems from which to choose. This approach is fraught with confusion and excessive information for the typical voter. In our view, a large amount of taxpayers' time and money has been wasted with these unnecessary processes. These long-winded dialogues divide and confuse community.

Dave Brekke's Proposal puts the importance of community involvement in decision making at the forefront.

PROPOSAL: To establish a Citizen's Assembly to focus the electoral change process by contrasting Dave Brekke's proven, effective mixed-member proportional system with the Yukon's present first-past-the-post system. Our team has developed a ballot for the Yukon voter to test. We feel that this ballot could be tested by the Citizen's Assembly through many virtual events like mock-elections.

We also feel it is important that Yukon's next election should be carried out with the new ballot, as part of its adoption. This more simple and effective process will improve Yukon's electoral system by engaging the community with a tangible ballot that gives representation to their votes.

Background

Attached to this proposal are 3 documents that outline how Mr. Brekke became concerned about First-Past-the-Post system, a possible ballot, analysis of how the MMP aspect of the Preferential Ridings Proportional (PRP) system that he is proposing would have affected the 2016 and 2021 territorial elections, and a series of electoral maps and graphs to illustrate the concepts of his system.

Mr. Brekke has an extensive body of research supporting this work that he has yet to publish. Our hope is that this Special Committee will be able to help this 83-year-old brittle diabetic publish and share his 16-year effort on electoral reform in the Yukon.

Benefits of the PRP System

For example, contrasted data for the two systems from Yukon's 2021 election shows that inclusion, empowerment, and representation of voters went from 45% using the present FPTP system to 95% using his proposed PRP system.

The PRP system was developed with the assistance of many Yukoners and other interested voters. PRP is basically an MMP system with a simple to count

preferential vote. With PRP, it is possible for **all voters** to take their concerns to an MLA/MP who was helped to be elected by their vote.

With PRP, minority governments that require collaborative governance are almost assured. Elected representatives will be the candidate chosen ahead of another candidate the most times. Only one vote count is required and would be made electronically like Whitehorse elections.

The PRP system can allow the candidate with the least first choice votes to be elected, being the candidate connected to the most voters. In the other preferential systems such a candidate is the first to be eliminated.

Under Canada's present electoral system only the votes cast for the riding winners are represented in the legislature. Under the proposed system, almost all votes are represented. Also, the proposed system maintains the aspect of elections that Canada's present FPTP system is very effective at: connecting voters to candidates and political parties before elections is a very valuable aspect for an electoral system to have.

International Examples

The PRP system is basically very similar to the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) systems in New Zealand, Scotland, Norway, Denmark, and many other countries. In their elections, voters are almost certain that their votes will be represented. Minority governments that require collaborative governance are almost assured.

Before changing their voting system in 1996, New Zealand's history was very similar to Canada's. Now New Zealand is a positively engaged democracy. Political parties with different perspectives all belong to and work together for the New Zealand people. Scotland has seen similar results and even has a permanent Citizens Assembly that Parliament consults when needed.

PRP System Details

PRP pairs ridings to have the result of approximately the same number of riding seats as proportional seats. Almost always, no additional seats are required. For comparison of election results, data can be used directly, without the need to estimate results.

When used, the PRP system will have an additional second choice on the ballot. That second-choice vote can give representation to the votes of the 5% of voters not included or represented under the MMP system. Currently, we are not aware of another proportional electoral system that has a way to give possible representation to 100% of the voters.

Recent Discussions with Special Committee Member

In late 2021, Special Committee on Electoral Reform member, Minister John Streiker and Dave Brekke met privately to discuss this proposal. At that time, Minister Streiker raised a question and proposed a solution that appears very effective to Mr. Brekke.

“What if a party received 75% of the popular vote in a paired-riding electoral area with 4 seats and the party had no candidates to fill the proportional seat?”

Minister Streiker’s solution: *“Have political parties run two candidates in each paired riding. The candidate with the highest ranking would win the party seat in question.”*

When a proportional seat is won by a party, the connected same party candidates have the satisfaction of their votes being represented.

A Citizens’ Assembly would be the best way to tackle these types of questions and discussions.

Conclusion

Learning about several proportional systems from which to choose can be an overwhelming process. We are confident that simplifying the electoral reform process by just comparing the two systems would be more effective and satisfying. The descriptions of the various systems would be valuable for reference for the Citizen's Assembly but simply too complicated to be effective for choosing a system.

Thank you for attending to this important issue, and we look forward to Mr. Brekke presenting his submission more fully in the community sessions and ideally before a Citizen's Assembly.

Respectfully,

Dave Brekke, retired Yukon teacher, principal, school counsellor and Federal Returning Officer.

Sally Wright, artist, filmmaker, former political candidate 2016 YT Election.

Jean-Paul Pinard, PhD, PEng, husband of former political candidate, Concerned Yukoner.

How I Became Concerned About Canada's Electoral System

How many people today think like I did before 2005? Awareness is so important to life.

As you may know, in 2004-2005 Canada's Government acted on the growing concern about the dropping number of voters in elections. It responded by calling for proposals to increase voter turnout throughout Canada. Government wanted apolitical evaluation for funding of the proposals, so it became the responsibility of Elections Canada (EC) who decided to have grassroots involvement. Eighteen Returning Officers (RO) from across Canada were brought together to do the evaluations.

Being the longest serving RO in northern Canada and having served on previous election reviews, I was called in to serve on that project.

At the first meeting, just after introductions, one RO stood up and angrily said, "What are we looking at this *&^%\$# stuff for? Why aren't we looking at our voting system?" I was shocked and found it hard to believe that anyone could question Canada's electoral system. Canada is such a wonderful country, and the candidate with the most votes wins the seat and the party with the most votes becomes Government.

That RO's comment was followed immediately by an EC official stating "That's a political statement! That comment cannot even be recorded, let alone discussed." It was in the evenings that I learned about how Canada's system works and could be much more inclusive, yet there was no perfect system. The rarely asked question was "Is my vote going to count?". Over time I felt very uncomfortable with my response that I used to feel comfortable with, "I can't promise that your vote will count, but I do promise that your vote will be counted."

My resignation was accepted after validating the vote in Canada's 2006 election. I thought that there must be an effective combination system that voters would like. I started asking people what they thought was important in an electoral system, and over the years with considerable help, I think that I now have a very inclusive system that could help build community rather than divide community as Canada's present system does.

Yours truly,

Dave Brekke, Very concerned former Federal Returning Officer for Yukon

COLLABORATION: the key to BETTER GOVERNANCE & The BALLOT that could help it happen in Yukon's next election

Proportional Representation Ballot with Second Choice Vote

- Mark 1 by your first-choice Candidate
- Mark 2 by your second-choice Candidate
- Mark 1 by your choice of Party for Popular Vote

CANDIDATE NAMES	CHOICE	POINTS	PARTY	CHOICE	POINTS
Helen	A		Party A		
Dick	B		Party B		
Jane	C	2	Party C		
Robert	D	1	Party D	1	'1'
Josephene			Independent		

EXAMPLE of PREFERENTIAL BALLOT for CHANGE

More choices could be added for future elections 2021 02 15

Offers all party Candidates two ways to win a seat:

- 1) own votes' points or
- 2) with additional points of same party candidates' votes

The candidate with the most points wins each seat. Only one count is needed to elect the winner. The winner could be the candidate with the least 1st choice votes – the most wanted and/or accepted candidate (most often chosen ahead of another candidate). This Mixed-Member-Proportional (MMP) system has increased vote representation under the present First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) system from less than 50% to over 90%.

In Yukon's 2016 election, 54% of ballots cast were not represented under FPTP. Whitehorse Star 2021 02 05 has a center page ad on this ballot. If you like this ballot and think that it could enliven change to more truly representative democracy with minority governments that require collaboration, see what a friend thinks of the ballot.

Respectfully,

Dave Brekke, genuinely concerned former Yukon Returning Officer

Majority Governments don't need Opposition votes! Would your MLA like her/his votes in the House meaningfully valued, whether in Opposition or Government?

Enlightening book: **TEARDOWN DEMOCRACY Rebuilding from the Ground Up** by

More info: electoralchange.ca

Dave Meslin

Example:

2016 YUKON ELECTION

WHITEHORSE Electoral Area
or Region

TOTAL SEATS: 10
TOTAL VOTERS: 10,946
Popular Vote of Area

Value of 1 seat: 1095 votes
10% of votes

Political Parties	Yukon Party	Liberal	New Democratic	Ind / YFN / Green
	32%	41%	27 %	1%

UNDER CANADA'S PRESENT FPTP ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Total seats in the Area:	10	1	7	2	0
% Whitehorse voting power		10.00%	70.00%	20.00%	0.00%
Effective voters					
in the area out of a total of:					
10,946	voters	435	3,156	1,092	-
TOTAL Effective voters:	REPRESENTED VOTES				4,683
% REPRESENTED VOTES				43%	of voters

UNDER THE PROPOSED Preferential Ridings Proportional (PRP) SYSTEM

Total seats in the Area:	10	3	4	3	0
% Whitehorse voting power		27%	45%	27%	0.00%
Effective voters					
in the area out of a total of:					
10,946	voters	3,284	4,378	2,972	-
TOTAL Effective voters:	REPRESENTED VOTES				10,634
% REPRESENTED VOTES				97%	of voters

HOW PROPORTIONAL SEATS ARE DETERMINED

Number of Paired-riding seats	5	1	3	1	0
% Rep Value of Riding Seats		10%	30%	10%	0%
Percent of popular vote remaining for Additional proportional seats		Popular vote minus percent value of Paired-riding seats			
		22%	11%	17%	1%
Fully supported proportional seats	4	2	1	1	0
Percentage remaining for partially supported seats.		Previous value minus percent value of proportional seats			
		2%	1%	7%	1%
Partially supported seats	1	0	0	1	0
Total percent of unrepresented First-choice votes		Previous value minus percent value of proportional seats			
		2%	1%	0%	1%
Total Seats	10	3	4	3	0
% Whitehorse voting power		30%	40%	30%	0.00%