



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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## **SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL REFORM**

**Public Proceedings: Evidence**

**Friday, April 22, 2022 — 2:00 p.m.**

Chair: Kate White

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE  
ON ELECTORAL REFORM**

**Members:**

Kate White, Chair  
Brad Cathers, Vice-Chair  
Hon. John Streicker

**Clerk:**

Allison Lloyd, Clerk of Committees

**Witness:**

**Fair Vote Yukon**

Linda Leon, Spokesperson, Fair Vote Yukon  
Sally Wright, Member, Fair Vote Yukon

**EVIDENCE****Whitehorse, Yukon****Friday, April 22, 2022 — 2:00 p.m.**

**Chair (Ms. White):** I will now call to order this hearing of the Yukon Legislative Assembly's Special Committee on Electoral Reform.

Allow me to introduce the members of the Committee: I am Kate White, Chair of the Committee and Member for the Legislative Assembly for Takhini-Kopper King; Brad Cathers is Vice-Chair of the Committee and the Member for Lake Laberge; finally, the Hon. John Streicker is the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes.

This Committee was established by the Yukon Legislative Assembly on May 26, 2021. The Committee's purpose is to examine electoral reform and report to the Assembly its findings and recommendations.

In our study of potential changes to the voting system, the Committee is seeking input from subject matter experts. Today, we have with us representatives from Fair Vote Yukon, a local organization advocating for electoral reform. Fair Vote Yukon was established by Danielle Daffe in 2009. Sally Wright has been a member of Fair Vote Yukon since 2013 and has co-authored, with Dave Brekke and other members, dozens of locally published letters advocating for a proportional electoral system. Linda Leon is known for her letters to the press on political matters, most notably the series on electoral reform in Yukon published locally and in *rabble.ca* in 2018.

We will start this hearing with a short presentation from Fair Vote Yukon and then Committee members will have the opportunity to ask questions. We will now proceed with the presentation. Ms. Leon.

**Ms. Leon:** Good afternoon. Fair Vote Yukon is a non-partisan citizen's movement advocating for electoral reform in the Yukon. We are here today to recommend the formation of a Yukon citizens' assembly on electoral reform. This Special Committee is an important step toward delivering an electoral system that better serves Yukoners; however, electoral reform is inherently a politically charged matter. To ensure public confidence in the reform process and to create a truly democratic foundation to our electoral future, Fair Vote Yukon asks the Special Committee to recommend to the Yukon Legislative Assembly the formation of a Yukon citizens' assembly on electoral reform.

Fair Vote Yukon believes that a citizens' assembly would have public confidence in the reform process and make unbiased recommendations on how to create a truly democratic foundation to our electoral future. Throughout the world, there are many electoral systems that more effectively represent the will of their citizens. All the successful systems are carefully tailored to the unique circumstances of the particular jurisdiction.

On to Sally.

**Ms. Wright:** Yukon poses a unique challenge when thinking about designing a fair electoral system. A large disparity of population size between urban electoral system districts of Whitehorse and those of the more remote

communities — like Ross River, Burwash Landing, and Watson Lake — further complicates the matter. Furthermore, there are big differences between cultures among these small remote communities.

Determining the electoral system best suited to effectively represent all Yukoners is not a simple or clear-cut task. There are many different voting systems to consider, each with a varying impact on key characteristics, such as proportionality, regional representation, and the ability to vote for parties and candidates separately. A recommendation developed by a citizens' assembly would elegantly address these issues. Randomly chosen citizens' assemblies are inherently open and non-partisan.

Fair Vote Yukon believes that a properly resourced, arm's-length citizens' assembly, along with a well-executed public education and consultation campaign, encourages public participation. Even Peter Loewen, who presented at an earlier event and is a critic of electoral reform, grudgingly observed that British Columbia's use of a citizens' assembly "gave it a bit more credence."

Both the Samara Centre for Democracy and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the OECD, found high levels of public trust in citizens' assemblies. A poll published in the journal *Irish Political Studies* confirms these findings — and I quote: "Perhaps the first thing to note is that overall levels of support for [citizens' assemblies] are relatively high. Over 75% of respondents agree that there are benefits in implementing [citizens' assemblies]."

Fair Vote Yukon believes that with all the available technological advances brought on by the COVID pandemic, a citizens' assembly today would be much more efficient and effective. Meetings could happen online. Presentations like this one can be shared online. Fair Vote Yukon believes that Yukon is the perfect place for an effective citizens' assembly to be created. All First Nations in the Yukon hold at least one general assembly every year and many hold multiple special assemblies to decide on important matters for its citizens. To gather and to be educated together on important matters is an important part of Yukon culture. The Yukon is an international leader on First Nation self-governance development and groundbreaking land claims agreements that protect the rights of all Yukoners.

The time is ripe for Yukon to be leaders again, this time, in transforming our electoral system. The climate emergency demands all voices be heard when it comes to the climate solutions that we need.

On this Earth Day, we ask the Special Committee to be bold and create a citizens' assembly on electoral reform.

**Ms. Leon:** In closing, we would like to leave you with a plea from long-time Fair Vote Yukon member Astrid Vogt — and I quote: "It would be great to finally dig in our heels and request a Yukon citizens' assembly, even just for educational reasons, so Yukon citizens would have a chance to learn about proportional representation and what it means to be able to vote with your heart without having to constantly worry about the vote split."

In closing, Fair Vote Yukon thanks the Special Committee on Electoral Reform for the opportunity to make a submission. Thank you.

**Chair:** Thank you both for that presentation.

What we will do now is we will move to questions. When the members have questions, Ms. Wright or Ms. Leon, if you can give me a visual cue as to who is going to answer it, thank you, and then I will identify who it is. This is for the purposes of Hansard.

Mr. Streicker, would you like to start?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Happy Earth Day, everyone. Thank you so much for that presentation.

You are our first Yukoners in the hearing. I appreciate that your suggestion is for a citizens' assembly. You both describe the unique circumstances for the Yukon. From your perspective, what might some of those unique circumstances be that you are thinking about? Also, what would that mean in terms of how you might go about choosing the citizens' assembly or what the logistics would be for what you think? If you could just give us some thoughts around that just to flesh out the idea a bit more for us.

**Ms. Leon:** I think that there are two questions: One is about citizens' assemblies and how we think that could happen; the second question was about the unique circumstances of Yukon. I will let Sally address the one about the unique circumstances of Yukon because she has lived here all her life and I have not, and she knows a great deal more about this than I do.

About the citizens' assembly, I think that you just follow the process of the citizens' assemblies in so many places where it has been a good thing, such as the Irish situation with their constitution. All the members were chosen by lottery. On the abortion issue, a certain percentage of the makeup of the assembly were pro-choice people. They were given enough resources together to come to solutions and they voted. I think that they had to vote because of the abortion issue. They voted among themselves and 68 percent of the members of their citizens' assembly voted for constitutional change. Then it went to a referendum, and the Irish people decided. A lot of the differences between the citizens' assembly that I have noted have been about the rules around whether or not the governing body is going to honour the recommendations or not and how they do that — whether it goes through legislation or whether it goes to referendum.

Fair Vote Yukon does not endorse a referendum, but we understand that it might happen anyway — whatever our opinion is — so there you go. As long as the rules are fair, open, and straightforward, I think that it could be really effective here.

**Ms. Wright:** Thank you. The uniqueness of the Yukon — and we know a little about that, and I just want to say that I haven't lived here all of my adult life — since I was 20. Unique — what is so unique about the Yukon? Every time that Yukon people gather to learn, great things happen. We share an extraordinary place with extraordinary people. We are the population of a small town in southern Ontario. We have 14 self-governing First Nations. We have more people employed by some sort of function of government in any jurisdiction in

Canada — on federal, territorial, municipal, First Nations — all told. We do a lot of governance in the Yukon. We do a lot of hard work on governance in the Yukon.

We can do this. Yukon has made history before, and we can do it again by succeeding with this citizens' assembly that becomes educated about what the options are. If the citizens' assembly decides that they want to have a referendum, my only recommendation would be that the question is clear, and I would say that there is education that happens before, instead of scare tactics. We are all adults here.

I think that we need to hear from people about how the first-past-the-post has damaged their lives with these false-majority governments. I think that there are so many better ways to move forward, and I know that Yukoners agree; I hear it all the time.

I think that we are in a good moment here to do something really special for a better future for everybody.

**Mr. Cathers:** Just a question of curiosity: How many people are part of Fair Vote Yukon?

**Ms. Wright:** I say that the core is about 35. Dave Brekke is one of the co-founders. I mean, Danielle is an incredibly important beginner, and Dave Brekke is one of the beginning people, and he is relentless in his pursuit, so many people are interested in what we do. Usually, there are about 12 who are the most active, keeping it moving forward.

**Chair:** I am going to ask a question. One of the challenges when we have been hearing from experts outside of the territory is that they don't understand the makeup. So, as you have pointed out, Ms. Wright, there are 14 First Nations, 11 with signed final agreements. You have talked about general assemblies and how those were important, but one of the things that I have been trying to grapple with is: What would you see as the makeup of the citizens' assembly? Honestly — personally, my own opinion is that I don't think that 19 people would be enough and I don't know if it would be multiple people per riding. Have you thought about this, and do you have some direction or some suggestions?

**Ms. Leon:** I think that two from each electoral district — I know that this means that there are two people from Old Crow with a very small population, but because they are so special, I think that most people would understand making that exception. I think that two from each would be fine — chosen at random, saying the roles, lottery. I think that we would end up with a really good mix. It means 38 people. I don't think that it is unreasonable.

**Ms. Wright:** We have given some thought about this because we feel that every community should be represented. Right now, the ridings are just too big. We were thinking a male and a female from every community, drawn out of a hat. It turned out to be 50, 55 — and then top it up with making sure that you have the proper percentage of indigenous people involved. The BC assembly — what Professor Carty co-authored on — has very good instructions on how to do the drawing of names out of a hat. So they had a very good cross-section with that, and I would have it run by the university — have it as an academic exercise and use all this wonderful technology that we have to be as inclusive as possible. We can

have two people from Beaver Creek, two people from Burwash, two people from Destruction Bay — because we have such an opportunity with this technology. Back in the old days, you had to fly everybody. You don't have to do that anymore. So, let's get modern here. Let's stop putting up barriers. Ideally — well, I can't remember what they had in British Columbia, but I think that with 55, you would get a pretty good cross-section of the community. Every First Nation — that is 14 First Nations. They all know how to hold an assembly. They will probably even host. That would be very inclusive. If the citizens' assembly wanted to go to Teslin, how wonderful is that? I just think that this is a wonderful opportunity for us, as a community, to have a positive outreach and learning campaign.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I just want to follow up on that question a bit more. I heard a range — maybe 38 to a pair per riding or maybe up to 55 where we take a pair from each community. You talked about the importance of education with the citizens' assembly, and you have talked a little bit about — if the citizens' assembly made a recommendation, whether they could decide or recommend whether or not it goes to referendum. Do you see elements where — the assembly itself would deliberate internally, of course, but would it also be engaging the broader public? For example, one of the things that we are trying to do is to go have this conversation with the public, but do you think that is also what the assembly would do? If you could just talk about how you imagine the various steps that the assembly would take — and like you, we have heard the expert witnesses who have talked about this, but I'm really hoping to get your perspective on how you think the assembly might unfold.

Also, what sort of time frame do you think would be needed in order to achieve the things that you imagine with the citizens' assembly?

**Ms. Leon:** I think that in terms of time scale, I am not really sure. I think that we would probably defer to the BC model, at the very least.

As for education, I remember Dr. Paul Howe talking about how it was a mistake to charge the citizens' assembly with public education. That has to be a separate body. It would be unreasonable to expect that of the citizens' assembly. Having said that, I am really sure that there needs to be transparency about what the citizens' assembly is doing. I did notice that the BC citizens' assembly had a really great website. Unfortunately, it wasn't advertised very much, which is a problem. There has to be some kind of body charged with public education that is prepared to be nimble and not think that they are advertising cars. It really needs to be something that becomes newsworthy and that people in coffee shops are talking about and arguing about. Wouldn't that be great? Arguing about electoral reform — that would be fantastic.

**Ms. Wright:** I want to add that I look forward to the opportunity to see what a citizens' assembly gets up to. They are very creative things that youth, in particular, can take advantage of these days.

There are voting systems out there through which the voter can rank the candidate and choose a party that they like, separate from the candidate. I think that this type of voting

system gives the power back to the voter, and I think that the voter wants this power back. It takes the division out of the Legislature when people can actually see their vote working. I think that this type of voting system gives the power back to the voter. I just want to make sure that we are all clear that every person in Canada needs to act boldly right now to stop climate change. This great challenge is of our generation. We must step up. We must do things differently, and we must succeed at changing our voting system so that we can all be in a better position to meet these huge challenges that are with us right now. I can't stress that enough — our need for reaching out into the community and letting the people see what the options are out there.

I think that I share something with all of you, other than loving planet Earth. I ran in an election and I went to people's doors, and they said, "I would love to vote for you, Sally, but I can't vote for your party. I only have one vote." I think that it is a big mistake, and it has repercussions and continues to have repercussions. We need to move into a better way forward. Who better to do it than Yukon First Nations? They are leaders. I think that this is what is unique about the Yukon. We have First Nations that have created governments and that have created the best legislation that protects us all. We need to partner, and this can be a huge act of reconciliation between us — that together we all learn a better way to vote.

**Mr. Cathers:** I would be interested — in the two different models that you described in terms of the eventual size of a citizens' assembly, you mentioned the potential for basing it on two people per community. My question relates to which communities you are counting as communities, because, as you know, depending on who is counting and how, what is considered a Yukon community varies. For example, Destruction Bay and Burwash Landing are factored as not separate communities or are grouped together.

Another thing that we run into — and that I will mention because it affects the area that I represent — is that, often in the Whitehorse periphery, people who may not be in an incorporated community or one of the LACs representing an area are sometimes considered as being just in the greater Whitehorse area when, in comparison — the Hot Springs Road area, within the Lake Laberge riding, actually has more people in it than a number of communities the size of, roughly, Carmacks and Mayo. The Mayo Road area also has more than a community of that size, yet they are often kind of forgotten and grouped in as being something near Whitehorse.

I am just wondering about — not just my side of town, but south of town within a riding — what you are considering as "communities" for the purpose of the list that you looked at.

**Ms. Wright:** I always think about that, because how do the communities — I hate to tell the person from Destruction Bay that they have the same issues as someone from Burwash. I think that every community should have a voice in this.

There are lots of ways in which we can top up with communities in Whitehorse to make sure that you have that. There are great ways to do it. I know that it is out there. There could be two representatives from each First Nation. I mean, that could also be a way to embrace more. There could be two

representatives from the farming community. It's the Yukon, and now that we have this technology, it's easier to be more inclusive, which will make it actually a better project.

I don't know about you, but I'm here for success. Are you here to see success? What do you think that success is? I would love inclusive. The more the merrier, really.

**Ms. Leon:** Yes, I would take back my opinion and say that I mostly agree with Sally about it needing to be larger. It is too much responsibility for a smaller number of people because the citizens' assembly would have a lot of responsibility. I think that the more people at the table the better. I agree that, because of technology, it is much more doable that the assembly could meet, discuss, and study together. It would be a really good exercise to have more people at the table.

**Chair:** I do appreciate Mr. Cathers' point because just even thinking about it, when we look at ridings outside of Whitehorse — looking toward Mr. Streicker's Marsh Lake community, Tagish, Mount Lorne — so, we look at all those things and I think that Mr. Cathers' point is a good one insofar as how not to exclude people, but I'm going to take your interpretation of "community members" as people who live in the territory, so "community" is a term of where we live in this place together.

When you talk about inclusivity and making sure more people are involved, Ms. Wright — and Ms. Leon, I appreciate that you are saying that this burden can't be on too few — how do we make sure that people are invited to the table to do it? I just wanted to reflect on that because I do appreciate it.

I thought it was really interesting that, right out of the gate, Fair Vote Yukon is saying "citizens' assembly". The reason why I appreciate it is because some of the other experts have not been so direct in their recommendations, and by that, I mean they have danced around any real recommendation, which was challenging.

Also, to the point that Mr. Streicker made, you are the first Yukoners that we have had, so you are experts many times over and in different ways than the other folks who have presented. Can you share with us how you landed on citizens' assemblies? I know, Ms. Wright, that you talked about different voting systems, but how did Fair Vote Yukon get to citizens' assemblies?

**Ms. Wright:** I will take that. It was meetings that we had — Fair Vote Yukon hosted a series of democracy salons in 2015. At one point, somebody came in and said that they did a citizens' assembly in BC and we all watched. They had a video on YouTube about how the citizens' assembly was doing, and we all sat around and watched the YouTube video and said, "Hey, that's a great idea. We should do that here; that would be great." Then we started talking to the government of the time — not your government. Dave did write quite a few letters to Mr. Pasloski at the time, but we also were pretty upset when Prime Minister Trudeau, in 2017, went back on his promise and we continued with unfair elections.

So, in 2017, we went and presented again. We put in a letter to Premier Silver that we understood — it's in the record somewhere and we could put that in our submission — asking for a citizens' assembly for Yukoners to decide for themselves.

We knew that an education campaign was needed. We knew that Yukoners like to engage on issues like this because we are small, we are nimble, and we are fiercely energetic when it comes to learning. You never stop when you learn something that is important.

Dave Brekke says that you have to learn this so that when you go to the Fair Vote table at Fireweed Market, we have done lots of mock elections. We have developed ballots. That is what we are doing at Yukon University today. We have a whole bunch of different types of ballots for people to look at and see what a different ballot would look like. We are using the normal one most, but it works great. It's just important that we don't talk down to the Yukon people. They are a very intelligent bunch. I have to say right now that I'm going to use a prop because I want to know: Did you guys approve this? Did you look at this ad before you paid for it? This is the most exclusive ad. This is the How Yukon Should Vote. This is what the communities are seeing right now.

There is a disclaimer that I have to use. There is a disclaimer — have you read or seen this ad? Can I ask that question?

**Chair:** You can, but I am actually probably going to steer the conversation away from that right now. We are open to feedback, but I don't know if this is the best forum to have the conversation. I will say that it is probably a lot harder to try to communicate this than people realize.

Ms. Leon, did you have any points to add about a citizens' assembly and how Fair Vote Yukon landed there?

**Ms. Leon:** I was away from Fair Vote Yukon for a little while and I returned because of the citizens' assembly. If Fair Vote Yukon was promoting any particular electoral system, I wouldn't be a part of it, because I studied all these. When I was writing articles about it, I was studying it and it became really obvious that the citizens needed to decide amongst themselves. It couldn't be a top-down decision from anyone. That's why a citizens' assembly appeals to me; it is because it is direct democracy in action. It won't be perfect because nothing ever is, but it will be a whole lot more perfect than any other way of determining a fair electoral system for Yukon.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Earlier, when we were talking about the assembly, you mentioned about the citizens' assembly being able to decide whether or not things should go to a referendum. We have also heard when we had other witnesses who talked about citizens' assemblies about how sometimes the citizens' assembly landed somewhere with recommendations, but then the government didn't necessarily follow through. I am just wondering whether you think that if the assembly votes, does it just need to be a majority? If they request a referendum, is it a majority? Should there be language in there that says that the government should be required to follow — what sorts of things are you thinking about once the assembly has reached its view about what would be good for the Yukon and how those next steps would proceed?

**Ms. Wright:** I am married to a PhD, and he gave me a great idea yesterday. He said, "Why don't you make the citizens' assembly produce two new ballots that come from systems that they like the best and have Yukoners choose

between ballots — actual things — instead of an acronym, a system.” Get the citizens’ assembly to make two new ballots, or choices, and then they have three ballots. That’s what we are doing up at the university right now. You look at the first-past-the-post, at the proportional representation, and a second one, and then let Yukoners decide for themselves. They can decide which one they like the look of. I thought that it was a brilliant idea. It is JP’s idea.

Communicating what is being learned when it is so complicated — all you really need to know is: What does the ballot look like? Am I getting the choice that I need? The rest of it is just math. That is the great thing about proportional representation. It is simply math, and it’s fair. Everybody gets a chance to have their vote represented in some way. I think that a citizens’ assembly — we live and breathe this stuff, but you need to be able to teach the Yukon people that these are options and that these are opportunities. Maybe that is the referendum — people’s choice so they can actually decide what the next ballot is going to look like.

Then do like what New Zealand did. After another election, try it and, if they don’t like it, then have another follow-up. I think that might be a more effective way of communicating the idea to the public after the citizens’ assembly.

**Ms. Leon:** I think that getting back to John’s question, it’s really up to the Legislature to decide how they are going to respond to the recommendations of the citizens’ assembly. I really hope that, if there is a citizens’ assembly established, the rules are laid out in advance and that we don’t have things like that it has to be 60 percent of a referendum or, if it is going to go to a referendum, that debate in the Legislature not happen. There should be a legislative response to the recommendations that a citizens’ assembly comes up with and clear rules that are fair. If it does go to a referendum because of the recommendations of the citizens’ assembly, then it should be a simple question. The citizens’ assembly can be charged with designing that simple question so that there is no political interference in how a question is being put out to the public to vote on.

**Mr. Cathers:** You know, I don’t think that I actually have any more questions right now. I will pass it over to you or to John.

**Chair:** I will jump right in.

I have to say that I am really taken by the idea of the examples. We did hear from — and I am going to forget her name, but we heard from a doctor on the east coast. She said that if you have a second ballot so that people can try it out — and, of course, we heard about the New Zealand example where they did the switch and then went back years later and reconfirmed that it was what people wanted. But I think that I am very taken by the idea of seeing the visual. I do think that it is an important aspect. I guess that this is more of a comment than a question, but I do appreciate that perspective. I know that, as a visual learner, for me, to see it physically is important.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I think that it was Dr. Everitt from New Brunswick.

I will just follow up based on one of the things that she said to us. I hear your main message today from Fair Vote Yukon, that you recommend a citizens’ assembly and we are getting a sense of how you think that might go.

One of the other things that we heard from Dr. Everitt as an example was that there may be other things that could be done as well, beyond just the voting system itself. I am just wondering if there is anything else you wanted to share with us, while we are here talking, about other aspects. I have heard clearly that a proportional system is important, but that the tool to use is a citizens’ assembly, but are there other things around the voting system that you would like to see improved?

**Ms. Leon:** I don’t know if I’m speaking for Fair Vote Yukon or not, but perhaps a citizens’ assembly could study the makeup of our ridings and decide whether we need more, with the majority of the population in the Whitehorse basin and our population growing quite large, but all of it is in Whitehorse, from what I understand. That might be another area of discussion for a citizens’ assembly, but I would also suggest that it be a different one. You can’t put too much on somebody’s plate. I don’t know; you’re putting too many challenges for one group of people. I think that is a separate problem and needs to be addressed separately. I am only speaking for myself here — that’s all.

**Ms. Wright:** Thanks for that, Linda. I will just speak for myself too just because we haven’t really talked about it a lot. I do think that assemblies of people are an effective way for us to actually gauge what is actually happening out there. So many people are falling through the cracks. I think that if the assembly succeeds to be able to be that way, it can be a leader in Canada. It would create a template, if we were going to be hopeful about this, that other jurisdictions could use.

We are unique. We have more First Nations per jurisdiction and have so much to learn together about how to work better, moving into the future. To have assemblies of people where you can tap into that elder knowledge — did you see that photo? I mean, in the presentations, I did some looking. It is all across the ages as well. The thing is that we should be teaching this in the schools. This should be led by BYTE, if you want my honest opinion. They are the ones who are going to spend the rest of their lives voting. This was one of the biggest things that I remember when Dave Brekke and I, after John, you lost and split the vote when you ran for the greens, and we were trying to deal with Ryan Leef and trying to make some headway there. We were seeing environmental disasters happening. We couldn’t do anything as we had no vote. I had no vote.

I just think that it is really important that we change. A citizens’ assembly of elders and youth working together at the hard work that it is to create a just society — I am speaking truth to power right now. We need a just society for us to be able to continue together at peace. This is what a citizens’ assembly would do. It will tap into all of that knowledge that sits right here with us and will help us and lead us into a better way forward. I hope that the citizens’ assembly decides that every year we are going to have an assembly on a different issue that people want to be able to talk about.

**Chair:** On that note, I am just going to jump in here because I actually think that this is a really good skip toward my point. When we talk about the lessons we learned from British Columbia, that was the first example of a large-scale citizens' assembly of that scale. It was replicated by Ireland, but what we have seen the Irish do is they are taking it from issues of importance to that country — I believe that, right now, they are dealing with climate. We heard about the issue of abortion.

We don't have much time and I believe, Ms. Wright, that I know that your answer would be yes, but do you see citizens' assemblies as a way of dealing with issues that are facing us collectively?

**Ms. Leon:** I would say that a citizens' assembly is a good tool, but it's a tool. I think that it is up to government and citizens to decide where it is appropriate to use it and where it isn't. There is a reason why we have legislatures and there is a reason why we vote you people in. You know, there isn't a catch-all problem solver. I am a little skeptical. I think that for some issues, it would really be the tool to use.

There is a lot of information about the use of direct democracies, of which a citizens' assembly is one of three, I believe. They are tools. It's like sometimes you use a paintbrush, but you don't use a paintbrush when you need a hammer. It's a really old process; the Greeks used something like the citizens' assembly, but it's new for us in the western world. I think that we need to find out where it is best used and where not to use it. Again, I'm speaking from my own opinion; I am not speaking for Fair Vote Yukon. I am sure that I could have lots of arguments with my colleagues.

**Ms. Wright:** I think that we have used assemblies of people for thousands of years to develop our societies to where they are right now. We have to meet. We have to learn together.

The opportunities for discourse are not very good right now. We haven't had that opportunity for the last two years to sit around the table and share ideas. It really has been difficult, but technology like this has actually expanded it and made us realize how much we need each other and how codependent we are for good decision-making. We don't have everyone around the table or are represented around the table. I think that the design that Old Crow has — two people right now.

Anyway, I just think that it is a really important part of our evolution as a society in the north that we must act together, and learning together is an important part of that, educating each other. So, I really am thankful for being able to present with you today.

**Chair:** Ms. Wright, I believe that you have just done a beautiful closing statement, urging us to work together. So, instead of solving that, I am going to close today's proceedings.

So, I just want to say a few words on behalf of the Committee. First, I would like to thank the witnesses, Ms. Leon and Ms. Wright, and I would also like to thank the Yukoners who are listening and watching this hearing now live or in the future.

The Committee intends to hear more from Yukoners at community hearings in the future. The information on those public hearings, as well as transcripts and recordings of the

Committee's meetings with subject matter experts, will be available on the Committee's webpage at [yukonassembly.ca/scer](http://yukonassembly.ca/scer).

Thank you very much for your time today. This hearing is now adjourned.

*The Committee adjourned at 2:54 p.m.*