From: Colin Graham
Sent: Monday, February 28, 2022 10:54 AM
Subject: PR in the house

Dear Electoral Reform committee,

I'd like to suggest a different approach to proportional representation than the ones in your survey (which I completed on line) . I'll call this new approach, "weighted voting in the house". The idea is to have the results in the house reflect the actual vote percentages but to have each riding represented by a designated person who ran in that riding, plus, in certain instances, extra members. Under this system there is no shift of power if an MLA crosses the floor. If there is a tie vote in a riding, the winning of a coin toss does not affect voting power in the house.

This system has a number of virtues:

  - each riding elects an MLA

  - the government and official opposition cannot be determined by a coin toss

  - every vote counts (as in all PR systems), even in ridings that go heavily to one party

  - small parties with dispersed support can be represented in the house

  - voting in the house always reflects the preferences of the voters

  - by-elections lead to a revision of voting weights and thus have more than symbolic effect.

Weighted voting in the house works this way:

1. First past the post (or preferential ballot) in each riding, thus providing each citizen with "his/her/their" MLA.

2. Any party that gets more than 5% of the territorial vote is entitled to at least one seat in the house and another one for each additional 10%, thus increasing the house size if the party has not won sufficient FPTP seats. These numbers could be larger or smaller, but small numbers could lead to many one or two seat parties and a very large and expensive legislature and large ones could defeat part of the purpose of this system.

3. When voting occurs in the legislature (plenary or in committee), each MLA has a weighted vote equal to the percentage of the vote his/her party received divided by the number of members that party has. (This would be awful to implement without spreadsheets, but trivial with them).

4. By-elections. The vote counts of the previous general election are revised by replacing the previous count from the riding with the results of the by-election. The house size and voting weights would be adjusted accordingly. This could result in one or more of the MLAs added in paragraph 2 losing his/her/their seat or the addition of new members.

5. Crossing the floor.

a) If an MLA crosses the floor to join another party, the weights of each of the remaining MLAs of the party deserted go up and the weights of the MLAs of the receiving party go down. This creates an incentive for by-elections and a disincentive to poaching.

b) If someone becomes an independent, that MLA gets a weight of y% (say half the minimum weight before the crossing, to be subtracted from the party deserted - the Speaker to rule on whether the MLA is really independent or has functionally joined another party and is claiming to be "independent" to avoid the penalty of a). Voting weights would be recalculated. Alternatives are possible; I see this as the most difficult part of weighted voting in the house.

If this system had been in effect for 2021, the weighted votes of the MLAs would have been:

   Each Yukon Party MLA would have 4.915 votes;

   Each Liberal MLA would have 4.04625 votes; and

   Each NDP MLA would have 9.37333... votes.

If Pauline Frost had won the coin toss, the NDP would still have 3 seats with weights 9.373333..., but the Liberal weights would have gone down to 3.5966666... This method has the virtue that winning a coin toss only determines the body count in the house and not the distribution of voting power, and is thus more reflective of the will of the voters.

Thank you for your consideration.

   Colin Graham
   Whitehorse