

HOW WE VOTE

2018 Electoral Reform Referendum

Report and Recommendations of the Attorney General

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May 30, 2018

Honourable John Horgan
Premier of British Columbia
Executive Council
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, British Columbia V8W 1X4

Dear Premier,

This report contains a summary of the How We Vote public engagement process and results, as well as my recommendations respecting all aspects of the fall 2018 referendum to decide whether B.C. should keep its current First Past the Post voting system or move to a system of proportional representation.

As I have previously stated, to maintain my actual and perceived neutrality throughout this referendum process I have recused myself from all Cabinet and caucus debate and discussions regarding all aspects of the referendum, including the consideration of this report. To enhance the level of transparency around decision-making respecting the referendum, I have also taken the step of making this report and my recommendations publicly available prior to transmitting the report to you.

If Cabinet endorses the recommendations in this report, with or without changes, I will submit regulations necessary to make them effective and ensure the referendum is held accordingly.

Yours truly,



Hon. David Eby, Q.C.
Attorney General

Executive Summary and Recommendations

On October 4, 2017, government introduced Bill 6, the *Electoral Reform Referendum 2018 Act*, to require a provincial referendum be held no later than November 30, 2018 on whether B.C. should keep its current voting system (First Past the Post or FPTP) or move to a system of proportional representation (PR). The Act is enabling legislation that provides the authority to conduct the referendum, and was given Royal Assent on November 30, 2017. However, key issues including the ballot question(s) and most administrative details respecting the conduct of the vote are left to regulations to be passed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

On November 23, 2017 the Attorney General launched the How We Vote public engagement. The purpose of the engagement was threefold:

- To begin informing and educating British Columbians about voting systems and the coming referendum;
- To provide British Columbians the opportunity to help shape key elements of the referendum, including the ballot question;
- To provide British Columbians the opportunity to express their values and preferences respecting voting and representation in the Legislature.

It is important to note that the purpose of the engagement was not to determine whether British Columbians prefer a proportional representation system or the current voting system – that is the purpose of the referendum itself.

The engagement began with a public website providing British Columbians with information to learn about the characteristics of voting systems used in B.C. and elsewhere in the world, and to respond to an online questionnaire focused on the values and preferences British Columbians want to see reflected in their voting system. The questionnaire also sought input on ballot design, choice of specific voting systems for inclusion on the ballot, and public funding distribution during the referendum campaign period.

Over the course of the engagement period, additional information was added to the website in English and four other languages, and the How We Vote public engagement was promoted through traditional and social media as well as a householder mailed to all two million residential addresses in B.C.

The questionnaire was administered to a separate online panel that closely reflects the varying ages, genders, ethnicities and geographic communities of British Columbians, and the public engagement also solicited open-ended written input from individuals and organizations. The Ministry of Attorney General conducted a separate consultation with Indigenous individuals and leadership groups from across British Columbia about their views on the subject. Comments made by MLAs during debate on Bill 6 were also reviewed, as were news media stories and commentary respecting the referendum and public engagement.

By the time the public engagement concluded on February 28, 2018, these activities together produced one of the most successful engagements government has conducted:

- The How We Vote website received more than 180,000 site visits;
- 91,725 questionnaires were completed via the website: 76,226 completed Parts 1 and 2 and 15,499 completed Part 1 only;
- 1,101 questionnaires were administered to a demographically balanced panel of British Columbians;
- 46 written submissions were received from organizations or individuals associated with an institution;
- 208 individuals made unique written submissions – hundreds more submitted endorsements of one or more of the organization submissions;
- 132 responses were received to a modified questionnaire delivered as part of the Indigenous consultation, as well as feedback from face-to-face meetings with community and leadership groups.

As might be expected on an issue as fundamental to democracy as changing the voting system, British Columbians hold a range of viewpoints, and many British Columbians are quite passionate about their views as expressed in the written submissions.

In addition to the structured feedback received through the questionnaire, the written submissions offered opinions, suggestions and analysis on all aspects of the referendum, including arguments for or against specific voting systems to be on the referendum ballot; issues about the referendum process such as public education and the role of advocacy groups; representation of different communities in the Legislative Assembly; and other suggestions for changing British Columbia politics and government that are outside the scope of the referendum. This broad input is reflected throughout the report and has informed the recommendations.

Four key principles have been applied in evaluating voting system suitability for inclusion on the referendum ballot:

- *Proportionality*: Must provide for generally proportional results, but not at the expense of other key principles and values identified in the public engagement;
- *Local representation*: Must respect British Columbians' desire for local representation in all areas of the province and balance the particular needs of urban and rural areas;
- *Simplicity*: Must not be too complex to be effectively communicated to voters or for voters to use if adopted;
- *Size of Legislative Assembly*: Must not require a significant increase in MLAs.

A voting system need not be in use elsewhere if it is otherwise suitable for B.C., as any chosen PR voting system would be the first of its kind in Canada in over half a century. Also, any chosen PR voting system will necessarily reflect a made-in-BC approach, as any new system must be customized to meet our needs – there is no such thing as an off-the-shelf voting system.

After reviewing the public engagement input and applying the key principles, three proportional representation voting systems are recommended for inclusion on the referendum ballot in addition to FPTP. They are:

Dual Member Proportional (DMP)

Dual Member Proportional is a proportional voting system in which most of the province's existing single-member electoral districts would be amalgamated with a second neighbouring district to create two-member districts. The largest rural districts could remain unchanged as single-member districts.

Political parties nominate up to two candidates per electoral district who appear on the ballot in an order determined by the party. Voters cast a single vote for the pair of candidates of the political party of their choice. Seats are won in two ways:

- The first seats are won by the first candidates of the party that receives the most votes in each electoral district, similar to FPTP;
- The second seats are allocated based on province-wide voting results and the individual district results.

DMP can provide highly proportional results because the second seat in each electoral district is allocated based on province-wide election results. DMP is a relatively simple system to understand and for voters to use. The election ballot would change little from the current voting system.

The system meets the principle of local representation because, although most electoral districts would double in size, they would retain two MLAs serving the same total area as present, with no MLAs elected on a regional basis. The largest rural electoral districts would not change.

DMP could be implemented in B.C. relatively easily, since it would require an Electoral Boundaries Commission only to make proposals for amalgamating existing electoral districts as well as proposals for districts that should remain single-member. DMP could be implemented with either no increase or a modest increase to the size of the Legislative Assembly.

Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)

MMP combines single-member electoral districts elected under FPTP with List PR¹ seats allocated on a regional or provincial level. The overall share of seats each party holds in the Legislative Assembly is determined by the party's share of the province-wide vote it receives. Candidates who fill the List PR seats are either elected directly or allocated from the parties' lists of candidates to compensate for any disproportional results from the FPTP vote, so that the overall result is fairly proportional.

MMP meets the principle of proportionality, particularly in regions with higher populations and relatively larger numbers of List PR seats. As recommended in this report, it meets the principle of local/regional representation by requiring at least 60% of the total seats to be from single-member electoral districts (albeit larger ones than currently), and by requiring

¹ For a description of List PR, see Appendix E.

that the List PR seats are allocated on a regional basis rather than a province-wide basis. MMP also provides for a relatively simple ballot with the possibility for voters to vote directly for candidates for both FPTP and List PR seats. MMP could be implemented with either no increase or a modest increase to the size of the Legislative Assembly.

Rural-Urban PR (also known as Flexible District PR)

Rural-Urban PR consists of multi-member districts with seats filled using the Single Transferable Vote (STV) in urban and semi-urban areas and MMP in the most rural areas. In the MMP regions, a small number of List PR seats are filled proportionally on a regional basis in order to provide some proportionality for these regions.

Rural-Urban PR was developed to address the varied geographic and demographic needs of voters in the urban and rural areas of Canada. It can provide some proportionality in the most rural areas of the province while retaining comparable levels of local representation for those voters. It can provide high levels of proportionality in the urban and semi-urban areas where larger STV electoral districts are more manageable for both voters and MLAs. In the MMP regions, there would be a relatively simple ballot with the possibility for voters to vote directly for candidates for both FPTP and List PR seats. In the STV regions, while the vote-counting rules are complex, the ballot itself is not, and it permits a high degree of voter choice by permitting voters to rank preferences for multiple candidates. Rural-Urban PR could be implemented with either no increase or a modest increase to the size of the Legislative Assembly.

The proportional representation voting systems recommended for inclusion on the referendum ballot are described in sufficient detail in this report for voters to understand how they would operate if adopted. Detailed descriptions of the recommended voting systems are contained in Appendices A, B, and C.

Some mandatory criteria would apply to any of the proposed proportional representation voting systems if implemented:

- Either no increase to the current number of 87 MLAs or a modest increase of no more than eight MLAs (i.e. up to 95);
- No region of the province would have fewer MLAs than it currently does;
- No political party would be eligible to receive seats through a system's proportional allocation method unless the party received at least 5% of the overall vote in the province or region, as applicable.

Beyond these recommendations, there are a number of design and implementation details that should be left to post-referendum work if the result of the referendum is the adoption of a new voting system. These details will differ depending on the voting system, but would include, for example, the precise number of seats in the Legislative Assembly and the configuration of party lists under either MMP or Rural-Urban PR. Although they are largely technical, these design details can have a significant effect on how a voting system works in practice and should be decided through a transparent multi-party process.

The best method for providing transparent public input on design and implementation while ensuring a reasonable timeframe for completion would be an all-party committee of the Legislative Assembly. The committee should receive input from experts, election administrators and the public on the remaining design details of the voting system to be adopted and issue a report with recommendations. None of the political parties represented in the Legislative Assembly under its current composition would have a majority on such a committee, and therefore the committee's recommendations would require thoughtful compromise among all the parties.

Summary of Recommendations

This report and the recommendations contained in it do not constitute any opinion on whether British Columbia should retain its current voting system or adopt a proportional representation voting system. The report and recommendations are intended to provide for a fair, transparent and informed vote on this important issue. Similarly, the proportional representation voting systems recommended for inclusion on the referendum ballot are chosen as the most suitable proportional representation voting systems for consideration by British Columbia voters. It will be up to British Columbia voters to decide whether any of them are preferable to the current voting system.

After reviewing the results of the public engagement and considering all the issues raised, the Attorney General makes the following recommendations respecting the conduct of the referendum.

Referendum Ballot Questions

Recommendation: That the referendum ballot questions be as follows:

1. Which should British Columbia use for elections to the Legislative Assembly?
(Vote for only one.)
 - The current First Past the Post voting system
 - A proportional representation voting system
2. If British Columbia adopts a proportional representation voting system, which of the following voting systems do you prefer?
(Vote for the voting systems you wish to support by ranking them in order of preference. You may choose to support one, two or all three of the systems.)
 - Dual Member Proportional (DMP)
 - Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)
 - Rural-Urban PR

Recommendation: That voters be permitted to:

- vote for either question or both questions as they wish; and
- indicate support for one, two or all three of the proportional representation voting systems in the second question.

Recommendation: Votes for the second question should be counted according to the Alternative Vote system, as follows:

- if no voting system receives more than 50% of first-choice votes, then the system that receives the fewest first-choice votes is dropped from further consideration;
- the second choices of the voters who voted for the system that has been dropped are redistributed to the other two systems;
- whichever of the two remaining systems has the most votes at that point would be the system that is adopted.

Matters for Post-Referendum Deliberation and Implementation

Recommendation: That, if the result of the referendum is the adoption of a proportional representation voting system, an all-party legislative committee consider and make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly on any matters necessary for the design and implementation of the chosen voting system that are not described in the recommended models in this report.

Recommendation: That the legislative committee be required to report no later than March 31, 2019, and that it be constituted during the Fall 2018 legislative session in order to begin its work immediately if the result of the referendum is to adopt a proportional representation voting system.

Referendum Voting Period

Recommendation: That the referendum voting period (the period during which ballot packages are to be distributed and returned) be October 22, 2018 to November 30, 2018.

Referendum Campaign Period

Recommendation: That the referendum campaign period (the period during which referendum advertising is regulated) begin on July 1, 2018 and end at the end of the referendum voting period.

Referendum Campaign Advertising and Financing

Recommendation: That referendum advertising sponsors be subject to an expenses limit of \$200,000 during the referendum campaign period.

Recommendation: That referendum advertising sponsors be regulated in a manner similar to election advertising sponsors under Parts 10.1 and 11 of the *Election Act*, including but not limited to restrictions on the source and amounts of permissible sponsorship contributions, a requirement to register in advance of conducting referendum advertising, and a requirement to file post-referendum reports.

Recommendation: That provincial political parties be subject to the same referendum campaign rules as other referendum advertising sponsors, except that any contributions raised by political parties for referendum activities be treated as political contributions under the *Election Act*.

Designated Referendum Proponent and Opponent Groups

Recommendation: That there be one designated group to advocate on behalf of retaining the current First Past the Post voting system, and one designated group to advocate on behalf of proportional representation.

Recommendation: That the Chief Electoral Officer select the designated groups using a process and selection criteria similar to the 2009 referendum on electoral reform.

Recommendation: That each group be provided with \$500,000 in public funding for the purpose of stimulating public interest and debate about the choices on the referendum ballot.

Recommendation: That the designated groups' use of public funding be regulated in a manner similar to the 2009 referendum on electoral reform, including restrictions on use and repayment of any unused funds.

Recommendation: That the overall expenses limit for each designated group be the sum of their public funding plus the amount of the expenses limit established for referendum advertising sponsors, and that any funds the designated groups raise outside of the public funding amounts be subject to the same rules as for other referendum advertising sponsors.

Public Education

Recommendation: That the Chief Electoral Officer be responsible for providing neutral and factual information to voters about the referendum, including informing voters about the voting systems appearing on the referendum ballot.

Subsequent Referendum

Recommendation: That, if the result of the 2018 referendum is the adoption of a proportional representation voting system, a second referendum be held after two provincial general elections in which the proportional representation voting system is used on whether to keep that voting system or revert to the First Past the Post voting system.

Indigenous Representation

Recommendation: That, regardless of the outcome of the referendum, a legislative committee be appointed to examine ways to improve the representation of Indigenous people in the British Columbia Legislature, including issues of accessibility and inclusion and the issue of creating one or more designated seats for Indigenous people in the Legislative Assembly.

Introduction

Government introduced Bill 6, the *Electoral Reform Referendum 2018 Act*, on October 4, 2017, to require a provincial referendum be held no later than November 30, 2018 on whether B.C. should keep its current voting system (First Past the Post or ‘FPTP’) or move to a system of proportional representation (‘PR’).

The Act is enabling legislation that provides the authority to conduct the referendum, establishes that it will be conducted by mail-in ballot, and sets the threshold for the results to be binding on government. The ballot question(s) itself and most administrative details respecting the conduct of the vote are left to regulations of the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The Act received Royal Assent on November 30, 2017.

When the bill was introduced in the Legislature, government announced that it would provide British Columbians the opportunity to help shape key elements of the referendum, including the ballot question, which would be defined in the regulations.

The Attorney General also announced he would serve as a neutral arbiter to ensure the referendum process is conducted fairly and in accordance with B.C. law, and to that end the Attorney General recused himself from both Cabinet and caucus debate and decisions regarding all aspects of the referendum following passage of the Act.

A Note on Terminology

The term “proportional representation” is a generic term that refers to a family of voting systems that are designed to consistently produce a moderate to high correlation between the share of votes a political party receives and the share of seats it receives in a legislative body.

The formal name for British Columbia’s current voting system is Single Member Plurality. However, as First Past the Post is the term most commonly used to describe the system, that term is used throughout this report.

Throughout this report, the term “proportional representation” is used in the lower-case when it is used as a generic description of a family of voting systems. Specific voting systems, such as Mixed Member Proportional, are used in upper-case.

Abbreviations used in the report:

DMP – Dual Member Proportional voting system

FPTP – First Past the Post voting system

MLA – Member of the Legislative Assembly

MMP – Mixed Member Proportional voting system

PR – proportional representation

How We Vote Public Engagement Process

The How We Vote public engagement was launched by the Attorney General on November 23, 2017 and concluded on February 28, 2018. The engagement had three main purposes:

- to begin informing British Columbians about the upcoming referendum on electoral reform and how different voting systems operate;
- to hear from British Columbians about their values and preferences about voting and representation in the Legislature; and
- to receive input on specific topics respecting the conduct of the referendum.

The feedback received from this public engagement has assisted the Attorney General in making recommendations about key aspects of the referendum, including the kinds of voting systems that correspond with voters' values as well as more specific questions respecting the conduct of the referendum such as rules respecting advertising by interested parties and the provision of public information.

This engagement was not intended to focus debate on the substantive question of whether the province should change to a proportional representation voting system or retain the current system: that debate will occur during the referendum campaign to come.

The How We Vote public engagement included the following elements:

Website

The How We Vote engagement website was created to inform British Columbians about the referendum as well as the characteristics of voting systems used in B.C. and elsewhere in the world.

The website included an introduction to the basics of voting systems (“The Building Blocks of Voting Systems”) to provide a short overview of the different elements that make up a voting system and how or why they may vary between systems. Slideshows with graphics were added for each voting system to better communicate these complex and often technical concepts.

The website was also the primary hub for people to complete the Voting Systems Questionnaire.

Over the course of the three-month engagement period, the engagement website received more than 180,000 site visits. Visitors spent an average of over 14 minutes on the site, independent of time spent completing the questionnaire.

Questionnaire

One of the main tools for providing input to the Attorney General was a questionnaire on key elements of the referendum – including ballot design, choice of voting systems and public funding distribution during the referendum campaign period.

The questionnaire was structured in two parts. The first and shorter part focused more on general questions of values and preferences and gauged respondents' level of interest in and awareness of voting and electoral reform. The second part included further values questions as well as more specific questions respecting the conduct of the referendum. Respondents could choose to respond to just the first part, or both parts of the questionnaire. Respondents were also provided with the opportunity to write open-ended comments, and approximately 58,000 individuals did so. Respondents on the website spent an average of 16 minutes completing the questionnaire.

Those without internet access who wished to complete the questionnaire were directed to their public libraries, while others had hard copies mailed to them for completion and return.

A total of 91,725 questionnaire responses were received²: 15,499 completed the first part only, and 76,226 completed both parts. This represents the largest number of responses to any engagement questionnaire conducted to date by the Government of B.C.

To ensure the Attorney General would hear the views and perspectives of a demographically balanced group of British Columbians beyond those who chose to take the questionnaire, Ipsos Public Affairs was contracted to conduct a separate online panel made up of 1,101 British Columbians that accurately reflected the demographics of the province. This representative panel completed a version of the online questionnaire that was formatted differently but was otherwise the same as the questionnaire completed through the engagement website. Panel members were presented with the entire questionnaire in a single part.

Written Submissions

Submissions from individuals and organizations were a second important source of input. A total of 46 organizations and 208 individuals sent written submissions over the course of the engagement period.

These submissions varied greatly: some were short expressions of support for, or opposition to, a particular voting system. Others went into some depth and made recommendations on a number of aspects of the referendum. Still others proposed voting systems not described on the public engagement website.

A list of submissions received is contained in Appendix J.

² Note: A figure of 88,547 completed questionnaires was announced immediately after the end of the engagement. This figure was a preliminary estimate that did not include paper questionnaires returned by mail and online questionnaires from individuals who indicated they intended to complete both parts of the questionnaire, but only completed the first part in full. These questionnaires were processed at a later date. For clarity, if an individual completed the first part in full, but not all of the second part, only the responses to the first part were considered.

Other Input

In addition to the input received during the public engagement, commentary in the Legislative Assembly during debate on the *Electoral Reform Referendum 2018 Act* has been taken into account in formulating the recommendations contained in this report.

Mailout and Advertising

In January, a brochure was mailed to all two million residential addresses in the province encouraging British Columbians to visit the website, learn about the referendum and complete the questionnaire.

In February, digital advertising was undertaken via video and static ads on a variety of social media platforms and on news sites. The videos reached were viewed approximately 700,000 times, and the static ads resulted in approximately 25,000 clicks.

In addition, advertisements were placed in 20 community-based media newspapers in February.

Translations

The How We Vote public engagement was the first engagement to give British Columbians the opportunity to provide their input in other languages. Translated versions of the questionnaire and most website content were available in French, Chinese Simplified, Chinese Traditional and Punjabi. The availability of the translated material was specifically highlighted in advertisements conducted through ethnic media outlets.

While the translated material available on the website was downloaded, no questionnaires were returned in the other languages.

Indigenous Consultation

A contractor, Corfield and Associates, was retained by the Ministry of Attorney General to engage in specific outreach to Indigenous British Columbians on the referendum and associated topics. The questionnaire was modified for the purpose of delivering directly to this group, and 132 responses were received. In addition, face-to-face meetings with two First Nations communities as well as with leadership and youth were held.

The feedback received from this consultation is included in the relevant sections of the report. The report of the consultant is attached to this report in Appendix I.

Academic Advisors

The Attorney General sought the assistance of four external academic advisors who reviewed and commented on the draft questionnaire and voting system information presented on the engagement website and provided feedback. They are not responsible for the final content of the questionnaire or website. They are all experts in democratic reform, voting systems and/or citizen engagement processes. The four advisors were:

Dr. Maxwell A. Cameron
Director, Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions
Professor, Department of Political Science
University of British Columbia

Dr. Genevieve Fuji Johnson
Professor, Department of Political Science
Simon Fraser University

Dr. Peter Loewen
Director, School of Public Policy and Governance
Associate Professor, Department of Political Science
University of Toronto

Dr. Jonathan Rose
Associate Professor, Department of Political Studies
Queen's University

The academic advisors' input and advice was greatly appreciated.

What We Heard

This portion of the report describes in detail the feedback received from the public engagement through questionnaire responses and comments as well as written submissions from individuals and organizations. It also includes the feedback obtained from the *Indigenous B.C. Elections Referendum Survey Results*.

Responses to the questionnaire are shown by group: “website” refers to those members of the public who completed the questionnaire online or in paper copy, and “panel” or “panel members” refers to those who completed the same questionnaire administered by Ipsos Public Affairs.

Detailed results of the website and panel questionnaire responses are posted on the How We Vote website (<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/howwewote/>). These results are broken down by region, age, gender, and some identity characteristics for which there were sufficient sample sizes (e.g. respondents identifying as visible minorities or as persons with disabilities).

Due to rounding, some responses to the questionnaire represented in the charts presented below do not add up to 100.

Interest in Public Affairs

The responses to many questions in this section of the questionnaire were similar from both website and panel respondents. However, there were some notable differences.

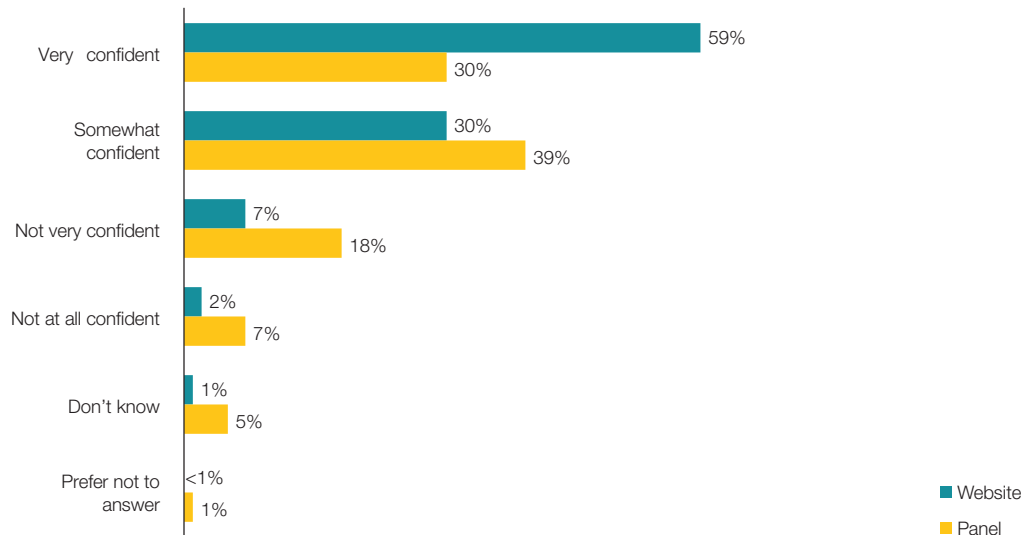
A sizable majority of website respondents (70%) were “very interested” in politics and current affairs, and another 27% indicated that they were “somewhat interested”. Panel members were more likely to be “somewhat interested” in politics and current affairs (53%) than “very interested” (30%).

Likewise, website respondents were more likely to report voting “all the time” (86%) than panel members (68%), and slightly more likely to have voted in either the 2005 or 2009 referenda on electoral reform.

Detailed information on these responses can be viewed on the How We Vote website.

For respondents to the *Indigenous B.C. Elections Referendum Survey Results*, 66% identified as “very interested” in politics and current affairs and 29% indicated “somewhat interested”. Sixty-one percent responded that they vote “all the time” and another 20% that they vote “most of the time”.

Confidence in Voting in a Referendum

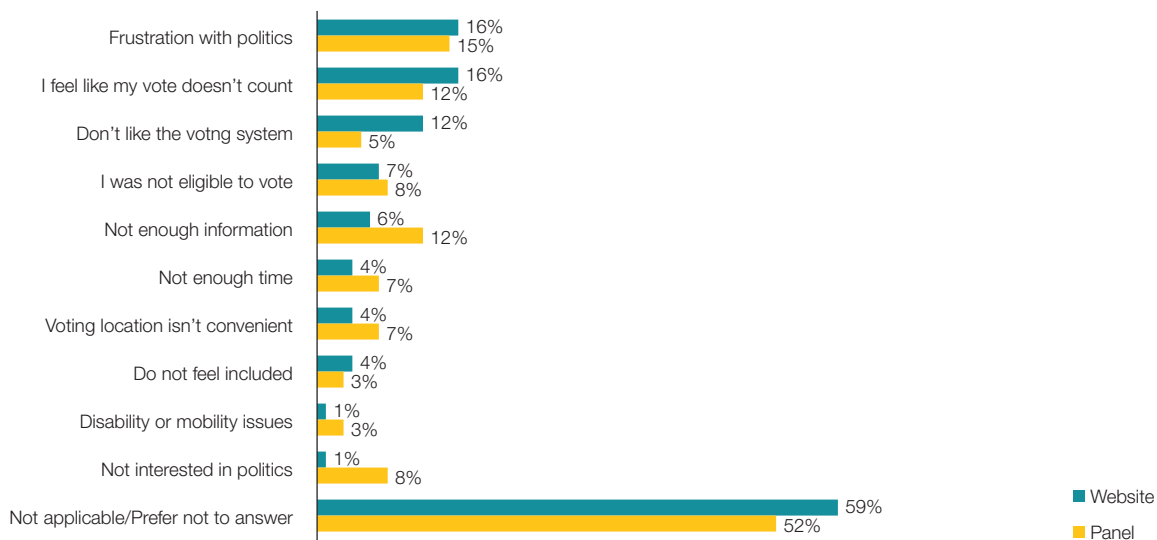


Q. *If you were to vote in a referendum to choose a voting system today, how confident are you that you would make an informed choice? (Select One)*

Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 91,725

A large majority of website respondents expressed confidence that they could make an informed choice in the referendum, and a smaller although clear majority of panel members indicated the same. Respondents to the Indigenous survey, by contrast, were less likely to indicate “very confident” (18%), with 41% “somewhat confident” and 27% “not very confident” or “not at all confident”.

Barriers to Voting in Provincial Elections



Q. Which, if any, of the following have been barriers that have kept you from voting?
(Select Any)

Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 91,725

In keeping with the high percentage of respondents who vote all or most of the time, very few respondents from the website, panel or Indigenous survey indicated that they encountered barriers to voting, with a majority saying the question was not applicable or they chose not to answer.

Respondents to the Indigenous survey for this question indicated the following as their top five responses:

- 48% indicated no barriers to voting
- 16% do not feel included in the political process
- 13% felt frustration with politics
- 12% indicated voting location isn't convenient
- 11% feel their vote doesn't count

Seven per cent of respondents to the Indigenous survey indicated that they do not like the voting system.

Interest in Public Affairs – Summary

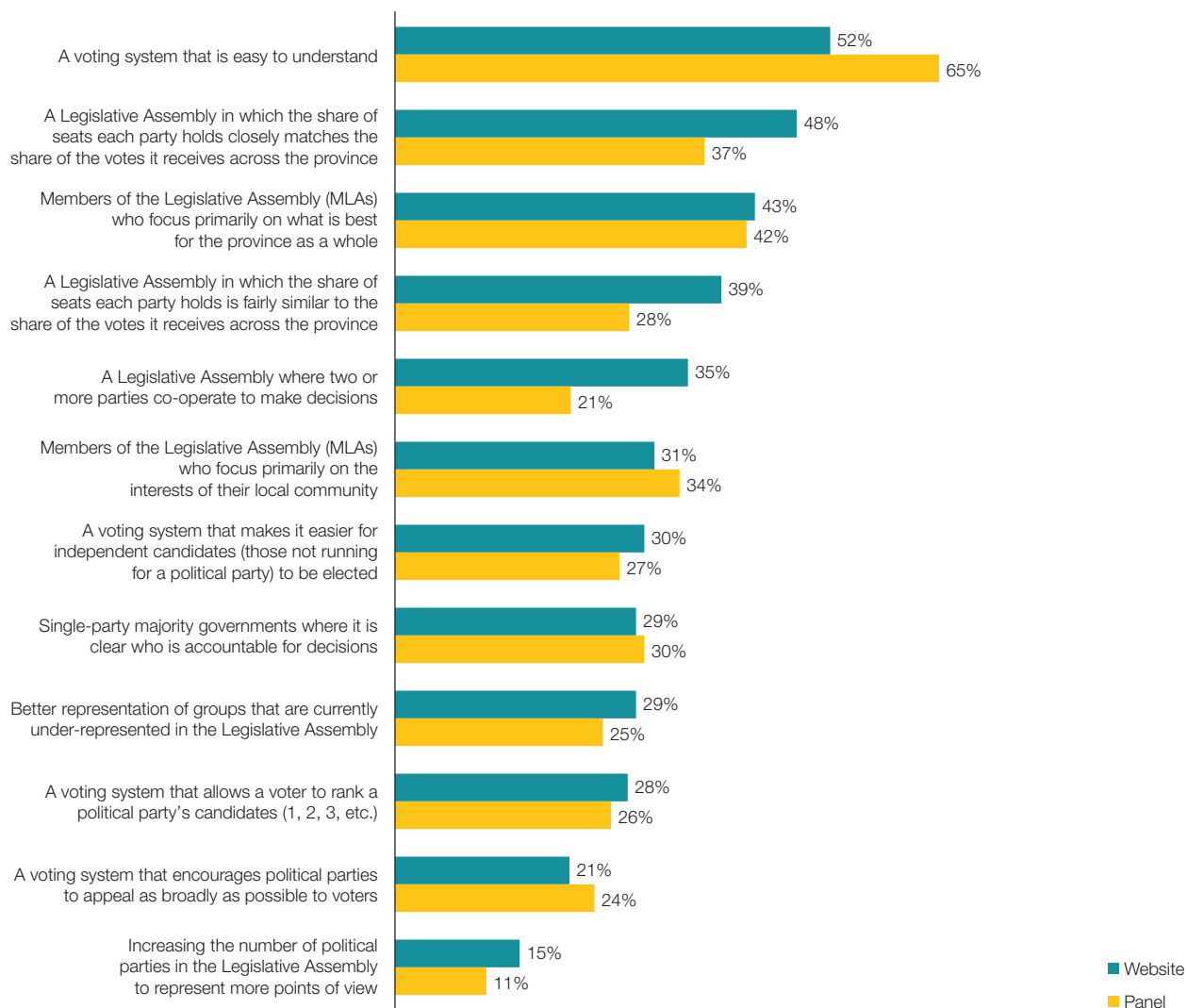
The relatively high levels of interest in politics and public affairs expressed by individuals responding to the questionnaire on the public website suggest that these respondents are somewhat more engaged and interested in voting and public affairs than British Columbians generally. This suggests that the views expressed by these respondents may not necessarily reflect the views of the average British Columbian.

It is in part for these reasons that the representative panel was established and the website questionnaire not treated as an opinion poll with the most popular responses always being reflected in the Attorney General's recommendations. The responses to the questionnaires are one of a number of forms of input considered by the Attorney General in this public engagement to hear from British Columbians. While chosen to reflect a more geographically and demographically balanced view, the representative panel members also indicated a fairly high degree of interest and participation. Respondents to the Indigenous survey also indicated a high degree of interest and participation.

Voting and Representation in the Legislature

One of the purposes of the public engagement was to hear from British Columbians about their values and preferences respecting voting in provincial elections, how they are represented in the Legislative Assembly, and how government functions within the Legislature.

Most Important Values



Q. Please select up to five values from the list that are most important to you. (Select up to 5)

Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 91,725

The questionnaire presented respondents with 12 value statements and asked them to select up to five that were most important to them. Respondents also had the option to write in a value statement of their own. The purpose of this question was to gauge British Columbians' most widely held values when presented in a series of different statements. It is important to note that this question measures the breadth of support for the various statements – it does not measure the relative strength each respondent might attach to any particular statement, for instance by asking whether respondents “strongly agree” vs. “agree”.

With some exceptions, the responses were quite similar between both website respondents and panel members.

A voting system that is easy to understand received the most selections and an outright majority overall, although the majority was larger among panel members (65%) than website respondents (52%).

There were also differences between the two groups respecting the second-most highly ranked value (i.e. that a political party's share of seats in the Legislative Assembly closely matches its share of the province-wide vote). Nearly as many website respondents chose this value as chose a simple voting system, while fewer panel respondents chose this value than chose MLAs who focus primarily on what is best for the province as a whole.

Another significant difference between the groups is evident in their responses to the statement “A Legislative Assembly where two or more parties cooperate to make decisions”. This was the fourth-most highly selected value amongst website respondents (35%), but the eleventh-most among panel members (21%). At 14%, that gap is the largest of any of the statements.

Two similar but slightly different statements measured respondents' values respecting proportional representation, and in particular the degree of proportionality they would prefer – that is, a share of seats that “closely matches” a party's vote share vs. being “fairly similar” to a party's vote share. In part, the intent of asking these two questions was to gauge respondents' relative support for a voting system that provides highly proportional results compared to one in which there may be some deviation between vote share and seat share. Respondents from both groups ranked both statements highly, with approximately 10% more respondents in both groups selecting the “closely matches” version of the statement.

The statements respecting the focus of MLAs were both ranked fairly highly by both groups as well. More respondents chose “MLAs who focus on what is best for the province as a whole” than “MLAs who focus primarily on the interests of their local community”.

Generally, there were very few major differences in responses across different regions of the province. Website respondents from the North were more likely than respondents from other regions to value MLAs who focus primarily on the interests of their local communities (42%) compared to 29% for Metro Vancouver and 27% for Vancouver Island. However, panel members' responses for this value were essentially uniform across the regions.

Notable differences in value statement selections were more frequent among different age groups. Respondents aged 65 and over were considerably more likely than voters 39 and under to select the following value statements:

- A voting system that is easy to understand (65% website respondents, 78% panel respondents);
- MLAs who focus on what is best for the province as a whole (61% website, 57% panel);
- Single-party majority governments where it is clear who is accountable for decisions (45% website, 39% panel);
- A voting system that encourages political parties to appeal as broadly as possible to voters (31% website, 30% panel).

For respondents aged 18 to 39, there were some significant differences within this age group between website responses and panel responses:

- A Legislative Assembly where the share of seats closely matches the share of votes (57% website, 33% panel);
- A voting system that is easy to understand (40% website, 61% panel);
- Better representation of groups that are currently under-represented in the Legislative Assembly (42% website, 29% panel)

Among respondents to the Indigenous survey, the top six values were the following:

- Better representation of groups that are currently under-represented (53%);
- A voting system that is easy to understand (45%);
- A Legislative Assembly where two or more parties co-operate to make decisions (38%);
- MLAs who focus primarily on the interests of their local community (38%);
- MLAs who focus primarily on what is best for the province as a whole (32%);
- A Legislative Assembly where the share of seats closely matches the share of votes (30%).

Comments/Additional values

A total of 6,645 of the 91,725 website respondents (7%) wrote in a value under “Other”. Four response themes were mentioned by at least 5% of these 6,645 respondents, including the following:

- **No change/keep the current system (17% of the “Other” entries)**

A simple, straightforward system, which we already have. (Northern respondent)

A voting system that worked for more than hundred years and has produced the greatest society in the history of the world. (Metro Vancouver respondent)

Current system works for me. (Metro Vancouver respondent)

▪ **Increased accountability for MLAs/parties (9% of the “Other” entries)**

A system that can hold politicians and political parties accountable for promises they make, and actions they take. (Northern respondent)

A Legislative Assembly where elected officials are accountable to their constituents. (Southern Interior respondent)

A system where parties are accountable for their promises. (Metro Vancouver respondent)

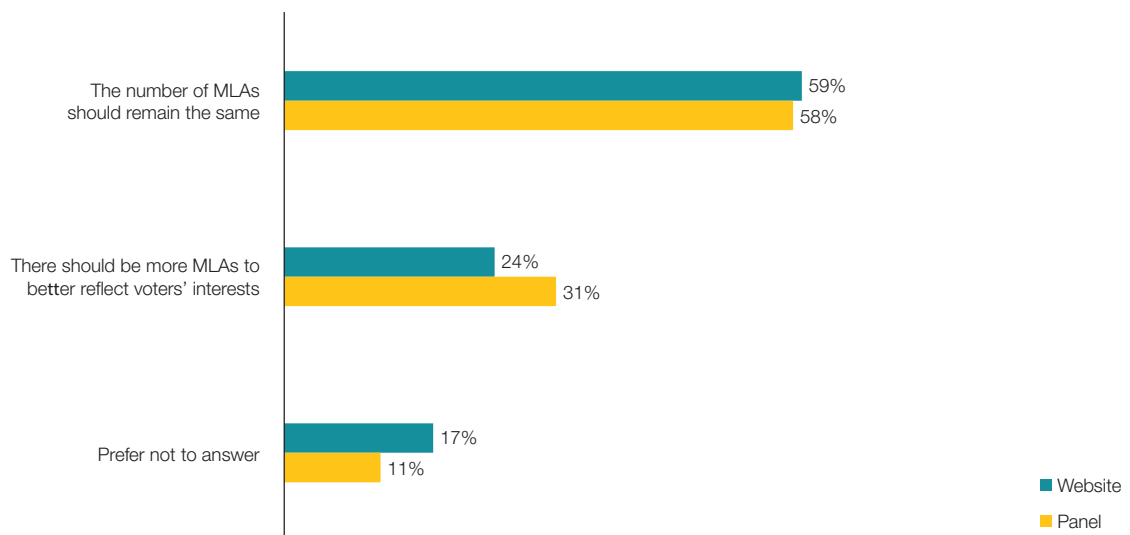
▪ **Need representation for all regions (7% of the “Other” entries)**

A Legislative Assembly in which all areas of the province are represented equally. (Metro Vancouver respondent)

Fair representation of rural and northern communities. (Northern respondent)

A system that gives all citizens of BC representation in the Legislature. (Metro Vancouver respondent)

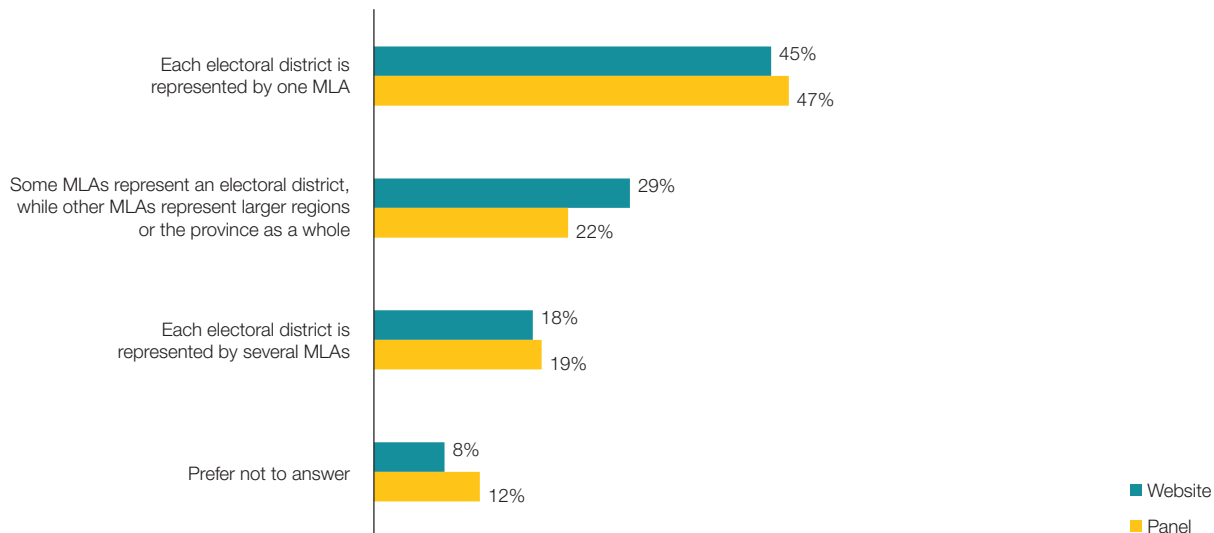
Preferred Number of MLAs



Q. Which would you prefer?
(Select One)

Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 91,725

Preferred Electoral District and MLA Representation



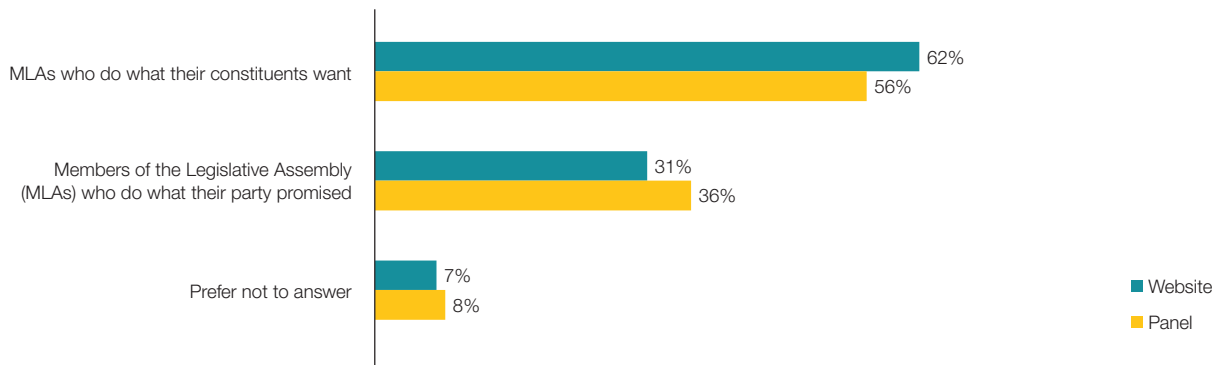
Q. Please indicate which you prefer.
(Select One)

Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 76,226

The responses to these questions indicate that respondents favour maintaining the same number of MLAs by a margin of roughly two to one, with the most popular form of representation being a single MLA for each electoral district.

A relatively high number of respondents preferred not to answer, particularly respecting the total number of MLAs. This may be explained by the numerous comments received in the open-ended question field that respondents would prefer there to be fewer MLAs. This was not provided as a possible response to this question as there are many reasons why respondents may prefer a reduction in the number of MLAs apart from the variable of introducing a new voting system.

Prefer MLAs Doing What Constituents Want or What Party Promised

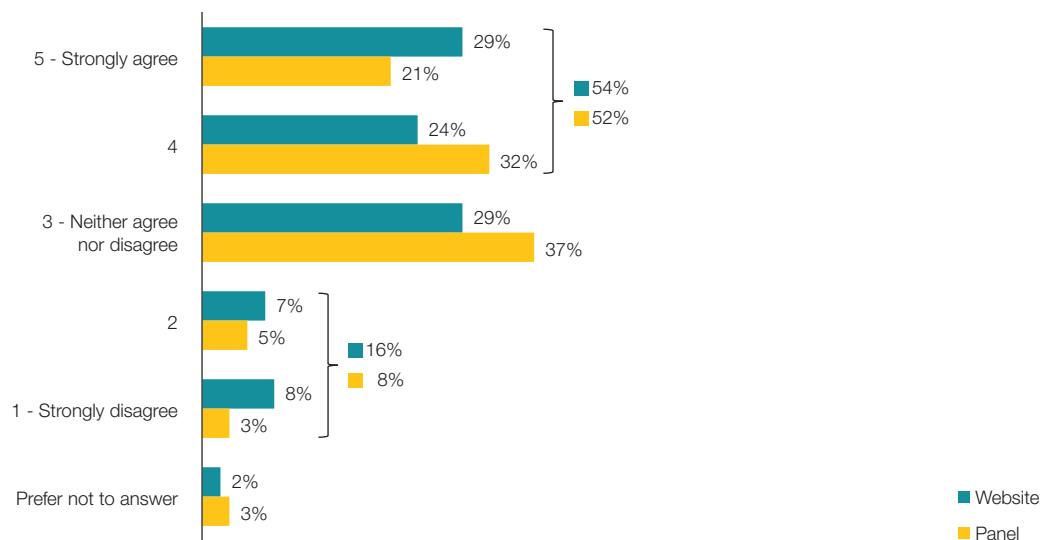


Q. Which would you prefer?
(Select One)

Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 76,226

This question sought respondents’ views on MLAs’ primary accountability: to constituents or to the commitments made by their respective political parties. A clear majority of respondents favoured MLAs following the wishes of their constituents over following the commitments of their parties.

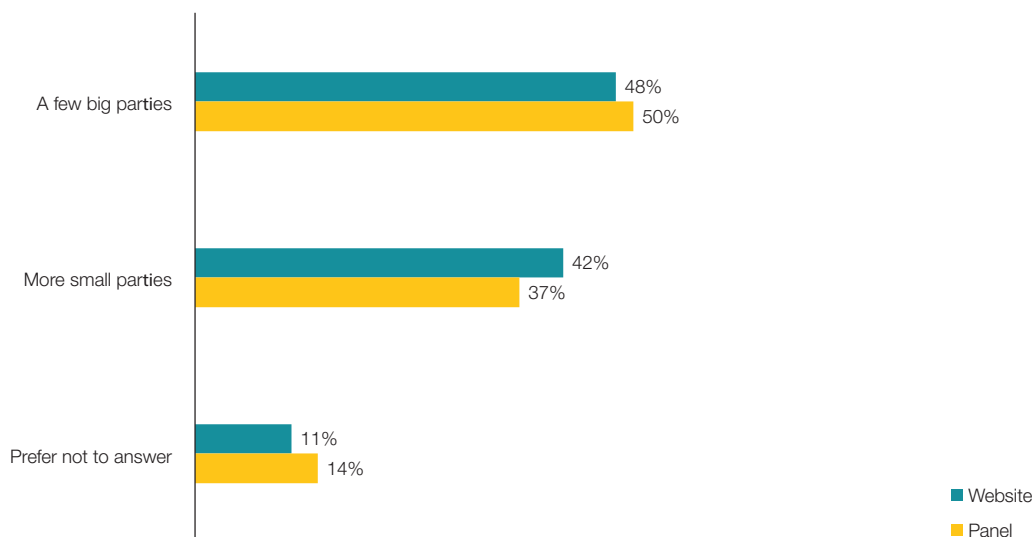
There should be greater diversity of views represented in the Legislative Assembly.



Q. Please select your level of agreement with the following statement.
(Select One)

Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 91,725

Prefer a Few Big Parties or More Small Parties in Legislature



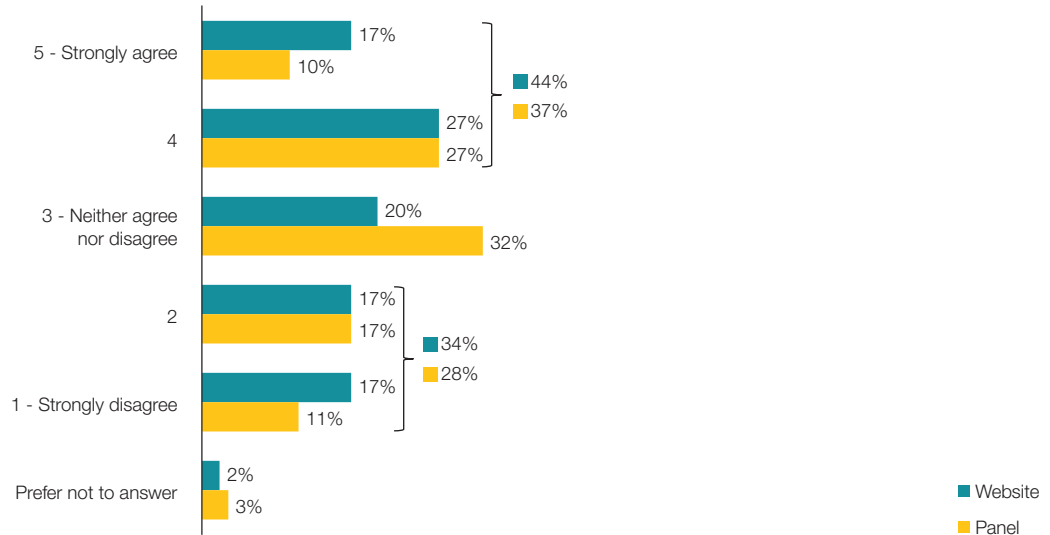
Q. Which would you prefer: having more small parties represented in the Legislature or a few big parties? (Select One)

Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 76,226

A small majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there should be greater diversity of views represented in the Legislative Assembly, with very few disagreeing. Panel members were less likely to agree strongly, and in fact the most common response was neutral. Website respondents who identified as LGBTW2S+ (73%) and those age 18-39 (68%) were significantly more likely to indicate agreement with this statement.

Respondents indicated somewhat more support for a few large political parties being represented in the Legislative Assembly compared to having more small parties. The difference in support for fewer parties was greater among panel members (50% to 37%) than among website respondents (48% to 42%). A fairly large proportion of both groups preferred not to answer this question.

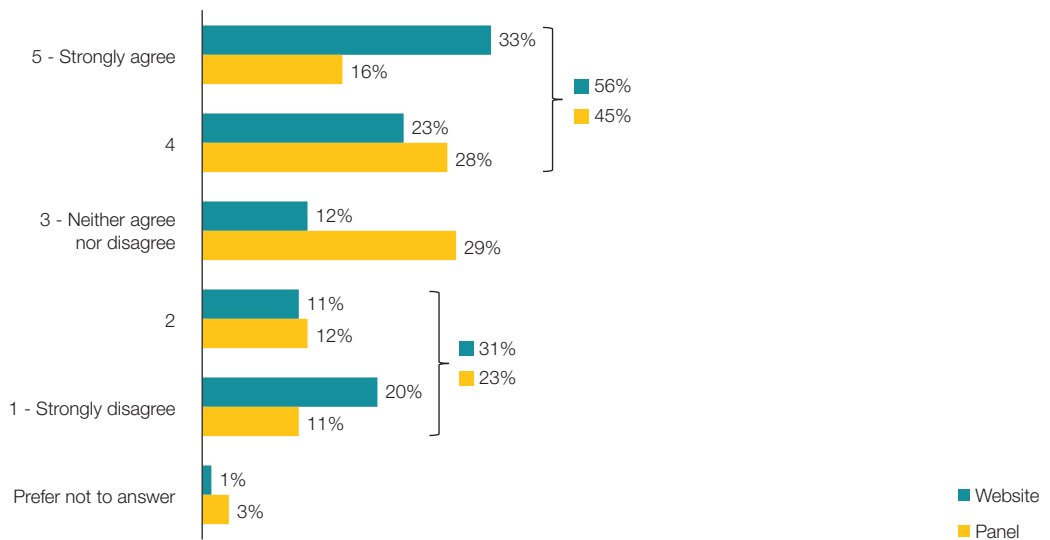
The party that wins the most seats in an election should have to compromise with other parties, even if it means changing some of its campaign commitments.



Q. Please select your level of agreement with the following statement.
(Select One)

Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 91,725

It is better for several parties to co-operate and govern together rather than one party to govern alone, even if it sometimes takes longer to form government after an election.



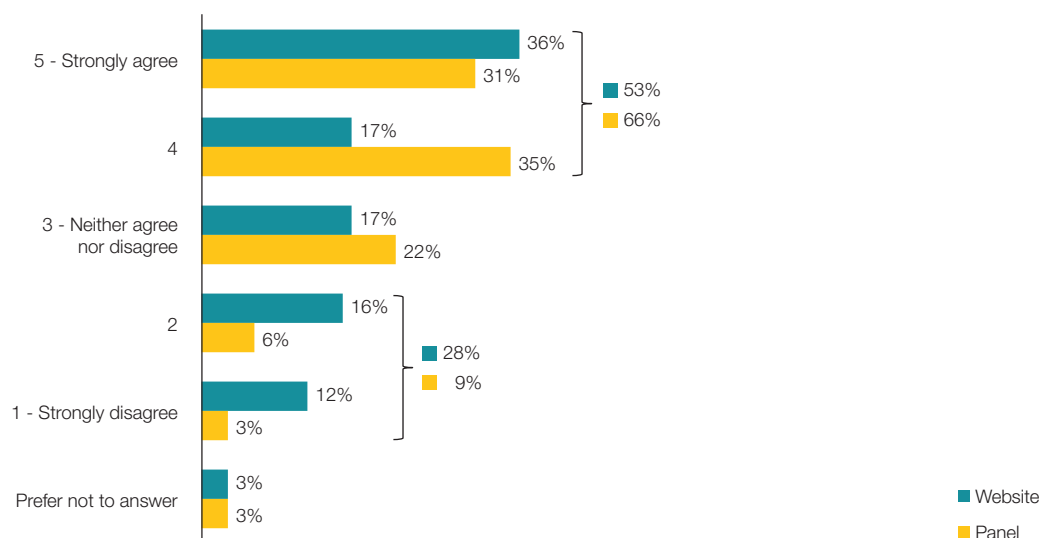
Q. Please select your level of agreement with the following statement.
(Select One)

Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 76,226

These two questions sought respondents' views on co-operation and compromise between political parties in order to govern British Columbia. Respondents generally favoured compromise between political parties even if it means changes to commitments made during an election campaign. Website respondents were more likely than panel members to agree with this statement (44% compared to 37%) and panel members were considerably more likely to be neutral on the question (32% compared to 20%). Relatively few respondents from either group strongly agreed with the statement.

Agreement was generally stronger for the proposition that government formed by several parties was worthwhile even if it means delays in forming government after an election. However, there were significant differences between website and panel respondents. A majority (56%) of websites respondents agreed or strongly agreed, and nearly half (44%) of panel members did as well. Website respondents were more sharply split, with nearly as many strongly disagreeing (20%) as agreeing (23%). By contrast, a large proportion of panel members were neutral on the statement, while relatively few website respondents were.

It should always be clear which party is accountable for decisions made by government, even if this means that decisions are only made by one party.

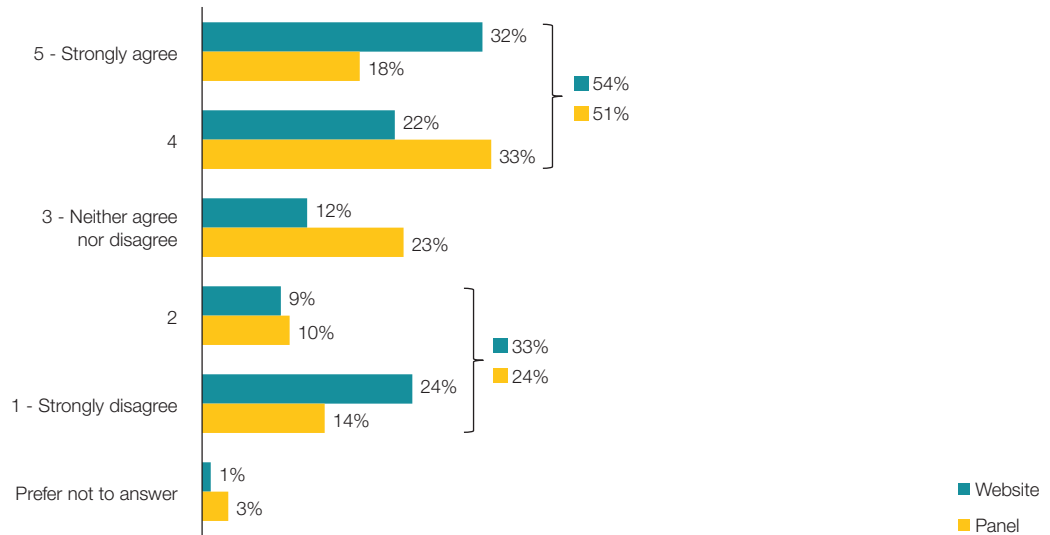


Q. Please select your level of agreement with the following statement. (Select One)

Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 91,725

This statement measured respondents' views on accountability for government decision-making. A slight majority (53%) of website respondents and a sizable majority of panel members (66%) wished to see clear accountability even if it meant only one party was making the decisions. Very few panel members (9%) disagreed with the statement, while 28% of website respondents did.

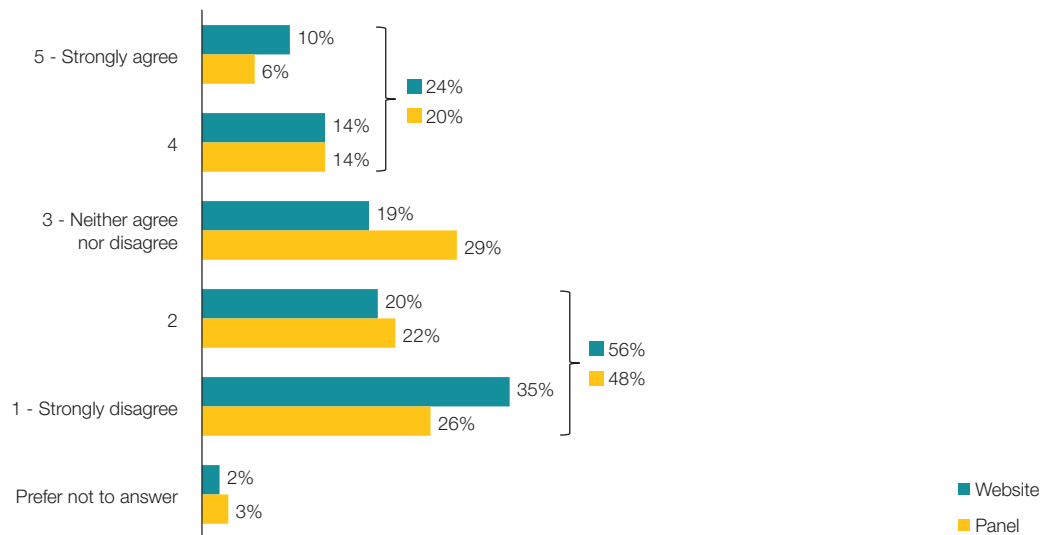
Ballots should allow voters to support more than one candidate or political party by ranking them in order of preferences.



Q. Please select your level of agreement with the following statement.
(Select One)

Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 76,226

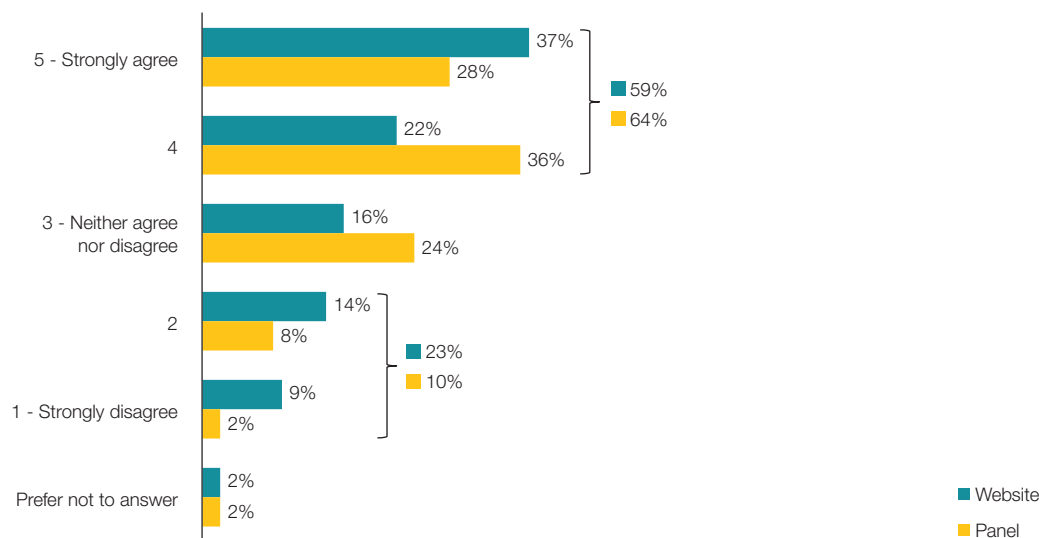
A ballot should give voters lots of choices, even if it's less clear how votes get turned into seats.



Q. Please select your level of agreement with the following statement.
(Select One)

Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 76,226

An election ballot should be easy to understand, even if it means voters have fewer options to express their preferences.



Q. Please select your level of agreement with the following statement.
 (Select One)

Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 76,226

The questionnaire asked three questions about respondents’ preferences respecting election ballots. A slight majority of respondents favoured the option of ballots that permit rank-ordering of candidates or political parties. Website respondents (24%) were more likely to strongly disagree with this option than panel members (14%).

A majority of website respondents (56%) and nearly half of panel members (48%) disagreed with having many choices on the ballot if it meant less clarity in seeing how votes translate into seats, with 35% and 26% respectively disagreeing strongly.

Likewise, there was strong support for a simple election ballot, even if it meant having fewer options for voters to vote for. A clear majority of both groups of respondents agreed with this statement, and only 10% of panel members disagreed.

Respondents to the Indigenous survey were asked a single, more general question about ballot choices and simplicity. Just over 50% of respondents agreed (16% “strongly agree”, 34% “agree”) that ballots should provide voters with more input into their preferences, for example by ranking candidates in order of preference or by supporting a political party and a candidate separately. Twenty-four per cent neither agreed nor disagreed, 9% disagreed, 3% strongly disagreed, and 14% preferred not to answer.

Relatively few written submissions from either organizations or individuals directly commented on values and preferences respecting voting and representation in the Legislature apart from indicating how they supported a particular voting system. Most individual and organization submissions consisted of specific comments and recommendations such as advocating for or against a particular voting system or addressing rules for the conduct of the referendum itself. These comments are reviewed in the relevant sections of this report.

During debate in the Legislative Assembly on the *Electoral Reform Referendum 2018 Act*, significant attention was focused on the process leading to the referendum itself, as well as on the perceived benefits and costs of potentially changing to a proportional representation voting system. MLAs also discussed the linkages between them and their constituents, and how a change to the voting system might change those linkages. The importance of local representation was emphasized by a number of MLAs.

I can tell you that in my riding people do want to have that local say. People do want to have that local connection with their local MLA office. I don't think that's a rural and an urban issue whatsoever.

—P. Milobar, MLA

I think that choice is what's really important from a local perspective, because at the end of the day, it's all about accountability. It's about having that voice here in Victoria, but it's also having that person that can be back in the riding, accountable to the riding – somebody who is not only known by the people in the area but one that knows the area, one that can actually represent the issues of the riding because they know the issues of the riding.

—M. Bernier, MLA

Other values expressed during debate included the need to ensure that British Columbians from all regions of the province are represented in the Legislative Assembly – this issue was raised both in the context of the ratio of seats to be apportioned amongst different regions of the province under FPTP or a potential PR voting system as well as the effects of different voting systems on which political parties' candidates may be elected in different regions.

Voting and Representation in the Legislature – Summary

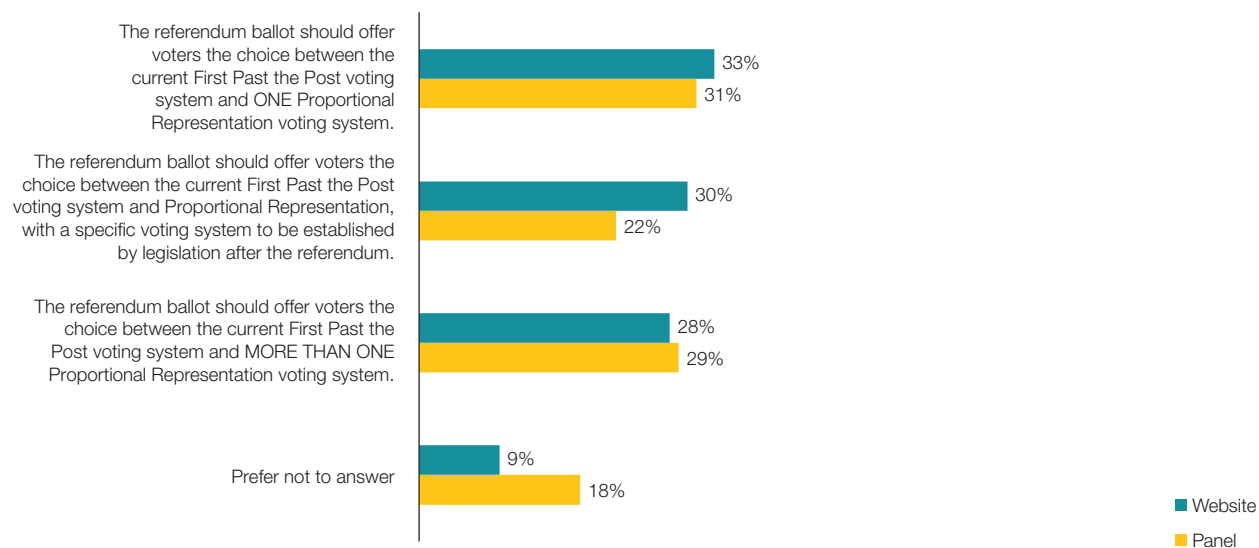
The questionnaire asked a variety of questions respecting British Columbians' values and preferences. A few themes become clear in the responses:

- British Columbians value simplicity in their voting system and their election ballots and are prepared to accept fewer choices on the election ballot if it helps to ensure a clear link between their votes and how MLAs are elected;
- A clear majority want their MLAs to put their constituents ahead of their political party, but not necessarily to put their local community ahead of what is best for the province as a whole;
- A clear majority do not want the number of MLAs in British Columbia to increase, although this question was not asked in the context of any potential changes to, or reductions of, the number of electoral districts that may flow from implementing a proportional representation voting system;
- Very few disagree with the idea of greater diversity of views being represented in the Legislature, but on balance respondents do not necessarily see a proliferation of political parties as being necessary to provide that diversity;
- Respondents are generally prepared to accept delays in forming government after an election if it is for the purpose of political parties governing together;
- Respondents are generally split on the question of the political party with the most seats changing its campaign promises in order to compromise with other parties;
- Respondents are generally supportive of co-operative government but not at the cost of lack of accountability for decision-making;
- A fairly high proportion of respondents (particularly amongst panel members) indicated neither agreement nor disagreement with a number of statements, indicating that they are open to more information on a number of these issues.

Referendum Ballot

Another key purpose of the public engagement was to hear more specifically what British Columbians wanted to see on the referendum ballot itself. How many options are they prepared to educate themselves about? How do they want to express their preferences? Are there specific voting systems they would like to be able to choose between, or would they prefer to support the concept of proportional representation and for a specific voting system to be determined following the referendum?

Preferred Choices on Referendum Ballot



Q. Which would you prefer?
(Select One)

Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 91,725

Respondents to the questionnaire were fairly evenly split as to the type of ballot question they would prefer to see used in the referendum. Slightly more respondents support a ballot with the choice between FPTP and one specific proportional representation voting system than a ballot offering more than one alternative proportional representation voting system or a ballot offering the choice between FPTP and an undetermined proportional representation voting system specified after the referendum (what’s generally referred to as a “mandate” option). Fewer respondents to the representative panel questionnaire than the website supported a mandate option. For both the website and panel, respondents over 65 years old were more likely to prefer to vote on one or more specific proportional representation voting systems than a mandate option. A high number of respondents to the representative panel questionnaire preferred not to answer this question.

Some individuals who raised these issues in the open-ended section of the questionnaire expressed concerns that offering voters the choice between multiple proportional representation voting systems would require voters to educate themselves about too many things, and could lead to

voter confusion. Others, however, wanted more than one proportional representation voting system to choose from.

“I feel the majority of people will not take the time to educate themselves on the options, therefore, not all of the options should be provided.”

—Interior

“There should be a two-stage ballot, with the first question a Yes/No regarding changing the current system, and second a list of possible alternative options, with the opportunity for everyone – even those who do not support change – to have a say on the alternative system.”

—Lower Mainland

Of the written submissions by individuals that addressed this issue, 12 favoured the choice between FPTP and multiple PR voting systems, eight favoured the choice between FPTP and one specific PR voting system, and nine preferred the choice between FPTP and an undetermined PR voting system to be specified after the referendum (mandate option).

Of the written submissions by organizations that addressed this issue, 12 favoured the choice between FPTP and multiple PR voting systems, three favoured the choice between FPTP and one specific PR voting system, and 21³ preferred the choice between FPTP and a mandate option.

Make Every Voter Count, the Broadbent Institute, the B.C. NDP and Green caucuses and numerous other organizations advocated for the mandate option. A preamble would set out the principles that any future PR system would include, such as proportionality, preservation of “local regional” representation, no reduction of seats in any region of the province, the ability to vote directly for specific candidates.

These organizations argued that putting one or more specified PR voting systems on the ballot causes the debate to focus more on system mechanics than on the values and outcomes that PR generally may provide. These organizations further advocated that after the referendum, a process involving an independent advisory body of experts as well as a cross-section of citizens be used to select the specific voting system to be implemented.

The submission from the No BC Proportional Representation Society advocated for a ballot question that asks voters to choose between FPTP and one specified PR voting system, which would be described in detail in accompanying materials. The submission did not propose which PR system it preferred to be on the ballot.

³ This includes the Make Every Voter Count Society (MEVC Society) and 11 organizations that explicitly endorsed their recommendations. Some of the other nine organizations are also affiliated with organizations that make up the MEVC Society but did not make an explicit endorsement of the Society’s submission, including Fair Vote Kamloops, Fair Vote South Okanagan Similkameen, Fair Vote Sunshine Coast, Fair Vote Nelson).

“British Columbia voters should have two clear choices.....our current First Past the Post system and whatever Proportional Representation system the government recommends. There should not be any ‘two-part’ ballots or ‘ranked ballots’ with multiple choices.”

—No BC Proportional Representation Society

Other organization submissions of note include a submission from the B.C. Symposium on Proportional Representation held in Vancouver that included academics and representatives from voting reform organizations. The submission made a number of recommendations respecting ballot choices and process. The majority of symposium members recommended a two-part ballot structure: a choice between FPTP and generic PR, then a second question offering a choice between two to four PR voting systems. A minority of members endorsed a “mandate-only” ballot.

“This [two-question] structure would clarify the mandate for switching to a proportional representation system if the referendum passes.....Second, it is important to offer voters a clear say in which specific PR system should be adopted.”

—B.C. Symposium on Proportional Representation

A submission by the Fraser Institute recommended following the process used by New Zealand, with two separate referenda. The first referendum would ask two questions, with the first question asking whether voters are in favour of any change, and a second question featuring a choice between a number of PR systems. The second referendum, if the vote in the first referendum is in favour of PR, would offer a choice between FPTP and the most popular PR system from the first referendum – in the interim, detailed legislation could be developed respecting the PR system on the ballot in the second referendum.

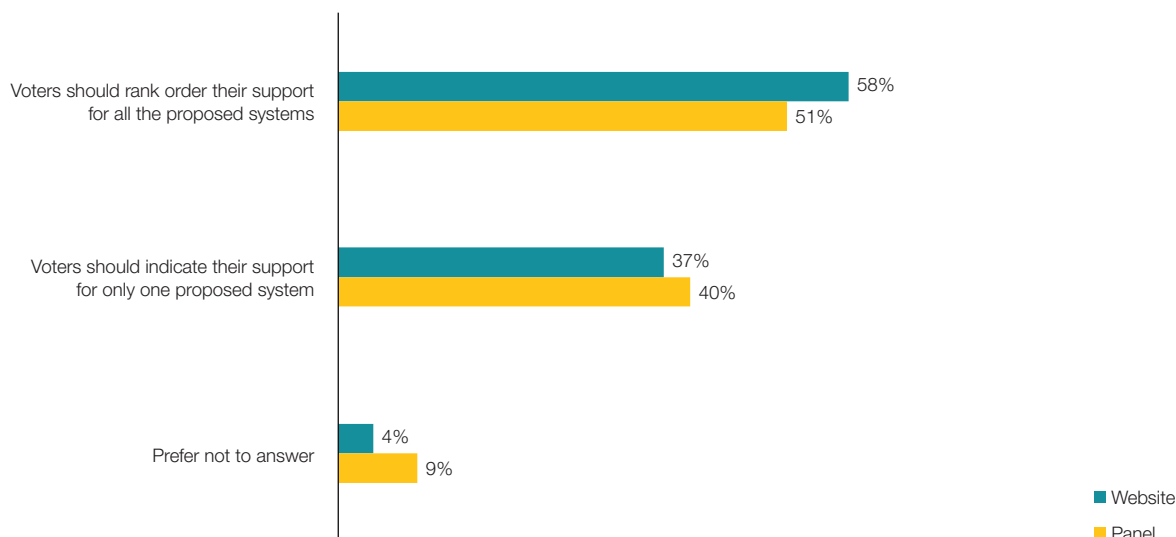
A submission by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives recommended a two-part ballot question: first, a choice between FPTP and proportional representation, and second, a ranked choice among Open-list MMP, STV, Local PR, and Rural-Urban PR.

A few individuals offered detailed submissions on ballot structure. Denis Pilon, a political scientist at York University, summarized the possible ballot options and highlighted two:

- a choice between the status quo and various value alternatives – this model would resemble the “mandate option” advocated by Make Every Voter Count and others described above; or
- a choice between the status quo and generic proportional representation, followed by a choice amongst specific PR alternatives, which could be chosen by ranking or single-choice.

Respondents to the Indigenous survey were less evenly split as to the type of ballot question they would prefer to see used in the referendum than respondents of the public website and representative panel questionnaires. One-third supported a ballot offering the choice between FPTP and an undetermined proportional representation voting system specified after the referendum, 21% supported a ballot offering more than one alternative proportional representation voting system, and 12% supported a ballot with the choice between FPTP and one specific proportional representation voting system.

Preferred Voting Method if Multiple PR Systems on Ballot



Q. *If the government offers voters a choice of more than one proportional representation voting system, which do you prefer? (Select One)*

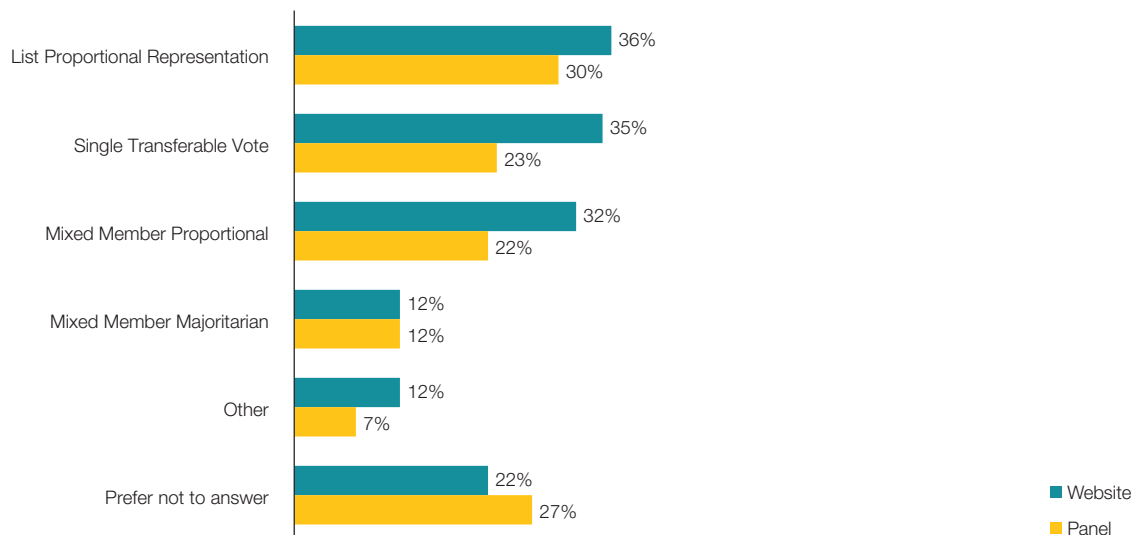
Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 76,226

If the ballot is to contain more than one proportional representation voting system, a majority of questionnaire respondents preferred the option of rank-ordering their support for all proposed options, rather than indicating support for only one option. The level of agreement with the option permitting voters to rank all the proposed voting systems was similar to the level of agreement in another question in the questionnaire regarding the option to permit voters to rank order candidates or political parties on an election ballot. In contrast to respondents aged 65 years or older, or from the Southern Interior or North, younger respondents (under 40 years old) were much more likely to support ranking their support for all the proposed voting systems.

Individuals who raised these issues in the open-ended section of the questionnaire did not generally express any rationale for their preference.

Of the smaller number of written submissions by individuals and organizations that addressed this issue, most supported rank-ordering preferences for all the proposed systems.

Desired PR System(s) on Referendum Ballot



Q. Alongside the option of keeping the First Past the Post voting system, which system or systems of proportional representation would you like to see on the ballot? (Select Any)

Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 76,226

Of the questionnaire respondents who expressed a preference for specific voting systems on the referendum ballot, support was fairly evenly split among each of List Proportional Representation (List PR), Single Transferable Vote (STV) and Mixed Member Proportional (MMP). Mixed Member Majoritarian (MMM) was preferred by substantially fewer respondents. STV and MMP were preferred by a higher proportion of respondents to the website questionnaire than the representative panel. Of respondents on the representative panel, youth (under 39 years old), visible minorities and persons with disabilities were more likely to support List PR and MMP. Respondents over 65 years old were more likely to choose Other.

“Prefer not to answer” was the second most common response for representative panel respondents and was similar to the proportion of representative panel respondents who indicated “Not very confident” or “Not at all confident” to the question asking about their level of confidence in making an informed choice if voting in the referendum today. In contrast, 22% of website questionnaire respondents chose “Prefer not to answer”, but only 9% indicated low levels of confidence in making an informed choice. This discrepancy may be attributable to the higher proportion of website respondents who prefer a referendum on the concept of proportional representation with a specific voting system to be determined later.

Many individuals who addressed these issues in the open-ended section of the questionnaire expressed strong preferences either for the voting system of their choice or against a particular system. Individuals in favour of List PR often felt it would result in more fair representation in the Legislative Assembly. Individuals in favour of STV often pointed to the recommendation of the 2004 B.C. Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform. Those in favour of MMP recognized that there are many possible implementations of mixed systems and so many also made recommendations that it use, for example, an open list based on regions rather than the entire province, or that it mimic the version of systems used in other countries, such as New Zealand or Germany. Those who referred positively to MMM generally did so for the same reasons as MMP.

Of the individuals who expressed preferences in the questionnaire comments for other proportional representation systems, Rural-Urban PR (also known as Flexible District PR), Dual Member Proportional (DMP) and Local PR received specific mentions. These proportional representation voting systems are not currently in use but have been designed to address some of the perceived weaknesses of other proportional representation voting systems. A number of individuals were in favour of voting systems that are not proportional representation voting systems, such as the Alternative Vote (ranked ballots in single-member electoral districts), or run-off voting systems.

Of the 54 written submissions from individuals that expressed preferences for specific proportional representation voting systems on the ballot, 13 expressed preferences for a form of STV, 11 expressed preferences for a form of MMP, eight expressed preferences for a form of List PR, and one expressed a preference for a form of MMM. Twenty-one expressed preferences for another form of proportional representation, including:

- Rural-Urban PR (also known as Flexible District PR) (6)
- Dual Member Proportional (5)
- Local PR (1)
- Parity Electoral System (1)
- Percentage Proportional Representation (1)
- Single Member District PR (1)
- Canadian Modified Proportional Representation (1)
- Representation by Popular Vote (1)
- Regional Seats (1)
- Preferential and Proportional (1)
- Mixed Member with Votes per Seat Adjustment (1)
- Mensa Brief Proposal (1)

Another 29 submissions from individuals expressed preferences for voting systems that are not proportional representation voting systems, such as the Alternative Vote or run-off voting systems. Thirty individuals expressed a preference for Fractional Voting, also known as Popular PR, which would not make any changes to the method by which MLAs are elected, but rather by weighting

each MLA's votes in the Legislative Assembly based on the MLA's party's share of the province-wide vote. Many individuals expressed preferences for more than one voting system.

Of the written submissions from organizations that expressed preferences for specific proportional representation voting systems on the ballot, 10 expressed preferences for a form of MMP, seven expressed preferences for a form of STV, two expressed preferences for a form of List PR, and none expressed a preference for MMM. Some expressed preferences for another form of PR, including:

- Rural-Urban PR (also known as Flexible District PR) (6)
- Local PR (5)
- Dual Member Proportional (2)
- Electoral Districts Voting (1)

A number of organizations expressed preferences for more than one voting system. The B.C. Symposium on Proportional Representation did not advocate for any specific PR system and instead suggested five systems that could be considered for inclusion on the ballot (MMP, Dual Member Proportional, STV, Local PR and Rural-Urban PR). They based their considerations on a number of criteria, namely systems that:

- score well on proportionality measures;
- include at least some locally elected MLAs;
- not reduce the number of MLAs in any region of the province;
- accommodate relatively small districts in rural areas;
- do not require an increase in the size of the Legislative Assembly; and
- give independent candidates a fair opportunity to be elected.

A submission by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives recommended a ranked choice among Open-list MMP, STV, Local PR, and Rural-Urban PR.

This question was not asked on the Indigenous survey. However, in an open-ended question on the survey, a number of respondents recommended a voting system that includes seats set aside for Indigenous MLAs to represent Indigenous voters in each region of the province (see Indigenous Outreach – Specific Engagement Feedback below)

Referendum Ballot – Summary

The feedback from the public engagement on the referendum ballot indicates:

- There is no clear majority in favour of one particular approach to how the referendum question or questions are put to B.C. voters.
- Among organization submissions, there is considerable support for a “mandate only” question, as well as support for a two-part ballot structure featuring a choice between the current voting system and proportional representation, followed by a choice among two or more specific PR voting systems.

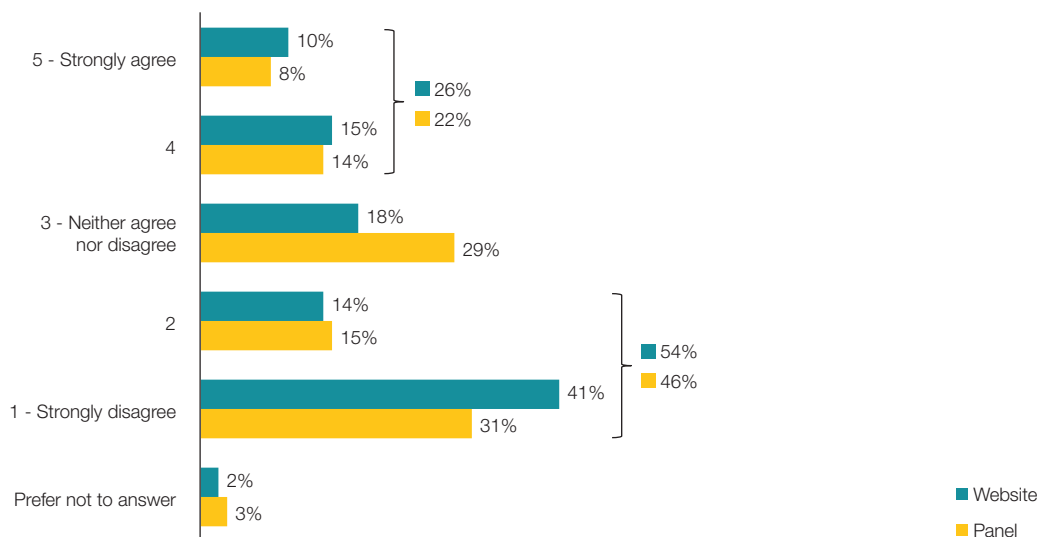
- As with ballot structure, there is no consensus from the public engagement feedback on which PR system(s) to put on the referendum ballot. List PR, MMP and STV were the three most popular in each aspect of the engagement, likely because these systems were also described in some detail on the engagement website.
- Respondents to the questionnaire were almost evenly split amongst List PR, MMP and STV. A large number preferred not to answer the question, which may be an indication that they do not yet feel informed enough to express a preference for any specific voting system.
- MMP received significant support but few submissions provided the level of detail necessary to implement a specific version for B.C. Many in favour of STV pointed to the work of the B.C. Citizens' Assembly and indicated trust in the Assembly's work, but others opposed STV on the grounds that it has already been voted on and rejected by B.C. voters.
- Of the other proportional representation voting systems put forward, Rural-Urban PR, Dual Member Proportional and Local PR were the most often cited. These voting systems were not described on the public engagement website because they are not currently in use, but they have been gaining visibility as systems that seek to address specific issues relating to implementing proportional representation in the Canadian context.
- A number of written submissions and comments on the questionnaire indicated concern about a potential lack of voter awareness/education respecting specific voting systems. This concern likely fed the high proportion of respondents who favour a comprehensive public education campaign during the referendum.

Descriptions of all of the voting systems that were analyzed in depth for this report are contained in the appendices.

Referendum Campaign

The final element of the public engagement was to hear British Columbians' input on elements of the referendum campaign, such as whether government should fund a neutral public education campaign or advocacy campaigns, and what rules should apply to sponsors of referendum advertising. The engagement also asked British Columbians whether there should be a follow-up referendum after any new voting system has been in use for a few elections.

The government should provide public funds to designated groups to campaign for their preferred voting system.



Q. Please select your level of agreement with the following statements. (Select One Per Statement)

Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 76,226

More respondents to the questionnaire strongly disagreed with the statement that government should provide public funding to designated proponent and opponent groups than any of the other options. A quarter of questionnaire respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Public funding was strongly opposed by a higher proportion of respondents to the website questionnaire than the representative panel. Among representative panel respondents, youth, visible minorities and persons with disabilities were more likely to support public funding. Only 18% of 18-39 year olds strongly disagreed with this statement compared to 43% of respondents over 65 years old. Of respondents to the website questionnaire, those from the Southern Interior and North were less likely to support public funding. Younger respondents and those identifying as LGBTQ2S+ were more likely to support public funding.

Many individuals who raised this issue in the open-ended section of the questionnaire expressed strong preferences that government should not be providing public funds for groups to advocate for their preferred voting system. Some of these same comments did not want to see public funds used for the referendum at all, while others preferred any money be spent on a neutral information campaign to better inform voters rather than advocacy by groups that they felt would provide misleading or self-serving information.

Of those in favour of providing public funding to designated groups, many saw advocacy efforts by these groups as complementing a separate neutral education campaign conducted by government or another independent third party. Many related comments also raised concerns about a perceived lack of understanding about the voting systems on the ballot in the 2005 and 2009 referenda on electoral reform.

Please direct public funds to public education and not simply provide cash for groups to campaign, where facts can be misrepresented.

—Metro Vancouver

I'd like public funds to be used directly (by the government) for public education on proportional representation, rather than given to groups campaigning for and against it.

—North

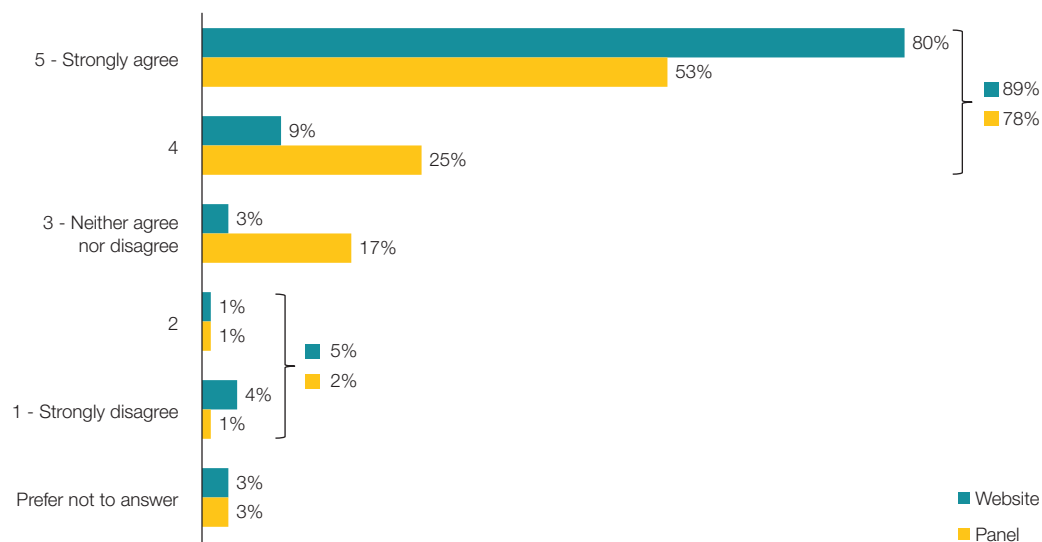
To ensure a fair and relatively level playing field, the government should provide funding to the groups representing the major choices.

—Vancouver Island

Many more organizations than individuals raised this issue in their submissions. Almost every organization that took a position on whether government should provide public funding to groups was in favour of at least modest public funding. Most organizations that specified an amount recommended \$500,000 be provided to one designated group on each side for this purpose. All of the organizations that raised this issue emphasized the importance of funding both sides equally if any funding is to be provided at all.

Very few written submissions from individuals addressed this topic. Of the six individuals who did, three recommended no funding be provided, one suggested that the public funding be limited to 20% of the designated group's spending limit (with no recommendation on the amount of such a limit), and two recommended an amount of \$500,000 be provided to one designated group on each side for this purpose, similar to what was done for the 2009 referendum on electoral reform.

The provincial government should ensure that paid advertisements that appear during the referendum campaign period are produced only by groups that must register, disclose their identity in their advertising and disclose their contributors and expenses after the referendum.



Q. Please select your level of agreement with the following statements.
(Select One Per Statement)

Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 76,226

Most questionnaire respondents, and particularly a large majority of website respondents, support registration, attribution and disclosure requirements for sponsors of paid referendum advertising. Only 5% of website respondents and 2% of panel respondents opposed such requirements. Of the representative panel, respondents under 39 and visible minorities were less likely to support these requirements than on average, but 91% of respondents over 65 supported them. To a lesser degree, respondents from the North and Southern Interior were more likely than the average to support these requirements.

Almost all individuals who raised this issue in the open-ended section of the questionnaire were strongly in favour of regulating the activities of sponsors of referendum advertising. Most of these individuals also expressed preferences for regulating and limiting the amount of contributions these sponsors may receive in a manner similar to the rules in place for provincial elections – this included banning contributions from corporations and unions, and setting contribution limits from individuals at, or below, the limits in place for provincial elections. A small number of individuals strongly advocated for a ban on all paid advertisements by advocacy groups, or recommended that advocacy groups be prohibited from raising money at all and only be supported through public funds.

The last question, concerning disclosure of donors and expenses does not go far enough. Donors and expenses should be disclosed as they happen, i.e. before the referendum.

—Metro Vancouver

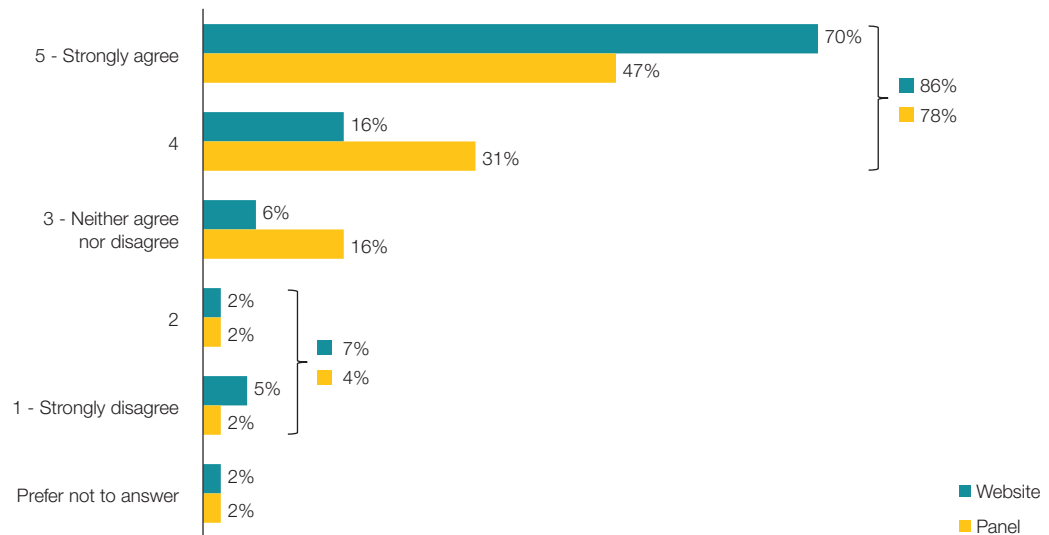
The government should make sure that corporations, unions, and the wealthy are not able to contribute to either the pro-status quo side or the pro-proportional representation side in the referendum.

—Metro Vancouver

Few written submissions from individuals raised this issue, but those that did were also largely in favour of regulating the activities of sponsors of referendum advertising. This support focused on prohibiting contributions from organizations such as businesses and unions, and setting contribution limits from individuals at, or below, the limits in place for provincial elections. Many recommendations were made for contribution limits between \$100 and \$1,000.

The Make Every Voter Count Society and the other organization submissions that endorsed their recommendations advocated for the same regulation of contributions for the referendum as those in place for provincial elections. Others advocated for “rigorous” disclosure requirements. A small number of submissions from organizations took an opposing view and advocated for no contribution restrictions at all, registration requirements only for sponsors of advertising over a given threshold (such as \$1,500 in a single electoral district or \$5,000 province-wide), or no restrictions for third party sponsors of referendum advertising beyond minimal attribution requirements on the advertising and disclosure after the referendum. Two organizations proposed contribution limits of \$500 or \$600.

There should be spending limits imposed on any group that campaigns for its preferred voting system.



Q. Please select your level of agreement with the following statements.
(Select One Per Statement)

Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 76,226

While the strength of support varied between the website questionnaire and the representative panel, a large majority of respondents supported imposing spending limits for any group that campaigns for its preferred voting system. Such limits would apply to designated proponent and opponent groups and third parties. Younger respondents on the representative panel were less likely to support spending limits than on average, but 90% of those aged 65 years or older supported spending limits.

Most individuals who raised this issue in the open-ended section of the questionnaire also supported spending limits for these groups. Responses rarely specified a dollar amount for the limit, and while some advocated for a “strict” limit, others recognized the need for the groups to have reasonable limits appropriate for a province-wide campaign.

The referendum exercise should have reasonable spending limits.

—Interior

Don't make the spending limits ridiculously low.

—Metro Vancouver

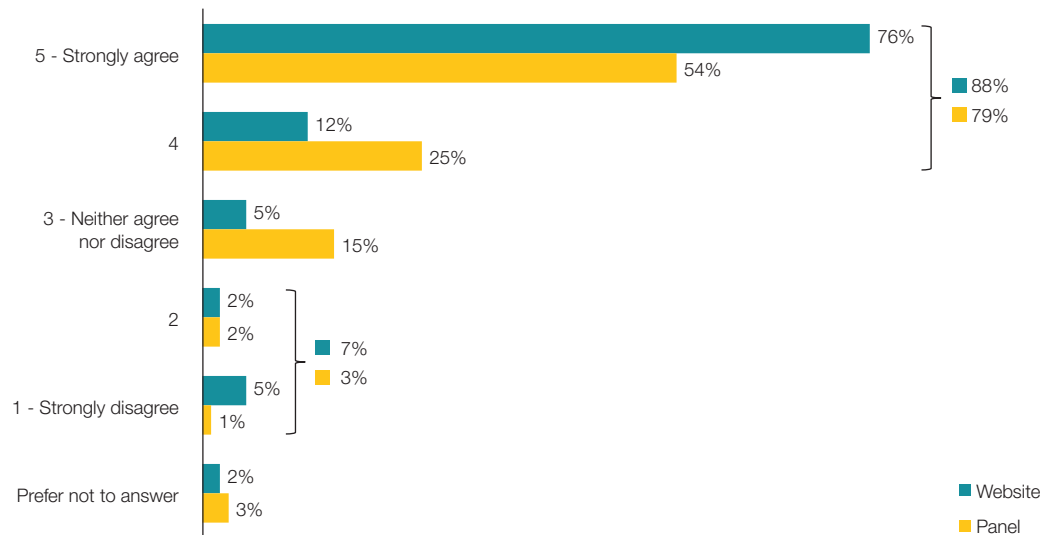
Please provide funding to non-partisan groups for education campaigns on PR and PR systems while having strict spending limits in place for the amount of money spent on the campaign by political parties, corporations and individuals.

—Vancouver Island

Very few written submissions from individuals raised this topic. It was more common for submissions from individuals to request there be no advocacy campaigning at all, and that the focus instead be on neutral education campaigns.

There was a greater number and variety of recommendations from organizations that addressed this topic. Five organizations suggested spending limits of \$0.50 per registered voter (approximately \$1.6M). Others suggested lower limits ranging from \$1M to \$100,000. These recommendations generally did not distinguish between spending limits for designated proponent and opponent groups and third party sponsors of referendum advertising. Of the few organizations that did make such a distinction, some recommended that third party sponsors of referendum advertising be required to be affiliated with one of the designated proponent or opponent groups and that spending by the third parties be applied to the limits of their affiliated group.

The provincial government should provide the public with impartial information during the referendum campaign period.



Q. Please select your level of agreement with the following statements.
(Select One Per Statement)

Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 76,226

There was a very high level of support for the provision of impartial information to the public by government during the referendum. Only 7% of website respondents and 3% of panel respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. The strength of respondents’ support or opposition varied between the website questionnaire and the representative panel. Of the representative panel, respondents from the North and respondents over 65 were more likely to support a neutral education campaign, while respondents under 39 were less likely to do so.

Individuals who raised this issue in the open-ended section of the questionnaire were generally very supportive of an impartial education campaign conducted by government. A number of the comments emphasized the importance of the education campaign to be neutral, even if it is conducted by government, which is perceived to be in favour of changing to a proportional representation voting system.

I strongly hope that the information campaign leading up to the referendum is comprehensive and impartial.

—Metro Vancouver

The government should spend all its funds to educate the public in a manner that is neutral and explain the various electoral systems in a clear manner.

—Interior

A significant number of written submissions from individuals voiced concern about a perceived low level of knowledge about previous referenda on electoral reform in B.C., and a low level of awareness or understanding of the current referendum subject. Many submissions advocated very strongly for a significant public education campaign to make voters aware of the concept of proportional representation voting systems generally as well as any voting systems that would be on the ballot specifically. This view was also echoed by MLAs during debate on Bill 6 in the Legislative Assembly:

I quoted before, from the past two referendums, the level of penetration in terms of the knowledge. Only 15 percent understood what STV was, and 60 percent of the people either didn't know or didn't have an opinion with regards to it.... Certainly that level of awareness needs to be raised if we're going to have any hope at all of having a good, solid debate on the issue of proportional representation.

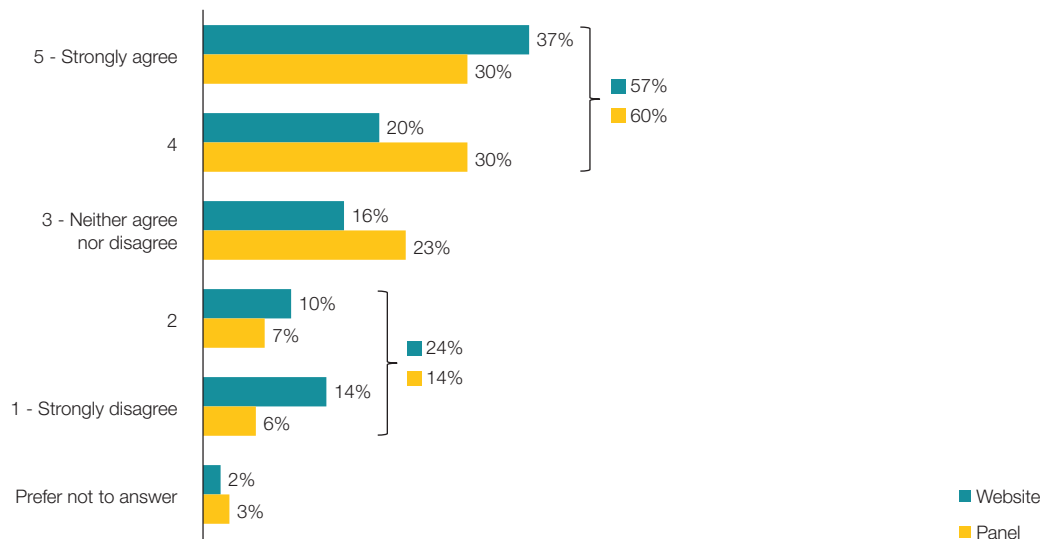
—J. Rustad, MLA

A number of comments emphasized particular segments of the population that should receive special attention, such as students, seniors or Canadians with English as a second language, or recommended who should be responsible for such education, such as government, Elections BC, or arms-length public relations companies. Many of these comments also suggested particular information that should be included in any education campaign.

Fifteen of the written submissions from organizations contained comments on this issue. All 15 were in favour of an education campaign, but differed on who should be responsible for conducting it and what the campaign should focus on or how it should be conducted. Six submissions recommended a role for Elections BC as a respected and trusted neutral body with a history of providing non-partisan information to voters about provincial elections. Three submissions specifically tasked government with this responsibility for the referendum. Two submissions suggested a new arms-length body be responsible for public education. Some submissions recommended that when the ballots are mailed to voters during the referendum, the package should also include neutral information about the voting systems, and/or advocacy information prepared by any designated proponent and opponent groups.

In addition to information about the current voting system and proportional representation voting systems generally, some submissions recommended the education materials also include specific guidance about how any new voting system would be implemented. Suggested materials included the pros and cons of each system, the number of electoral districts under each system, maps showing any new electoral districts or regions (where applicable) and the role of political parties under the new voting systems, among others. Organizations that advocated for a ballot question that does not ask voters to choose a particular proportional representation voting system strongly suggested any education campaign focus on the principles of proportional representation.

If B.C. changes to a system of proportional representation, there should be a second referendum after a trial period (for example, two elections) on whether to keep the new system.



Q. Please select your level of agreement with the following statement.
(Select One)

Sample Size: Panel = 1,101; Website = 76,226

Slightly more than half of all questionnaire respondents expressed support for a second referendum on whether to keep a new voting system, if implemented, after it has been used in a few elections. Respondents from the Southern Interior and North on the representative panel were more likely than others to strongly agree with this statement. Website respondents from the North were more likely than average to support a second referendum, but only half of respondents aged 18-39 did.

Very few comments about this issue were made in the open-ended section of the questionnaire, but those that did raise it were in favour of a follow up referendum after a new system's use in a few elections. This approach was used by New Zealand when it adopted a proportional representation voting system in the 1990s.

The second referendum (after two elections) is a MUST as we are talking about how our democracy is run into the next generations.

—Vancouver Island

Only a few written submissions from individuals explicitly raised this issue, but all that did advocated for a review process or second referendum following the use of any new system after a few election cycles.

Six of the written submissions from organizations raised this issue and all that did advocated for a review or second referendum after two or three election cycles.

Referendum Campaign – Summary

Feedback from the public engagement on questions around the conduct of the referendum campaign was generally clear:

- *Public Education:* Respondents overwhelmingly favour funding comprehensive neutral public education for voters. However, opinion divides on whether it should be the responsibility of government or Elections BC. Ministry of Attorney General staff held this role in the 2005 and 2009 referenda on electoral reform, but in both of those referenda, unlike the 2018 referendum, the major political parties did not take a public position on the referendum question.
- *Funding advocacy groups:* By a wide margin, respondents generally preferred government fund an effective public education campaign rather than fund designated advocacy groups. However, some organizations' submissions emphasized the role of advocacy groups in a broader public education campaign and in building awareness of the referendum and the options on the ballot – it need not be one or the other.
- *Advertising rules and spending limits:* The predominant view from the engagement is that the rules from the *Election Act* should apply to the referendum, including contribution restrictions, registration, attribution, and disclosure.
- *Subsequent referendum:* A majority agreed with the idea of a second referendum following two to three elections, and many suggested that this commitment be incorporated in the legislation implementing the new voting system.

Additional Questionnaire Comments

The questionnaire provided opportunities for respondents to offer open-ended comments on voting systems or the referendum. For website respondents, there were two opportunities: one at the end of Part 1 of the questionnaire, and another at the end of Part 2. For panel respondents, one opportunity was provided at the end of the questionnaire.

In all, approximately 58,000 comments were offered by website respondents and 182 from panel respondents. They addressed a wide range of topics, including:

- support for, or opposition to, specific voting systems;
- disagreement with having a referendum or changing the voting system;
- advocacy for a two-part referendum process;
- provision of unbiased information during the referendum campaign;
- positive and negative comments about the questionnaire;
- keeping costs down or not spending taxpayer money on the referendum;
- need for more co-operation in politics;
- encouraging higher voter turnout;
- opposition to small parties having too much influence;
- more accountability of political parties and politicians.

Selected representative comments have been inserted into the preceding sections respecting What We Heard. Below is a high-level summary of the comments received.

Panel Responses

Most panel survey respondents (83%) had no other comments to make about voting systems or the upcoming referendum. The top 10 most frequently mentioned comments among all respondents were:

Comment	Frequency
Public needs more/better information	4%
Whatever system chosen, keep it simple	3%
No need for change/ keep current voting system	3%
Parties/politicians need to be more accountable/transparent	2%
Need to encourage higher voter turnout	2%
Keep costs down/don't waste money	2%
Need change/ new voting system	1%
Current system is corrupt/flawed	1%
Maintain rural representation/not be urban dominated	1%
Dislike/do not support proportional representation (PR)	1%

Website Responses

Approximately four in ten (42%) of website questionnaire respondents made comments about voting systems or the upcoming referendum at the end of Part 1 of the questionnaire. The top 10 most frequently mentioned comments among all Part 1 respondents are shown below.

Comment	Frequency
Provide good/ easily accessible information	8%
No need for change/ keep current voting system	7%
Like/support proportional representation (PR)	3%
Maintain rural representation/ not be urban-dominated	3%
Negative questionnaire mentions	3%
Dislike/do not support proportional representation (PR)	3%
Don't like small parties having too much influence	2%
Dislike/do not support First Past the Post	2%
Need to encourage higher voter turnout	2%
Parties/politicians need to be more accountable	2%

Approximately one-quarter (26%) of website questionnaire respondents made comments about voting systems or the upcoming referendum at the end of Part 2 of the questionnaire. The top 10 most frequently mentioned comments among all Part 2 respondents are shown below.

Comment	Frequency
Provide good/ easily accessible information	6%
No need for change/ keep current voting system	4%
Negative questionnaire mentions	2%
Keep costs down/ don't waste money	2%
Limit outside influence/ spending on elections	2%
Provide unbiased information	2%
Be more transparent/ honest/ open	1%
Should have two-part referendum	1%
Limit/ regulate advertising	1%
Be fair/ make the process fair	1%

Indigenous Outreach – Specific Engagement Feedback

The online questionnaire was open to all British Columbians, including Indigenous persons, and over 3,000 individuals who self-identified as First Nation, Métis or Inuit completed the questionnaire. In addition, the online and panel-administered questionnaire was modified in certain ways for the purposes of outreach to Indigenous people in British Columbia. Certain questions were eliminated, while others designed to elicit feedback on issues that may be of specific concern to Indigenous people were added.

Indigenous respondents were asked specifically if they believed that Indigenous voices are currently adequately represented in the Legislative Assembly. A large majority (73%) responded no, with 20% responding that they felt somewhat represented. Just under 5% responded that they felt adequately represented.

In keeping with that finding, responses to an open-ended question for comments on voting systems or the referendum showed strong support for designated Indigenous seats in the Legislative Assembly:

“There should be a designated number of Indigenous MLAs that represent the regions throughout the province.”

“Proportional representation models should address the guaranteed participation of First Nations in the Legislature – as members of parliament [sic] or through other collaborative government models.”

Similarly, in face-to-face meetings, First Nations leadership:

articulated the need to have First Nation representation on the Provincial Legislature. Senior Indigenous political leadership all articulated the need to have Indigenous representation on the Provincial Legislature, similar to how New Zealand’s Parliament includes guaranteed representation for Maori.⁴

Indigenous respondents also were asked what methods of communication they felt would be most effective for them and their communities to receive information about the referendum campaign. The most popular were:

- Website (35%)
- Community meetings (23%)
- TV commercials (20%)
- Newspaper articles or ads (11%)

Another 9% suggested other avenues such as social media with short videos, direct mail, First Nations community newsletters and posters, and door-to-door visits.

⁴ Indigenous B.C. Elections Referendum Survey Results, p. 1.

Discussion and Recommendations

Discussion: Ballot Structure and Ballot Questions

There is no consensus from the public engagement questionnaire on ballot structure, namely:

- whether the ballot should offer the choice between First Past the Post (FPTP) and one PR system, more than one PR system, or generic PR; and
- whether the ballot should ask one question or more than one question.

Both website and panel respondents are almost evenly divided on the question of referendum ballot structure. A slight majority are in favour of ranking PR systems in order of preference if there is more than one PR system on the ballot.

The two previous referenda in British Columbia on changing the voting system featured a single question: a choice between FPTP and the Single Transferable Vote system (STV) proposed by the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform.

In other jurisdictions, a variety of ballot structures have been used:

- A referendum in Ontario in 2007 featured a single question: whether to retain FPTP or change to MMP as proposed by Ontario's Citizens' Assembly.
- The 2016 plebiscite in Prince Edward Island had a single-question ranked ballot with five voting system options: FPTP, MMP, Dual Member Proportional (DMP), FPTP with Leaders, and Preferential Voting. The results of the plebiscite was that FPTP was the first choice until all but the last round of counting, when it was overtaken by MMP. An earlier 2005 plebiscite in PEI asked voters a single question: whether to retain FPTP or change to MMP.
- In New Zealand, a two-part process was used. First, a plebiscite was held in 1992 with a two-part ballot that featured a choice between FPTP and PR, then a choice between four alternate PR voting systems. With a majority voting for change generally, and for MMP specifically, a detailed MMP system was developed and a referendum was held in 1993 with a single question featuring a choice between FPTP and MMP.

While there is no clear consensus from the public engagement on ballot structure, there was a clear preference expressed in written submissions that whatever the structure, it should feature an explicit choice between the current voting system and PR.

Previous referenda and plebiscites on voting system reform indicate that a wide range of ballot structures are possible. British Columbia's history has been to offer a choice between the status quo and one specified alternative; however, that followed the Citizens' Assembly process, which was mandated to examine possible alternatives and propose a single voting system.

The "mandate option" (choice between FPTP and proportional representation without specifying a particular PR voting system on the ballot) is favoured by the largest number of organization

submissions that address this topic. However, it would present some challenges if it were to be the only ballot question. First, the question on its own is essentially an “apples to oranges” comparison: a specific voting system (FPTP) vs. a concept (PR). If certain attributes of a PR system to be chosen post-referendum were listed as a preamble to the ballot, it would be necessary to choose and describe those specific attributes, and they still may not provide sufficient detail for voters to know with confidence what system would eventually result⁵. Both MMP and STV, for example, could be configured to address a number of PR attributes, yet the two systems are very different structurally and in terms of the choices and outcomes for voters and for candidates and political parties. This would likely matter significantly to voters.

Second, since all voting systems require trade-offs between different principles or values, it is unclear whether any system could fulfill all of the proposed attributes to the satisfaction of most voters – for example, what constitutes preserving local (or regional) representation, since any PR system will require some changes to single-member electoral districts. There is a significant risk that voters who voted for PR would be dissatisfied with the PR voting system that eventually may result.

Third, the logistics of arranging a post-referendum process to choose the PR voting system as well as all its design elements would be considerable. The process, which would require selecting participants from around the province, as well as time for education and deliberation, could be expected to take several months and would place significant pressure on the ability of government and Elections BC to implement the new system in time for an election on or after July 1, 2021, as required by the *Electoral Reform Referendum 2018 Act*.

These issues are overcome if the ballot requires voters to make an explicit choice between the status quo and one or more specific PR systems, provided that those systems are described in accompanying materials in sufficient detail to ensure voters know what they are voting for and that the implementation of a new PR system, if one is chosen, accords with that description.

The two ways of making this choice explicit are:

- a single question with a choice between the status quo and a single PR voting system, or
- two questions:
 1. a choice between the status quo and a change to PR (“mandate question”);
 2. a choice among two or more PR voting systems.

The two-question option would permit voters to choose to vote for one or both questions. Public information materials would make clear that if a majority vote for PR in the first question, then the PR system that receives a majority of votes in the second question would be implemented. If more than two PR systems are listed in the second question, then in order to ensure one system achieves majority support, voters would rank-order their choices and vote-counting would proceed using the Alternative Vote method.

⁵ “This preamble should further specify that any system selected in this process must satisfy certain key criteria that the public at large regards as crucial in an acceptable proportional voting system: proportionality, preservation of local regional representation, no reduction of seats in any region of the province, the ability to vote directly for specific candidates, etc... and to rule out.....significant expansion of the Legislature.” Make Every Voter Count submission

Each voting system added to the ballot increases the complexity of the choice, since voters will have to evaluate each system against the others, and therefore public education to ensure an informed vote becomes even more important.

On the subject of specific wording of ballot questions, the submission from the Fraser Institute commented that:

There is a consensus among Canadian and international best practices that referendum questions must:

- be clear;
- present the status quo as an option;
- be free of biased language that could drive voters to a specific result; and
- ensure that electors are informed of the effects of the referendum.

Similarly, the B.C. Symposium on Proportional Representation, in its proposal for a two-question ballot structure, recommended that:

- Question 1 should be asked in a completely neutral fashion, without attempting to convey or influence voter values. Thus, for instance, formulations such as “Should British Columbia modernize its voting system?” are to be avoided.
- Question 1 should be asked in a way that minimizes known biases such as status-quo bias. Thus, a yes/no formulation, as well as words such as “keep” and “change”, should be avoided.
- In Question 2, the names of the methods under consideration should be given in full: for instance, “Single Transferable Vote” or “Flexible District Proportional Representation”, rather than “STV” or “FDPR”.

These suggestions, as well as review of other literature on formulating referendum questions, have been taken into account in developing the precise wording for the referendum questions.

Discussion: Voting Systems on the Ballot

There is no apparent consensus from the public engagement respecting which voting systems should appear on the referendum ballot. MMP, STV and List PR were advocated most commonly, although List PR was primarily favoured in the questionnaire responses, not in written submissions.

Newly developed systems such as Rural-Urban PR and Dual Member Proportional are less well known but were advocated by a number of substantive individual and organization submissions because these systems have been developed to address specific issues respecting PR systems in the context of Canada’s demography and geography.

Most submissions from organizations and academics do not advocate for one specific system. Some submissions describe in general terms the system(s) that the authors believe would be suitable for inclusion on the ballot.

All voting systems require trade-offs between a number of values. These include:

- degree of proportionality;
- nature of local or regional representation;
- degree of voter choice, both in number of candidates/parties appearing on a ballot and nature of indicating support (e.g. single choice vs. ranking in order of preference); and
- complexity.

Two additional considerations must be taken into account in determining voting system suitability for British Columbia: the total number of MLAs in the province and the variances between electoral district sizes and populations. Few submissions to the public engagement addressed these issues at all, and none in any depth.

British Columbia is one of the most urbanized provinces in Canada, with wide disparities of concentrations of population between the Lower Mainland, Capital Region, and central Okanagan and most other areas of the province, particularly the North, Kootenays and central Interior. Existing electoral districts' geographic sizes vary from 7 km² to nearly 200,000 kms², and populations vary from a low of approximately 20,000 to over 60,000.

Balancing urban and rural representation within this geographic and demographic reality presents challenges for the design of any voting system, including the current FPTP system. Under PR systems, the overall proportionality of election results comes from some level of district magnitude⁶ greater than one. A common way to increase district magnitude is to group existing electoral districts into larger geographical districts or regions of two seats or more, or reduce the number of electoral districts and add compensatory seats on a regional basis. In either case, individual MLAs may represent more voters or a larger geographic area.

One potential response to this tension is to increase the total number of MLAs in the province. However, the results of the public engagement indicate that British Columbians do not generally favour a larger Legislative Assembly. Few written submissions addressed this particular issue in-depth.

Evaluating Proportional Representation Voting System Suitability

Based on the requirements of the *Electoral Reform Referendum 2018 Act* and a review of public engagement feedback, the following key principles have been applied in evaluating voting system suitability for inclusion on the referendum ballot:

- *Proportionality*: Must provide for generally proportional results, but not at the expense of other key principles and values identified in the public engagement;
- *Local representation*: Must respect British Columbians' desire for local representation in all areas of the province and balance the unique needs of urban and rural areas;

⁶ "District magnitude" refers to the number of candidates elected in a single electoral district or region. For example, under FPTP each electoral district elects one candidate, so the district magnitude is one.

- *Simplicity*: Must not be too complex to be effectively communicated to voters or for voters to use if adopted;
- *Size of Legislative Assembly*: Must not require a significant increase in MLAs.

A voting system need not be in use elsewhere if it is otherwise suitable for B.C., as any chosen PR voting system would be the first of its kind in Canada in over half a century. Substantial public education ahead of the referendum vote will be required regardless of which PR voting systems are on the ballot. As well, any chosen PR voting system will necessarily reflect a made-in-BC approach, as they all must be customized to meet our needs – there is no such thing as an off-the-shelf voting system.

Several voting systems were analyzed in depth for this report. Three have been selected as recommended for inclusion on the referendum ballot. They are:

- Dual Member Proportional (DMP)
- Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)
- Rural-Urban PR (also known as Flexible District PR)

The rationale for selecting these three voting systems is described in the “Recommendations” section below. Each of the three systems is described in more detail in Appendices A, B, and C respectively, including those elements of the systems that are recommended in this report and those elements that would require post-referendum decision.

All of the proportional representation voting systems that were proposed by respondents to the public engagement were reviewed. The following voting systems were analyzed in depth but are not recommended for inclusion on the referendum ballot:

- Fractional Voting / Popular PR
- List PR
- Local PR
- Mixed Member Majoritarian (MMM)
- Single Transferable Vote (STV)

A description of these systems and the reasons for not selecting them is contained in Appendix E.

Recommendations: Ballot Structure and Ballot Questions

After reviewing all of the public engagement feedback and analyzing the various proportional representation voting systems put forward for consideration, the following recommendations are made.

Recommendation: That the referendum ballot questions be as follows:

1. Which should British Columbia use for elections to the Legislative Assembly? (Vote for only one.)
 - The current First Past the Post voting system
 - A proportional representation voting system
2. If British Columbia adopts a proportional representation voting system, which of the following voting systems do you prefer? (Vote for the voting systems you wish to support by ranking them in order of preference. You may choose to support one, two or all three of the systems.)
 - Dual Member Proportional (DMP)
 - Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)
 - Rural-Urban PR

Recommendation: That voters be permitted to:

- vote for either question or both questions as they wish; and
- indicate support for one, two or all three of the proportional representation voting systems in the second question.

Recommendation: Votes for the second question should be counted according to the Alternative Vote system, as follows:

- if no voting system receives more than 50% of first-choice votes, then the system that received the fewest first-choice votes is dropped from further consideration;
- the second choices of the voters who voted for the system that has been dropped are redistributed to the other two systems;
- whichever of the two remaining systems has the most votes at that point would be the system that is adopted.

If the result of the vote for the first question is that British Columbia retains the First Past the Post voting system, then the result of the second question is moot. If the result of the first question is that British Columbia adopts a PR voting system, then the system to be adopted will be the system that receives a majority of support as determined by the second question.

The *Electoral Reform Referendum 2018 Act* requires that the result of the referendum is binding on government if a majority of votes cast are in favour of the same voting system. A question with more than two options requires a counting method that will result in one system receiving more than 50% support – preferential voting using the Alternative Vote method provides this.

Voters should be permitted to vote for either question alone or for both questions. For the second question, voters would rank-order their preferences (1, 2, 3) for one or more voting systems they wish to support. Voters would not be required to indicate support for all three systems – they may choose to support one, two or all three.

Elections BC will be responsible for determining the precise form (size, layout, etc.) of the referendum ballot. Elections BC also should include clear instructions in the voting packages for completing the ballot.

Voters would vote knowing that one of the defined PR voting systems would be implemented if the result of the first question is to make a change.

This ballot structure provides voters with an explicit choice between the current voting system and a shift to PR. Unlike the “mandate only” option, voters would vote knowing that one of the defined PR systems would be implemented if the result of the first question is to make a change. This ballot structure also provides voters with a high degree of choice between three contrasting voting systems if the outcome of the first question is in favour of changing to a PR system. It is acknowledged that public education will be critical to ensuring voters have sufficient information to make an informed choice amongst the PR systems on the ballot. This issue is addressed in more detail below.

The three PR voting systems recommended to be on the ballot are described in detail in appendices A, B, and C respectively. The reasons for their inclusion on the ballot are as follows:

Dual Member Proportional (DMP)

Dual Member Proportional is a proportional voting system in which most of the province’s existing single-member electoral district would be amalgamated with a second neighbouring district to create two-member districts. The largest rural districts could remain unchanged as single-member districts.

Parties nominate up to two candidates per electoral district who appear on the ballot in an order determined by the party. Voters cast a single vote for the pair of candidates of the political party of their choice. Seats are won in two ways:

- The first seats are won by the first candidates of the party that receives the most votes in each electoral district, similar to FPTP;
- The second seats are allocated based on province-wide voting results and the individual district results.

The process for allocating the second seat in the electoral districts provides an overall result that is proportional province-wide:

- The total number of seats each party should win is determined based on the parties' shares of the province-wide vote;
- The number of first district seats each party has won is subtracted from that total, leaving the number of second district seats each party should be allocated;
- The second district seats are allocated to each party based on the strength of their performance in each district.

This system was recently developed specifically in the Canadian context and is not currently in use. It was on Prince Edward Island's recent plebiscite ballot, where it received the third-most votes.

DMP can provide highly proportional results because the second seat in each electoral district is allocated based on province-wide election results. DMP is a relatively simple system to understand and for voters to use. The election ballot would change little from the current voting system. The system meets the principle of local representation because, although most electoral districts would double in size, they would retain two MLAs serving the same total area as present, with no MLAs elected on a regional basis. The largest rural electoral districts would not change.

DMP could be implemented in B.C. relatively easily, since it would require an Electoral Boundaries Commission only to make proposals for amalgamating existing electoral districts as well as proposals for districts that should remain single-member. DMP could be implemented with either no increase or a modest increase to the size of the Legislative Assembly.

Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)

MMP combines single-member electoral districts under FPTP with List PR seats allocated on a regional or provincial level. It is in use in a number of other countries at the national or sub-national level and was chosen by the Ontario Citizens' Assembly as their preferred PR system.

MMP meets the principle of proportionality, particularly in regions with higher populations and relatively larger numbers of List PR seats. As recommended in this report, it meets the principle of local/regional representation by requiring at least 60% of the total seats to be from single-member electoral districts (albeit larger ones than currently), and by requiring that the List PR seats are allocated on a regional basis rather than a province-wide basis. MMP also provides for a relatively simple ballot with the possibility for voters to vote directly for candidates for both FPTP and List PR seats.

MMP could be implemented with either no increase or a modest increase to the size of the Legislative Assembly.

Rural-Urban PR

Rural-Urban PR is a mixed voting system that elects MLAs in two ways:

- Using the Single Transferable Vote (STV) in urban and semi-urban areas; and
- Using MMP in rural areas – that is, single-member electoral districts using FPTP with a small number of List PR seats allocated to provide some proportionality in these regions.

This system was recently developed specifically in the Canadian context and is not currently in use as a single integrated voting system. It is intended to be an improvement on STV in response to the different geographic and demographic needs of voters in different parts of the province. It can provide some proportionality in the most rural areas of the province while retaining comparable levels of local representation for those voters. It provides high levels of proportionality in the urban and semi-urban areas where larger STV electoral districts are more manageable for both voters and MLAs. In the MMP regions, there would be a relatively simple ballot with the possibility for voters to vote directly for candidates for both FPTP and List PR seats. In the STV regions, while the vote-counting rules are complex, the ballot itself is not, and it permits a high degree of voter choice by permitting voters to rank preferences for multiple candidates. Rural-Urban PR could be implemented with either no increase or a modest increase to the size of the Legislative Assembly.

Matters for Post-Referendum Decision

The voting systems recommended for inclusion on the referendum ballot are described in sufficient detail in this report for voters to understand how they would operate if adopted. However, there are a number of design and implementation details that should be left to post-referendum work. Although they are largely technical, these design details can have a significant effect on how a voting system works in practice, and should be decided by a transparent multi-party process.

The number and complexity of those details depends upon the specific voting system, and the appendices describing the proposed PR voting systems also include a list of design details that would require decision post-referendum. Whether there should be any increase in the overall number of MLAs in the province is one example. Another is the issue under MMP (should it be adopted) respecting the design of the ballot for the List PR seats. Lists may be “closed”, “open” or “flexible”. For closed lists, voters endorse a party and its candidates as listed in the order put forward by that party. For open lists, voters may choose the candidates they prefer from amongst the candidates put forward by a party, or there may also be an option to endorse the party’s list as presented. For flexible lists, voters may choose individual candidates they prefer or they may vote to endorse the party’s list. While the feedback from the public engagement indicated more support for either “open” or “flexible” lists because they provide voters with more choice, the engagement also indicated support for simple ballots, which a “closed” list would provide. This is an issue that would benefit from further debate and discussion.

Although they are largely technical, these design details can have a significant effect on how a voting system works in practice, and should be decided by a transparent multi-party process.

A number of respondents to the public engagement suggested that if the result of the referendum is in favour of adopting a proportional representation system, it is important that the details respecting that system be designed and implemented in a manner that is fair and transparent. However, as noted above, a lengthy post-referendum process involving an independent advisory body of experts as well as a cross-section of citizens to decide upon all design details creates a risk that the statutory deadline for implementing a new voting system would not be met.

The best method for providing transparent public input on design and implementation while ensuring a reasonable timeframe for completion would be an all-party committee of the Legislative Assembly. The committee should receive input from independent experts, election administrators and the public on the remaining design details of the voting system to be adopted and issue a report with recommendations.

None of the political parties represented in the Legislative Assembly under its current composition would have a majority on such a committee, and therefore the committee's recommendations would require thoughtful compromise among all the parties.

Beyond the design decisions for the committee and the Legislature, if any of the proposed PR systems are adopted, an independent Electoral Boundaries Commission would be required to recommend new electoral boundaries for the province. The scope of the commission's task would vary depending upon the voting system and the degree of direction given it by the Legislature: for example, whether it is required to propose a specific number of electoral districts/MLAs for the province or whether it is given a numerical range to work within, and whether it would be required to delineate specific regions of the province.

Recommendation: That, if the result of the referendum is the adoption of a proportional representation voting system, an all-party legislative committee consider and make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly on any matters necessary for the design and implementation of the voting system that are not described in the recommended models in this report.

Recommendation: That the legislative committee be required to report no later than March 31, 2019, and that it be constituted during the Fall 2018 legislative session in order to begin its work immediately if the result of the referendum is to adopt a proportional representation voting system.

Referendum Voting Period and Campaign Period

The public engagement did not seek British Columbians' views on the specific questions of when the campaign period and voting period should occur. The campaign period is the period during which activities aimed at influencing the outcome of the referendum, such as advertising, are regulated. The voting period is the period during which ballot packages are distributed and returned; this is a period of approximately five to six weeks.

The *Electoral Reform Referendum 2018 Act* requires only that the voting period be completed no later than November 30, 2018. It does not set any other timelines for the referendum.

Apart from this referendum, the other major scheduled electoral event this fall is local government elections, which have a campaign period beginning September 22nd and ending on October 20th. Ideally there would be no overlap between the two campaign and voting periods so that voters are not engaged with two separate electoral events simultaneously.

However, the only way to completely separate the two periods would require scheduling the referendum voting period to conclude before September 22nd. This in turn would mean a referendum campaign period that would mostly occur during the summer. Such a timetable would not provide for a proper debate and an informed vote.

By contrast, setting the voting period to end on November 30th would permit the ballot packages to be mailed out beginning the week after the local elections conclude, and would minimize voter confusion over the two events. The referendum campaign period would necessarily overlap with the local elections campaign period, but the voting process would not.

The second question is how long the referendum campaign period should be. The results of the public engagement indicate that there is a high level of interest among British Columbians in this issue, and a level of readiness amongst groups and individuals to begin the formal campaign in earnest that is higher than British Columbia has seen for past referenda on the voting system.

Given that, and the clear preference amongst British Columbians for transparency around the referendum debate, creating a formal referendum campaign period that begins shortly after the referendum details are finalized is advisable. Beginning the campaign period on July 1 should provide prospective referendum advertisers sufficient time to understand their obligations (see "Referendum Advertising" below) and ensure that most, if not all, of the referendum campaigning is covered by the required regulations.

Recommendation: That the referendum voting period (the period during which ballot packages are to be distributed and returned) be October 22, 2018 to November 30, 2018.

Recommendation: That the referendum campaign period (the period during which referendum advertising is regulated) begin on July 1, 2018 and end at the end of the referendum voting period.

Referendum Campaign Advertising and Financing

The results of the public engagement clearly indicate British Columbians' desire for a fair and transparent referendum debate, including a requirement that groups and individuals who are campaigning for a particular outcome in the referendum register with Elections BC, disclose their identity in the advertising and report their income and expenses after the referendum. Further, restrictions on referendum advertisers' contribution sources and amounts, as well as limits on spending, were clearly favoured.

The outcome of this referendum could have a significant effect on British Columbia elections for a long time to come, and it is clearly in the public interest to ensure that the debate unfolds fairly. To that end, there seems no reason to regulate referendum advertising sponsors any differently from election advertising sponsors under the *Election Act*, including:

- mandatory registration with Elections BC by groups and individuals in advance of conducting referendum advertising;
- identifying the sponsor of any referendum advertising in the advertising;
- limiting contributions to referendum advertising sponsors to individual Canadian citizens and permanent residents residing within British Columbia;
- limiting contributions to referendum advertising sponsors to \$1,200;
- requiring post-referendum financing reports to be filed with Elections BC.

However, given that the recommended referendum campaign period will be significantly longer than a provincial election campaign period, a modestly higher amount than the current \$150,000 for election advertising sponsors is warranted.

Recommendation: That referendum advertising sponsors be subject to an expenses limit of \$200,000 during the referendum campaign period.

Recommendation: That referendum advertising sponsors be regulated in a manner similar to election advertising sponsors under Parts 10.1 and 11 of the *Election Act*, including but not limited to restrictions on the source and amounts of permissible sponsorship contributions, a requirement to register in advance of conducting referendum advertising, and a requirement to file post-referendum reports.

It is anticipated that provincial political parties will play an active role in the referendum campaign. That is understandable given the importance to them of any change in the voting system.

However, it is important that political parties not be permitted to dominate the campaign debate. It is also important that the referendum campaign not disturb the new rules and restrictions on how political parties may be funded in this province. Accordingly, they should be treated the same as other referendum advertising sponsors, including being subject to the same restrictions on who may contribute to them, as well as the same expenses limit and requirements for registering and reporting. In addition, political parties should not be permitted to raise any contributions

for the purpose of referendum campaigning that would exceed the existing limits for political contributions under the Election Act of \$1,200 per year from eligible individuals.

Recommendation: That provincial political parties be subject to the same referendum campaign rules as other referendum advertising sponsors, except that any contributions raised by political parties for referendum activities be treated as political contributions under the *Election Act*.

Designated Referendum Proponent and Opponent Groups

In British Columbia's past two referenda on changing the voting system in 2005 and 2009, different approaches were taken to officially designating proponent and opponent groups and providing any public funding to them for the purpose of stimulating debate. In 2005 no such groups were recognized, while in 2009 two groups were designated, one on each side of the debate, and equal funding of \$500,000 was provided to each group.

The public engagement feedback from the questionnaire indicates that a majority of British Columbians do not favour providing public funding to proponent groups. Submissions from organizations generally did favour some public funding, while those from individuals were split.

Experience from the past two electoral reform referenda demonstrates that groups can play a positive role in stimulating debate. While they cannot take the place of neutral and factual information provided by an independent source (see "Public Education" below), as advocates they can serve to sharpen the issues at play in the debate.

While designated groups cannot take the place of neutral, factual information provided by an independent source, as advocates they can serve to sharpen the issues at play in the debate.

Referendum advertising sponsors have not previously been subject to restrictions on their fundraising. This time they will be, if the above recommendations respecting advertising sponsors are implemented. Without any public funding to offset those restrictions, there is a risk that referendum debate will be curtailed, to the detriment of public interest and participation in the referendum. Providing equal public funding to both sides ensures a basic level of activity and fairness, a value emphasized throughout the engagement process.

Accordingly, the process followed in 2009 should be followed again in 2018 and set out in the regulations for the referendum. One group should be designated on each side of the debate and public funding provided to them following an application process. This time, that process should occur through the Chief Electoral Officer to ensure that the selection decision is seen to be fully independent of government. As in 2009, eligibility requirements should include non-profit status with a majority of board members being resident in British Columbia, with political parties, constituency associations and local elector organizations disqualified from applying.

Both groups should be restricted in their use of public funds, as they were in 2009. The funds should not be used for any purpose other than communicating with the public and advocating for their respective side of the referendum debate, nor should they be used for any partisan election purpose.

Unlike the 2009 referendum, for this referendum there is more than one proportional representation voting system on the ballot. While this may complicate the task of the PR proponent group somewhat, it is preferable to an alternative whereby the limited amount of public funding is divided amongst three PR proponent groups, each advocating for its own preferred voting system.

Recommendation: That there be one designated group to advocate on behalf of retaining the current First Past the Post voting system, and one designated group to advocate on behalf of proportional representation.

Recommendation: That the Chief Electoral Officer select the designated groups using a process and selection criteria similar to the 2009 referendum on electoral reform.

Recommendation: That each group be provided with \$500,000 in public funding for the purpose of stimulating public interest and debate about the choices on the referendum ballot.

Recommendation: That the designated groups' use of public funding be regulated in a manner similar to the 2009 referendum on electoral reform, including restrictions on use and repayment of any unused funds.

Recommendation: That the overall expenses limit for each designated group be the sum of their public funding plus the amount of the expenses limit established for referendum advertising sponsors, and that any funds the designated groups raise outside of the public funding amounts be subject to the same rules as for other referendum advertising sponsors.

Public Education

Voting systems are complex and abstract things, and evaluating them is not a simple task. Past referenda have demonstrated the challenges involved in informing and educating the general public about the choice before them. For this referendum, that challenge is arguably greater given the degree of choice being offered to voters.

For the 2018 referendum, the task of providing neutral information to voters about the referendum, including information about the voting systems on the ballot, would be best carried out by Elections BC. Historically, that office has not been responsible for informing the public about substantive policy matters that are the subject of a referendum or plebiscite. However, for this referendum it is appropriate for the Chief Electoral Officer to take on the role in order to ensure that the public education function is seen to be fully independent of government.

The Chief Electoral Officer should determine the appropriate budget and methods for providing voters with neutral, factual information about the referendum and the voting systems on the ballot.

Recommendation: That the Chief Electoral Officer be responsible for providing neutral and factual information to voters about the referendum, including informing voters about the voting systems appearing on the referendum ballot.

Subsequent Referendum

Adopting a different voting system would be a major change in how B.C.'s democracy operates. Given the significance of the change, a subsequent referendum on whether to retain a new voting system would give British Columbians the opportunity to evaluate how the new system has operated in practice and whether it has lived up to their expectations. This is what New Zealand did following its change to proportional representation.

Respondents to the public engagement questionnaire clearly favour having a subsequent referendum on whether to retain the proportional representation voting system if one is adopted.

The timing of a subsequent referendum should come after two general elections. This would provide voters with more than a single opportunity to use and evaluate the new voting system, while not putting the issue off too far into the future.

Recommendation: That, if the result of the 2018 referendum is the adoption of a proportional representation voting system, a second referendum be held after two provincial general elections in which the proportional representation voting system is used on whether to keep that system or revert to the First Past the Post voting system.

Indigenous Representation

The public engagement included specific outreach to Indigenous communities through delivery of a modified questionnaire and in-person interviews with community members and leaders.

The strongest message received from this outreach is that Indigenous people do not see themselves represented adequately in the B.C. Legislature. There are numerous reasons for this, and numerous challenges in changing this perception and this reality.

The principal change advocated by Indigenous leadership was designated seats for Indigenous people in the Legislative Assembly, in a manner similar to the representation of the Maori in New Zealand. Such a change would be significant and a first of its kind in Canada. It would raise numerous political and logistical issues and is beyond the scope of the current referendum process. However, it should not simply be ignored, as it is one possible response among many to the issue of Indigenous representation.

Recommendation: That, regardless of the outcome of the referendum, a legislative committee be appointed to examine ways to improve the representation of Indigenous people in the British Columbia Legislature, including issues of accessibility and inclusion and the issue of creating one or more designated seats for Indigenous people in the Legislative Assembly.

Appendix A – Recommended Dual Member Proportional Voting System

System Overview

Dual Member Proportional is a proportional voting system in which most of the province's existing single-member electoral districts would be amalgamated with a second neighbouring district to create two-member districts. The largest rural districts could remain unchanged as single-member districts.

Political parties nominate up to two candidates per electoral district who appear on the ballot in an order determined by the party. Voters cast a single vote for the pair of candidates of the political party of their choice. Seats are won in two ways:

- The first seats are won by the first candidates of the party that receives the most votes in each electoral district, similar to FPTP;
- The second seats are allocated based on province-wide voting results and the individual district results.

The process for allocating the second seat in the electoral districts provides an overall result that is proportional province-wide:

- The total number of seats each party should win is determined based on the parties' shares of the province-wide vote;
- The number of first district seats each party has won is subtracted from that total, leaving the number of second district seats each party should be allocated;
- The second district seats are allocated to each party based on the strength of their performance in each district.

This system was recently developed specifically in the Canadian context and is not currently in use. It was on Prince Edward Island's recent plebiscite ballot, where it received the third-most votes.

System Tendencies

- Results are proportional on a province-wide basis, but not necessarily in each electoral district.
- Many districts would be served by MLAs of two different political parties.
- All candidates are on a local electoral district ballot and all MLAs represent a local district.
- The ballot is simple for voters to mark.
- Independent candidates are elected if they place first or second in an electoral district.
- The MLA of a party a voter supports may come from a more distant area of a newly amalgamated district.

- The process for allocating the second seat in each district is fairly complicated.
- The runner-up in an electoral district may not receive the second seat in that district because the second seats are distributed to achieve province-wide proportionality.
- There is more limited voter choice than under MMP or STV.

Rationale for Inclusion on Referendum Ballot

DMP can provide highly proportional results because the second seat in each electoral district is allocated based on province-wide election results.

DMP is a relatively simple system to understand and for voters to use. The election ballot would change little from the current voting system.

The system meets the principle of local representation because, although most electoral districts would double in size, they would retain two MLAs serving the same total area as present, with no MLAs elected on a regional basis. The largest rural electoral districts would not change.

DMP could be implemented in B.C. relatively easily, since it would require an Electoral Boundaries Commission only to make proposals for amalgamating existing electoral districts as well as proposals for districts that should remain single-member. DMP could be implemented with either no increase or a modest increase to the size of the Legislative Assembly.

Recommended DMP model

- Total number of MLAs: between the current 87 and a maximum of 95.
- Electoral districts in urban and semi-urban areas of the province to be amalgamated into two-member districts. The geographically largest electoral districts in rural areas to remain single-member districts. Electoral Boundaries Commission to decide which districts become two-member and which remain single-member.
- Ballot design: voters cast a single vote for a political party's candidate(s).
- Votes in single-member districts count towards determining provincial results.
- A political party must receive at least 5% of the province-wide vote to be eligible to receive the second seat in any district.
- Parties can have up to two candidates on the ballot in a district. Parties must indicate which candidate is first and which is second.
- Independent candidates who:
 - place first in an electoral district win the first seat in that district; and
 - place second in an electoral district win the second seat in that district, and the district is removed from the remainder of the second-seat allocation process.
- Vacancies in a district filled by FPTP.

Post-Referendum DMP Decisions for Legislature

- Total number of MLAs in the province: either a specific number or a range, up to a maximum of 95.
- Whether to use “reserve” seat allocation method and if so, for what percentage of seats.

Post-Referendum DMP Decisions for Electoral Boundaries Commission

- Number and configuration of single-member districts.
- Configuration of two-member districts.

Appendix B – Recommended Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) Voting System

System Overview

MMP combines single-member electoral districts elected under FPTP with List PR seats allocated on a regional or provincial level. The overall share of seats each party holds in the Legislative Assembly is determined by the party's share of the province-wide vote. Candidates who fill the List PR seats are either elected directly or allocated from the parties' lists of candidates to compensate for any disproportional results from the FPTP vote, so that the overall provincial result is fairly proportional. MMP is in use in a number of other countries at the national or sub-national level.

System Tendencies

- Ensures proportional results, particularly in regions with a large number of seats
- Ensures local representation, albeit in larger electoral districts
- Relatively simple to understand and for voters to use
- Creates two types of MLAs – those elected in electoral districts and those elected or chosen regionally from the party's list
- Unless the total number of MLAs increases, requires reducing the current number of electoral districts in order to create List PR seats.

Rationale for Inclusion on Referendum Ballot

MMP meets the principle of proportionality, particularly in regions with higher populations and relatively larger numbers of List PR seats. As recommended in this report, it meets the principle of local/regional representation by requiring at least 60% of the total seats to be from single-member electoral districts (albeit larger ones than currently), and by requiring that the List PR seats are allocated on a regional basis rather than a province-wide basis. MMP also provides for a relatively simple ballot with the possibility for voters to vote directly for candidates for both FPTP and List PR seats. MMP could be implemented with either no increase or a modest increase to the size of the Legislative Assembly.

Recommended MMP model

- Total number of MLAs: between the current 87 and a maximum of 95.
- To preserve local representation, no more than 40% of the total seats in the province may be List PR seats.
- No region will have fewer MLAs than it does currently.
- A political party must receive at least 5% of the province-wide vote to be eligible to receive any List PR seats.
- List PR seats are to be allocated within defined regions, not on a province-wide basis.

Post-Referendum MMP Decisions for Legislature

- Total number of MLAs in the province: either a specific number or a range, up to a maximum of 95.
- Exact ratio of FPTP seats to List PR seats: up to a maximum of 40% List PR seats.
- Ballot options for List PR vote:
 - closed list – the order of candidates is determined by the party
 - open list – voters vote for specific candidates, or
 - open list with party option – voters can vote for a specific candidate or endorse the party’s order of candidates
- Whether voters will have:
 - one vote which counts for both the local candidate and the List PR seat allocation;
 - two votes, one for local candidate and one for the List PR seat allocation;
- Whether candidates for a local FPTP seat may be on the party’s list for regional List PR seats.
- Method for determining the order in which List PR seats are allocated.
- Whether to permit “overhang” seats – that is, have a fixed number of total seats in the Legislative Assembly – potential added seats to compensate if a party wins a greater share of the FPTP seats than its overall vote share would entitle it to.
- Whether the order of candidates on the List PR ballot should be randomized or not.
- Method(s) for filling single-member districts and List PR seat vacancies.

Post-Referendum MMP Decisions for Electoral Boundaries Commission

- Number and configuration of regions.
- Number and configuration of FPTP districts in each region.
- Number of list seats in each region.

Appendix C – Recommended Rural-Urban Proportional Voting System

System Overview

Rural-Urban PR is a mixed voting system that elects MLAs in two ways:

- Using the Single Transferable Vote (STV) in urban and semi-urban areas – that is, electoral districts that elect multiple members and voters rank-order their preferences (1, 2, 3, etc.) for candidates appearing on the ballot;
- and
- Using Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) in rural areas – that is, single-member electoral districts using FPTP with a small number of List PR seats allocated to provide some proportionality in these regions.

Rural-Urban PR consists of multi-member districts with seats filled using STV in urban and semi-urban areas and MMP in the most rural areas. In the MMP regions, a small number of List PR seats are filled proportionally on a regional basis in order to provide some proportionality for those regions. Rural-Urban PR is not used anywhere as a single integrated system. However, STV is used in several countries at the national and sub-national level, and was proposed by the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform in 2004, and MMP is in use in a number of other countries at the national or sub-national level.

System Tendencies

- Ensures proportionality in most areas of the province, particularly in STV districts with four or more MLAs.
- Local representation in rural areas is maintained with small to medium impact on size of existing electoral districts.
- Requires a smaller number of additional List PR seats than MMP to provide overall proportionality.
- Provides less proportional results in rural areas than in urban areas.
- In STV regions, independent candidates have a relatively high chance of being elected.
- More complex to understand because it utilizes two different voting systems (STV and MMP).

Rationale for Inclusion on Referendum Ballot

Rural-Urban PR was developed to address the varied geographic and demographic needs of voters in the urban and rural areas of Canada. It can provide some proportionality in the most rural areas of the province while retaining comparable levels of local representation for those voters. It can provide high levels of proportionality in the urban and semi-urban areas where larger STV electoral districts are more manageable for both voters and MLAs. In the MMP regions, there would be a relatively simple ballot with the possibility for voters to vote directly for candidates for both FPTP and List PR seats. In the STV regions, while the vote-counting rules are complex, the ballot itself is not, and it permits a high degree of voter choice by permitting voters to rank preferences for multiple candidates. Rural-Urban PR could be implemented with either no increase or a modest increase to the size of the Legislative Assembly.

Recommended Rural-Urban PR model

- Total number of MLAs: between the current 87 and a maximum of 95.
- No region will have fewer MLAs than it does currently.
- STV regions:
 - Elements of STV as recommended by the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform:
 - District magnitude between two and seven MLAs, although under Rural-Urban PR most STV districts should tend towards the higher range;
 - Droop formula used to determine electoral quota;
 - Weighted Inclusive Gregory method for distributing surplus votes, i.e. all surplus votes transferred at a fraction;
 - When voting, voters must indicate at least a first choice, but are not required to express further preferences if they do not wish to;
 - Political parties may sponsor candidates up to the number of MLAs to be elected in an STV district; and
 - Candidates grouped on ballot by party, but listed in random order within grouping, and parties listed in random order.
- MMP regions:
 - List PR seats are to be allocated on a regional basis in the areas consisting of single-member districts;
 - No more than 40% of the total seats in an MMP region may be List PR seats;
 - A formal threshold for a political party to receive any List PR seats is not required, since the relatively few number of List PR seats in a region means the effective threshold will be higher than 5%.

Post-Referendum Rural-Urban PR Decisions for Legislature

- Total number of MLAs in the province: either a specific number or a range, up to a maximum of 95.
- Ratio of FPTP seats to List PR seats in MMP regions.
- MMP seats:
 - Ballot options for List PR vote:
 - closed list – the order of candidates is determined by the party
 - open list – voters vote for specific candidates, or
 - open list with party option – voters can vote for a specific candidate or endorse the party’s order of candidates
 - Whether voters will have:
 - one vote which counts for both the local candidate and the List PR seat allocation;
 - two votes, one for local candidate and one for the List PR seat allocation;
 - Whether candidates for a local FPTP seat may be on the party’s list for regional List PR seats.
 - Method for determining the order in which List PR seats are allocated.
 - Whether to permit “overhang” seats – that is, have a fixed number of total seats in the Legislative Assembly – potential added seats to compensate if a party wins a greater share of the FPTP seats than its overall vote share would entitle it to.
 - Whether the order of candidates on the List PR ballot should be randomized or not.
- Method for filling STV, single-member district and List PR seat vacancies.

Post-Referendum Rural-Urban PR Decisions for Electoral Boundaries Commission

- Number and configuration of MMP and STV regions.
- Number and configuration of FPTP districts in each MMP region.
- Number of List PR seats in each MMP region.
- Number and configuration of STV districts.

Appendix D – First Past The Post Description

System Overview

This is the current voting system in British Columbia. Its formal name is Single Member Plurality. Each electoral district elects a single MLA and voters vote for one candidate only. It is a system in which the candidate who gets the most votes in an electoral district (i.e. a plurality) wins and represents that district in the legislature.

System Tendencies

- Each electoral district is represented by a single member.
- Ballot is simple to understand and mark.
- Simple process to determine results.
- Does not usually produce proportional results – that is, a political party's share of the popular vote usually does not match its share of seats in the Legislative Assembly.
- Often results in single-party majority governments – coalition and minority governments are less common than with other voting systems.
- Elects candidates of larger political parties and only rarely candidates of small parties and independent candidates.
- Often produces single-party majority governments that win less than a majority of the popular vote.

Appendix E – Voting Systems Not Recommended for Inclusion on the Referendum Ballot

Fractional Voting / Popular PR

A number of submissions from individuals addressed the possibility of achieving proportionality in the Legislative Assembly by making no changes to method by which MLAs are elected, but rather by weighting each MLA's votes in the Legislative Assembly based on the MLA's party's share of the province-wide vote. These proposals went by the name of Fractional Voting or Popular PR. These proposals were reviewed and the system was considered out of scope for this referendum because this type of system would represent a form of proportional voting system inside the Legislature rather than in the election of MLAs themselves.

Single Transferable Vote (STV)

A voting system in which multiple MLAs are elected in each electoral district and voters rank the candidates according to their preferences (1, 2, 3, etc.). A formula determines the quota, which is the minimum number of votes a candidate must receive to be elected. Any candidates who reach the quota based on voters' first choices are elected. If any seats remain unfilled because other candidates did not reach the quota, voters' subsequent choices are transferred to the other candidates until all seats are filled.

A version of STV called BC-STV was proposed by the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform in 2004 and voted on by British Columbians in two previous referenda. Despite the reasonably high level of support for STV in the How We Vote engagement, and the high regard for the process by which BC-STV was created, STV is not recommended for inclusion on the 2018 referendum ballot, particularly because a similar model (Rural-Urban PR) is recommended.

List PR

A voting system in which multiple MLAs are elected in either several large regions or the province as a whole. The proportion of total votes received by each political party determines the share of seats it receives in the Legislative Assembly.

Each party prepares a list of candidates prior to the election. Lists may be "closed", "open" or "flexible". For closed lists, voters endorse a party and its candidates as listed in the order put forward by that party. For open lists, voters may choose the candidates they prefer from amongst the candidates put forward by a party, or there may also be an option to endorse the party's list as presented. For flexible lists, voters may choose individual candidates they prefer or they may vote to endorse the list put forward by a political party.

Despite the relatively high level of support for List PR in the How We Vote engagement questionnaire, written submissions generally did not favour it due to the negative implications for local representation, particularly in rural areas which would be geographically large and elect relatively few MLAs. For that reason, List PR is not recommended for inclusion on the referendum ballot. However, it forms a component of the recommended Mixed Member Proportional voting system.

Local PR

A voting system in which existing single-member electoral districts are grouped together into multi-member regions and voters can rank all candidates in the region according to their preferences (1, 2, 3, etc.).

Local PR is similar to STV, but differs in that under Local PR each of the electoral districts within the region remains a separate entity. No more than one candidate of a political party is on the ballot for an electoral district, and exactly one candidate from each electoral district is elected.

Ballots are counted in a manner similar to traditional STV, but once the first candidate in an electoral district is elected, all other candidates from that district are eliminated and votes for those candidates are redistributed to candidates in the remaining electoral districts in accordance with the voters' preferences.

Local PR is generally consistent with the tendencies of STV. Despite the benefit of ensuring each existing electoral district would retain a local representative, it is less suitable for B.C. due to the influence that voters in the electoral districts within a defined region would have on the election of each others' MLAs. It is therefore not recommended for inclusion on the referendum ballot.

Mixed Member Majoritarian (MMM)

A voting system that is very similar to MMP in which FPTP and List PR are both used to allocate seats in the Legislative Assembly and voters have a separate vote under each system. Some seats are filled at the local electoral district level under FPTP, while other seats are filled at the regional or provincial level under List PR.

In MMM, unlike MMP, the List PR seats are not allocated to compensate for any disproportional results from the FPTP vote – instead, the List PR seats are allocated proportionally only amongst themselves. While MMM produces more proportional results than FPTP, it does not necessarily produce closely proportional results overall and is usually referred to as a semi-proportional system.

MMM was not generally supported in the public engagement feedback. For that reason, and the fact that it is not a distinctly proportional voting system, MMM is not recommended for inclusion on the referendum ballot.

Appendix F – Public Engagement Website Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions to help us understand your interest in, and familiarity with, current affairs and voting in elections.

1) Generally speaking, how interested are you in politics and current affairs?

Choose **one** of the following answers:

- Not interested at all
- Not very interested
- Somewhat interested
- Very interested
- Prefer not to answer

2) How often do you vote in provincial elections?

Choose **one** of the following answers

- I am not eligible to vote
- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Most of the time
- All of the time
- First time voter in 2017
- Prefer not to answer

3) Which, if any, of the following have been barriers that have kept you from voting?

Check **all that apply**

- Not interested in politics
- Don't like the voting system
- Not enough time
- Disability or mobility issues
- Not applicable / Prefer not to answer
- Do not feel included
- Voting location isn't convenient
- Not enough information
- I was not eligible to vote
- Frustration with politics
- I feel like my vote doesn't count

4) If you were to vote in a referendum to choose a voting system today, how confident are you that you would make an informed choice?

Choose **one** of the following answers

- Not at all confident
- Not very confident
- Somewhat confident
- Very confident
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

5) Please select up to five values from the list below that are most important to you.

I value most:

Please select maximum 5 answers

- A Legislative Assembly in which the share of seats each party holds closely matches the share of the votes it receives across the province
- A Legislative Assembly where two or more parties co-operate to make decisions
- Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) who focus primarily on what is best for the province as a whole
- Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) who focus primarily on the interests of their local community
- A voting system that allows a voter to rank a political party's candidates (1, 2, 3, etc.)
- Better representation of groups that are currently under-represented in the Legislative Assembly
- A Legislative Assembly in which the share of seats each party holds is fairly similar to the share of the votes it receives across the province
- A voting system that is easy to understand
- A voting system that makes it easier for independent candidates (those not running for a political party) to be elected
- Single-party majority governments where it is clear who is accountable for decisions
- A voting system that encourages political parties to appeal as broadly as possible to voters
- Increasing the number of political parties in the Legislative Assembly to represent more points of view
- Other: _____

Please answer the following questions to help us understand your values and preferences regarding how MLAs are elected, how governments are formed and how the Legislative Assembly operates.

6) Which would you prefer?

Choose **one** of the following answers

- The number of MLAs should remain the same
- There should be more MLAs to better reflect voters' interests
- Prefer not to answer

7) Please select your level of agreement with the following statements.

There should be greater diversity of views represented in the Legislative Assembly.

Choose **one** of the following answers

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Prefer not to answer

The party that wins the most seats in an election should have to compromise with other parties, even if it means changing some of its campaign commitments.

Choose **one** of the following answers

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Prefer not to answer

It should always be clear which party is accountable for decisions made by government, even if this means that decisions are only made by one party.

Choose **one** of the following answers

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Prefer not to answer

Please answer the following question to help us understand the choices you would like to see on the referendum ballot.

8) Which would you prefer?

Choose **one** of the following answers

- The referendum ballot should offer voters the choice between the current First Past the Post voting system and ONE Proportional representation voting system.
- The referendum ballot should offer voters the choice between the current First Past the Post voting system and MORE THAN ONE Proportional representation voting system
- The referendum ballot should offer voters the choice between the current First Past the Post voting system and Proportional representation, with a specific voting system to be established by legislation after the referendum.
- Prefer not to answer

NOTE: This and the following questions are used to understand who is responding to the feedback form. Your responses are confidential. All responses will be compiled and analyzed as a group. Responses will not be identified by individual.

9) Please indicate your gender:

Choose **one** of the following answers

- Man
- Woman
- Prefer not to answer
- Other: _____

10) What age range best describes you?

Choose **one** of the following answers

This question is mandatory

- Under 18
- 18 - 39 years
- 40 - 64 years
- 65 - 75 years
- Over 75 years
- Prefer not to answer

11) With which of the following groups do you identify?

Check **all that apply**

- Visible minority
- First Nations
- Inuit
- Métis
- Persons with disabilities
- LGBTQ2S+
- None of the above
- Prefer not to answer

12) What are the first three characters in your postal code (e.g. V9E)?

— — —

Please answer the following questions to help us understand your interest in electoral reform.

13) How closely have you followed public debate on electoral reform?

Choose **one** of the following answers

- Not closely at all
- Somewhat closely
- Very closely
- Prefer not to answer

14) Did you vote in either the 2005 or 2009 B.C. referendum on electoral reform?

Choose **one** of the following answers

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- Not eligible
- Prefer not to answer

Please answer the following questions to help us understand your values and preferences regarding how Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) are elected, how governments are formed and how the Legislative Assembly operates.

15) Which would you prefer, having more small parties represented in the Legislature or a few big parties?

Choose **one** of the following answers

- A few big parties
- More small parties
- Prefer not to answer

16) Which would you prefer?

Choose **one** of the following answers

- Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) who do what their party promised.
- MLAs who do what their constituents want
- Prefer not to answer

17) Please select your level of agreement with the following statements.

Ballots should allow voters to support more than one candidate or political party by ranking them in order of preference.

Choose **one** of the following answers

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Prefer not to answer

A ballot should give voters lots of choices, even if it's less clear how votes get turned into seats.

Choose **one** of the following answers

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Prefer not to answer

An election ballot should be easy to understand, even if it means voters have fewer options to express their preferences.

Choose **one** of the following answers

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Prefer not to answer

It is better for several parties to co-operate and govern together rather than one party to govern alone, even if it sometimes takes longer to form government after an election.

Choose **one** of the following answers

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Prefer not to answer

18) Please indicate which you prefer:

Choose **one** of the following answers

- Each electoral district is represented by one MLA
- Each electoral district is represented by several MLAs
- Some MLAs represent an electoral district, while other MLAs represent larger regions or the province as a whole.
- Prefer not to answer

Please answer the following questions to help us understand the choices you would like to see on the referendum ballot.

19) If the government offers voters a choice of more than one Proportional representation voting system, which do you prefer?

Choose **one** of the following answers

- Voters should indicate their support for only one proposed system
- Voters should rank order their support for all the proposed systems
- Prefer not to answer

20) Alongside the option of keeping the First Past the Post voting system, which system or systems of Proportional representation would you like to see on the ballot?

*For more information on voting system options, please refer to:
engage.gov.bc.ca/howwewote/votingsystems/*

Check **all that apply**

- List Proportional representation
- Mixed Member Proportional
- Single Transferable Vote
- Mixed Member Majoritarian
- Prefer not to answer
- Other, please describe _____

21) Please select your level of agreement for the following statement.

If B.C. changes to a system of proportional representation, there should be a second referendum after a trial period (for example, two elections) on whether to keep the new system.

Choose **one** of the following answers

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Prefer not to answer

Please answer the following questions to help us understand your expectations with regards to public funding for advocacy groups and campaign advertising for particular voting systems during the referendum.

22) Please select your level of agreement with the following statements.

The government should provide public funds to designated groups to campaign for their preferred voting system.

Choose **one** of the following answers

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Prefer not to answer

There should be spending limits imposed on any group that campaigns for its preferred voting system.

Choose **one** of the following answers

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Prefer not to answer

The provincial government should provide the public with impartial information during the referendum campaign period.

Choose **one** of the following answers

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Prefer not to answer

The provincial government should ensure that paid advertisements that appear during the referendum campaign period are produced only by groups that must register, disclose their identity in their advertising and disclose their contributors and expenses after the referendum.

Choose **one** of the following answers

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Prefer not to answer

23) Are there any other comments you would like to make about voting systems or the upcoming referendum? [Please limit your response to 1000 characters]

Thank you for your feedback.

Appendix G – Questionnaire Respondents: Demographics

	Website	Panel
Gender		
Man	55%	48%
Woman	37%	51%
Prefer not to answer	1%	1%
Other	6%	<1%
Age		
Under 18	1%	n/a
18 – 39 years	24%	35%
40 – 64 years	36%	43%
65 – 75 years	25%	18%
Over 75 years	9%	4%
Prefer not to answer	5%	n/a

	Website	Panel
Region		
Metro Vancouver	37%	53%
Vancouver Island	30%	17%
Southern Interior	22%	23%
North	8%	7%
Prefer not to say	4%	n/a
Identify As?		
Visible minority	7%	23%
LGBTQ2S+	6%	5%
Persons with disabilities	5%	10%
First Nations	2%	2%
Métis	2%	1%
Inuit	<1%	<1%
None of the above	69%	61%
Prefer not to answer	13%	3%

Appendix H – Questionnaire Methodology

Website

Between November 23rd, 2017 and February 28th, 2018 British Columbians could access an online questionnaire to provide input on their values and preferences respecting voting and representation in the Legislature, as well as on specific topics such as ballot design/questions and the process for the referendum campaign itself. The questionnaire also offered respondents the opportunity to submit their own individual comments.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The questions in Part 1 asked for people's general preferences and Part 2 asked more specific and technical questions. To complete Part 2, the respondent had to first complete Part 1 of the survey. For those who did not have access to the internet, paper copies were mailed to them so that they could complete the questionnaire by hand.

In total, there were 91,725 questionnaire completions of Part 1, and 76,226 (83%) of these respondents also completed Part 2. Of the 91,725 completed questionnaire, 91,677 were submitted online and 48 were completed by hand and submitted by fax, email and mail.

One of the questions asked respondents to provide the first three digits of their postal code (FSA). Regularly during the engagement, this information was compared to BC Stats 2017 Regional District population estimates and used to target social media advertisements at districts that were under-represented in the questionnaire responses.

The online questionnaire tool implemented a number of technical and manual preventive measures to make repetitive responses from the same individual or organization unlikely, and to identify responses from outside of the province. More overtly restrictive measures such as requiring every questionnaire user to first obtain an online key or passcode were not employed because such measures inevitably have the effect of reducing participation.

There are no technical or other safeguards that are completely effective in ensuring that every questionnaire response is from a unique individual, particularly in a time when many people own multiple electronic devices. It is in part for this reason that Ipsos Public Affairs was contracted to administer the questionnaire to a demographically balanced group of British Columbians, so that online responses and panel responses could be compared and both could inform the results of the public engagement.

Ipsos Panel

The Ipsos panel questionnaire was conducted online among 1,101 adult (18+ years) British Columbians using Ipsos's household panel between January 4 and 11, 2018. Panel respondents were informed that the questionnaire was being conducted on behalf of the Government of British Columbia. The questionnaire was structured to be nearly identical to the Government of British Columbia's website questionnaire.

The sample was stratified by region as follows:

- 552 interviews in Metro Vancouver (53% of population)
- 200 interviews on Vancouver Island (17% of population)
- 249 interviews in Southern Interior (23% of population)
- 100 interviews in North (7% of population)

Questionnaire data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's region, age and gender composition reflects that of the actual BC population according to Census data. The precision of Ipsos surveys and polls containing online data is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the overall results accurate to within +/-3.4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all adult British Columbians been surveyed. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and questionnaires may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

An online panel is a group of selected research participants who have agreed to respond to questionnaires over an extended period of time. Panelists provide additional information about themselves and their household, such as demographics, ownership and lifestyle information. This information is used both to target specific segments of the panel, as well as to ensure that questionnaire samples accurately reflect the makeup of the broader population based on Census and other reliable data.

Ipsos uses a variety of quality procedures to ensure its panelists are:

Real – They are who they say (Double Opt-In approach, Country validation via Geo-IP, Mismatch between device settings and geo location)

Fresh – They have not participated recently in similar questionnaires (Strict panel usage rules, Duplicate devices through digital Fingerprinting)

Engaged – They complete questionnaires seriously (Detection of speeders, straight liners, regular purge)

Unique – They can only take the questionnaire once (Duplicates, digital Fingerprinting)

Appendix I – Indigenous BC Elections Referendum Survey

2018

Corfield & Associates

INDIGENOUS BC ELECTIONS REFERENDUM SURVEY RESULTS

Indigenous BC Elections Referendum Survey

Introduction

The B.C. government is holding a referendum in the fall of 2018 to ask voters whether the province should keep the current First Past the Post (FPTP) voting system or change to a Proportional Representation (PR) voting system. Corfield & Associates has modified the BC government's questionnaire to reach out to sample Indigenous views about the preferences and expectations of BC voters and specifically Indigenous Voters about the referendum.

The survey asked key questions about values, the Indigenous general outlook as to how the legislature functions, and as to how to vote for Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). The survey also asks questions that are more detailed about preferences regarding electoral reform, FPTP and PR systems, and the referendum process.

There were 132 respondents to the survey, with another 10 abstaining from completing the survey because they do not vote.

As a summary, although 80% of respondents voted most or all of the time, almost 73% do not feel that Indigenous voices are currently adequately represented in the Legislative Assembly. Further, about 35% of respondents did not understand the basics of First Past the Post and proposed Proportional Representation; and 88% had not yet seen the Provincial website developed as part of the engagement strategy. Although many respondents want more diverse views heard, 50% want to maintain the simplicity of the ballot.

Consultation Summary

How we reached out: the survey tool was sent through the BC Title and Rights list server twice, Nation Talk, and individual emails were sent to select Indigenous leaders throughout BC. In addition to these efforts, in-person meetings were also conducted. Meetings were held with two First Nation communities and in-person with provincial leaders and youth. Corfield & Associates attended the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations meeting in Prince George, this is an all chiefs meeting hosted by the Regional Chief and over the two-day period both qualitative and quantitative data was collected.

Leadership Council participants articulated the need to have First Nation representation on the Provincial Legislature. Senior indigenous political leadership all articulated the need to have Indigenous representation on the Provincial Legislature, similar to how New Zealand's Parliament includes guaranteed representation for Maori, whom indigenous people are making up approximately 15% of the general population. This would also align with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which states that

Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.

This sentiment for designated indigenous representation in the Legislature has long been expressed by First Nations Chiefs and Council members and was re-confirmed in the 60 qualitative encounters.

First Nations Chief and Councils also expressed the need to have permanent representation on the Legislature. They also suggested that polling stations within their communities would help voter turnout. One of the barriers in remote communities was transportation and identification.

Urban Youth expressed the need to understand voting, and stated they really did not have a clear understanding of political parties. They also stated it was not something that they talked about with their parents.

The people that chose not to complete the survey were very clear that they did not participate in elections federally or provincially. They did not believe that they could make a difference and felt they had no voice in government.

General comments were people were excited to participate in the survey, and some struggled with the level of questions

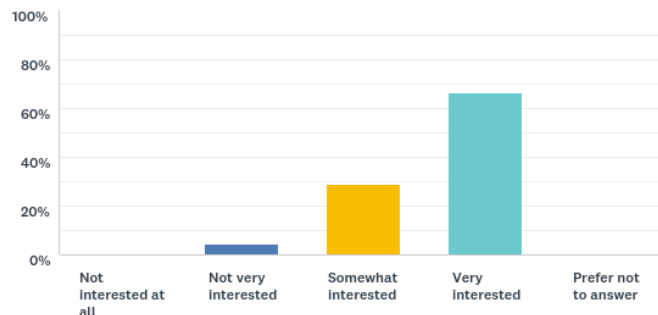
Qualitative data:

Reference was made repetitively to the New Zealand experience. Research is available at <https://lop.parl.ca/content/lop/researchpublications/bp359-e.htm>. In the qualitative data produced two major themes one guaranteed representative on the provincial legislature, the second education and information.

The following is the breakdown of responses.

1. *Generally speaking how interested are you in politics and current affairs?*

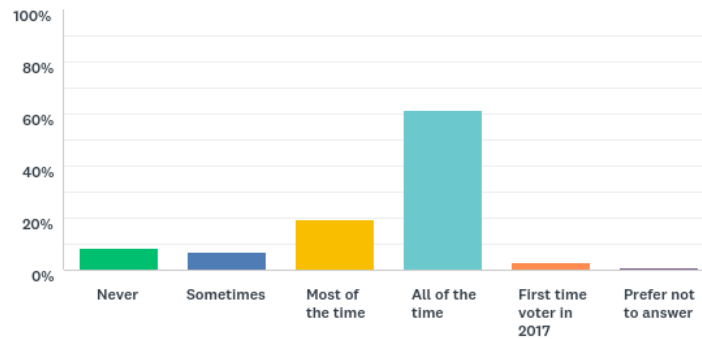
Q1 Generally speaking, how interested are you in politics and current affairs? Choose one of the following answers:



For this question, 66% of respondents identified as “Very Interested”, 29% were “somewhat interested”, and 5% were “Not very interested”. Choose one of the following answers:

2. *How often do you vote in provincial elections?*

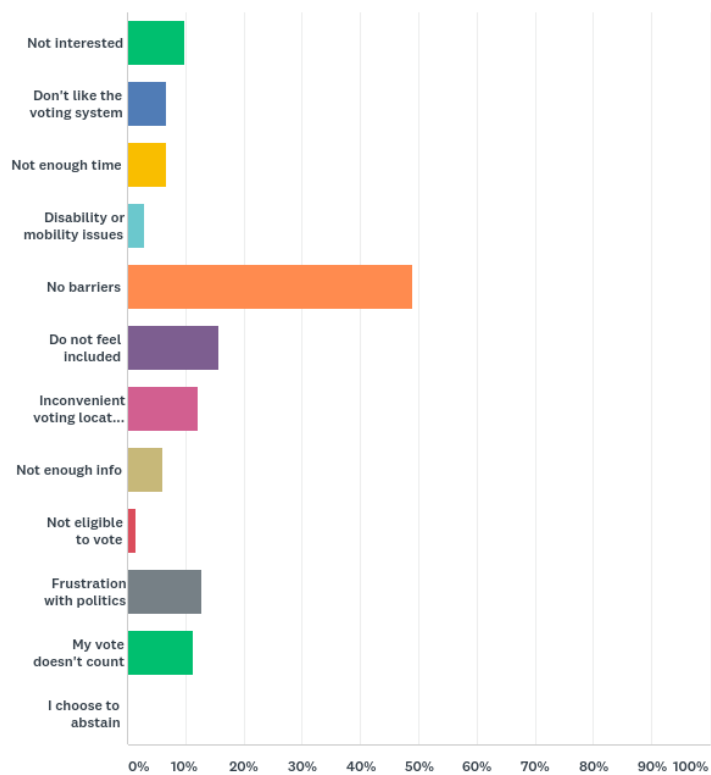
Q2 How often do you vote in provincial elections?



For this question, 61% of respondents vote “all of the time”, 20% of respondents vote “most of the time”, 7% vote “sometimes”, 3% were first time voters in 2017, 8% never vote and 1 % chose the option “prefer not to answer”.

3. Which, if any, of the following have been barriers that have kept you from voting?

Q3 Which, if any, of the following have been barriers that have kept you from voting? Check all that apply

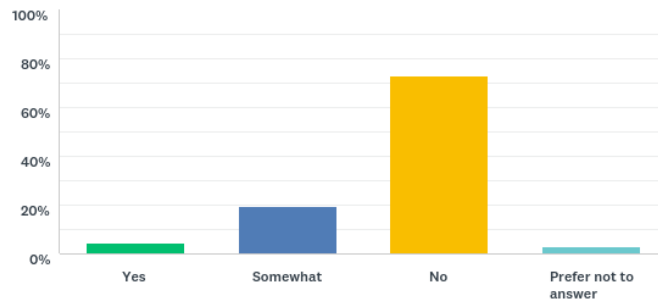


For this question, 48% of respondents did not note any barriers to voting. For those that did notice barriers to voting, 16% do not feel included in the political voting process, 13% felt frustration with politics in general, 12% thought that the voting location isn't convenient, 11% didn't feel that their votes count anyway, 10% were not interested in politics, 7% don't like the voting system, 7% don't feel like they have time to vote, 6% felt that they didn't have enough information, 3% had disability or mobility issues and 1% were not eligible to vote.

Note that even with these barriers, some overcame them and responded to question #2 that they vote all the time.

4. *Do you feel that Indigenous voices are currently adequately represented in the Legislative Assembly?*

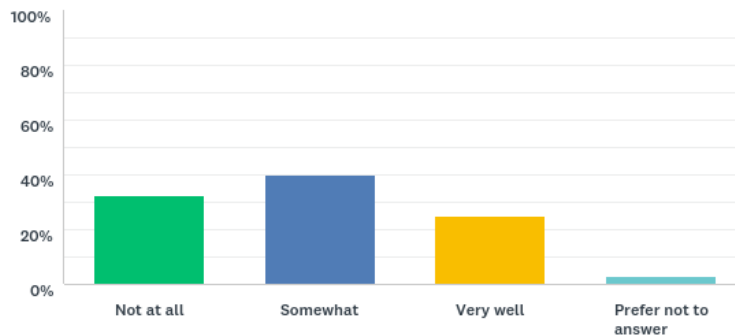
Q4 Do you feel that Indigenous voices are currently adequately represented in the Legislative Assembly?



For this question, almost 73% of respondents did not feel that Indigenous voices are adequately represented in the Legislative Assembly. Less than 5% felt that their voices were adequately represented, a little fewer than 20% felt that they were somewhat represented, and 3% preferred not to answer.

5. *How well do you understand the First Past the Post voting system?*

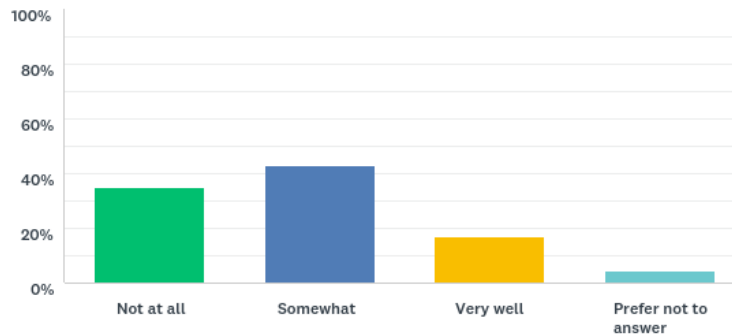
Q5 How well do you understand First Past the Post voting system?



The current voting system is not at all understood by 32.5% of respondents of this survey, and 3% chose the option to not answer the question. Only 24% felt that they understood the system “very well” and 40% felt that they somewhat understood the First Past the Post voting system.

6. *How well do you understand Proportional Representation?*

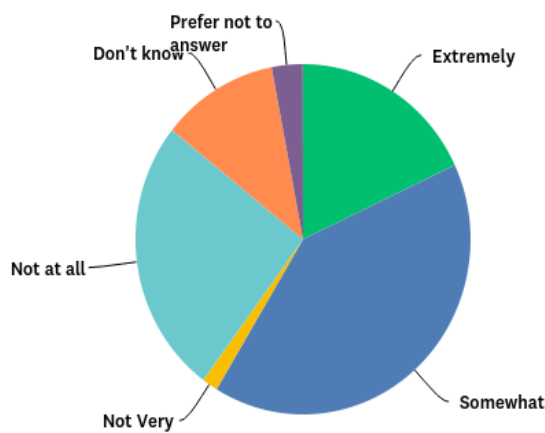
Q6 How well do you understand Proportional Representation?



An alternative to the current voting system is Proportional Representation and is the focus of the upcoming referendum. Unfortunately, 35% of respondents do not understand the Proportional Representation at all, and almost 5% preferred not to answer the question. However, 42.5% felt that they “somewhat” understood the system and 17% felt that they understood it “very well”.

7. *If you were to vote in a referendum to choose a voting system today, how confident are you that you would make an informed choice?*

Q7 If you were to vote in a referendum to choose a voting system today, how confident are you that you would make an informed choice? Choose one of the following answers

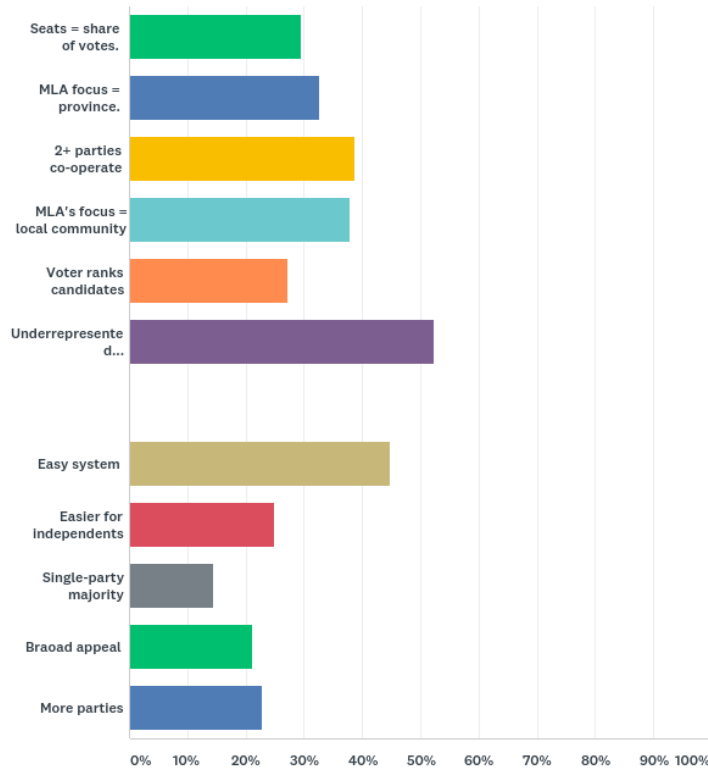


For this question, 18% of respondents felt “extremely confident” that they could currently make

an informed choice, less than 1% felt “not very confident” and nearly 41% of respondents felt “somewhat confident”. Just under 27% felt “not very confident” or “not at all confident” that they could make an informed choice. Interestingly, over 11% did not know if they could and 3% preferred not to answer this question.

8. Please select up to five values from the list below that are most important to you.

Q8 Please select up to five values from the list below that are most important to you. (Please select maximum 5 answers)



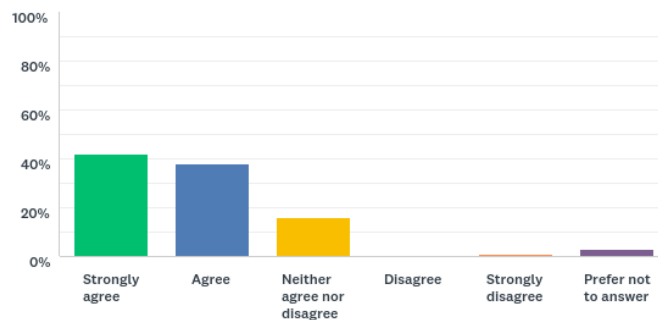
The following list shows the most popular values listed by respondents:

- The majority of respondents, almost 53%, wanted better representation of groups that are currently under-represented in the Legislative Assembly.
- The next most popular value at 45% was that the voting system is easy to understand.
- 38% of respondents wanted a Legislative Assembly where two or more parties co-operate to make decisions, which is similar to our current government.
- 38% of respondents also wanted the Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA's) to focus primarily on the interests of their local community.
- 32% of respondents want MLA's to focus primarily on what is best for the province as a whole.
- Almost 30% wants a Legislative Assembly in which the share of seats that each party holds closely matches the share of the votes that it receives across the province.

- 27.5% want a voting system that allows a voter to rank a political party’s candidates (1, 2, 3, etc.)
- 25% of respondents wants a voting system that makes it easier for independent candidates (those not running for a political party) to be elected.
- Almost 23% want to see an increase in the number of political parties in the Legislative Assembly so that more points of view can be represented.
- 21% wants a voting system that encourages political parties to appeal as broadly as possible to voters.
- And almost 14% want single-party governments where it is clear who is accountable for decisions.

9. *Do you agree with the following statement: “there should be greater diversity of views represented in the Legislative Assembly”?*

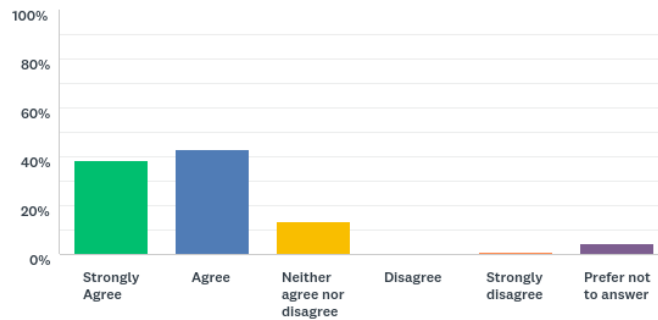
Q9 Please select your level of agreement with the following statement. There should be greater diversity of views represented in the Legislative Assembly. Choose one of the following answers



For this question 42% of respondents strongly agreed and almost 39% agreed. None disagreed with the statement and 16% neither agreed nor disagreed and 3% preferred not to answer the question.

10. *In the Legislative Assembly, there should be greater expectations of compromise and accountability to all constituents, not just the majority.*

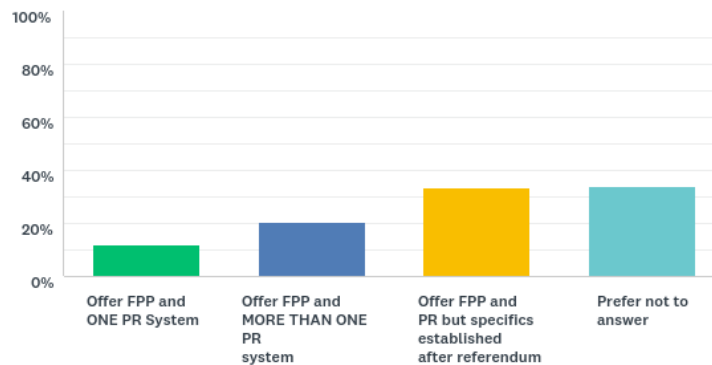
Q10 In the Legislative Assembly, there should be greater expectations of compromise and accountability to all constituents, not just the majority. Choose one of the following answers



The majority of the respondents strongly agreed (almost 38%) or agreed (43%) with this statement. Less than 1% strongly disagreed and over 13% neither agreed nor disagreed and almost 5% preferred not to answer.

11. Which would you prefer? Choose one of the following answers

Q11 Which would you prefer? Choose one of the following answers



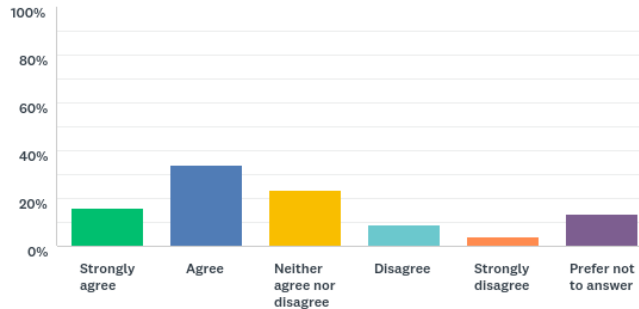
Interestingly, 35% of respondents preferred not to answer this question. For those that did, almost 33% felt that the referendum ballot should offer voters the choice between the current First Past the Post voting system and Proportional Representation, with a specific voting system to be established by the legislation after the referendum. Nearly 21% felt that the referendum ballot should offer voters the choice between the current First Past the Post voting system and more than one proportional representation voting system, and 12% felt that only one Proportional Representation system choice should be offered.

12. Please select your level of agreement with the following statement

Ballots should allow voters to provide more input into preferences (e.g. by supporting a candidate and a political party, or by ranking more than one candidate or political party in order

of preference). Although voting will not be as simple as under the current method, it will allow voters greater input of preferences.

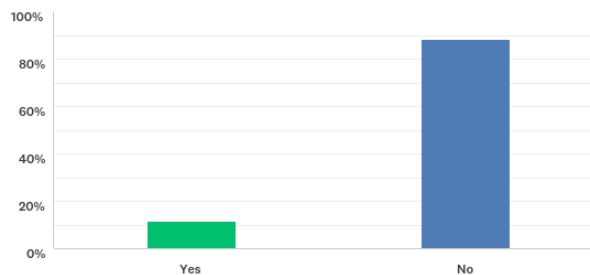
Q12 Please select your level of agreement with the following statement. Ballots should allow voters to provide more input into preferences (e.g. by supporting a candidate and a political party, or by ranking more than one candidate or political party in order of preference). Although voting will not be as simple as under the current method, it will allow voters greater input of preferences. Choose one of the following answers



Just over 50% of respondents agreed (16% strongly and 34% agreed) that ballots should provide voters with more input into their preferences. 9% of respondents disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed, signaling that they preferred simplicity on the ballot. Almost 24% neither agreed nor disagreed and almost 14% preferred not to answer.

13. Have you visited the Provincial Government's voting referendum engagement website (<https://engage.gov.qc.ca/howwewote/>)?

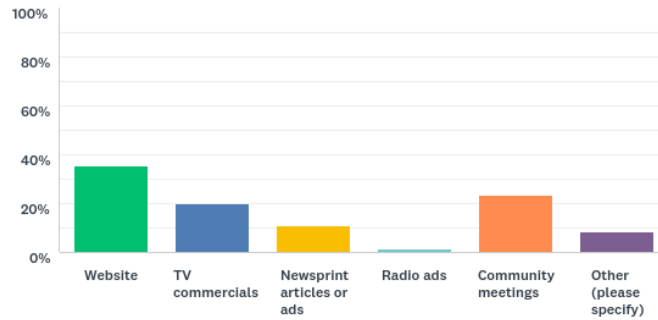
Q13 Have you visited the Provincial Government's voting referendum engagement website (<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/howwewote/>)?



A total of 88% of respondents had not visited the Provincial Government's voting referendum engagement website, and almost 12% had.

14. What methods of communication would you think would be most effective in ensuring that you and your community receives information about the referendum campaign?

Q14 What methods of communication would you think would be most effective in ensuring that you and your community receives information about the referendum campaign?

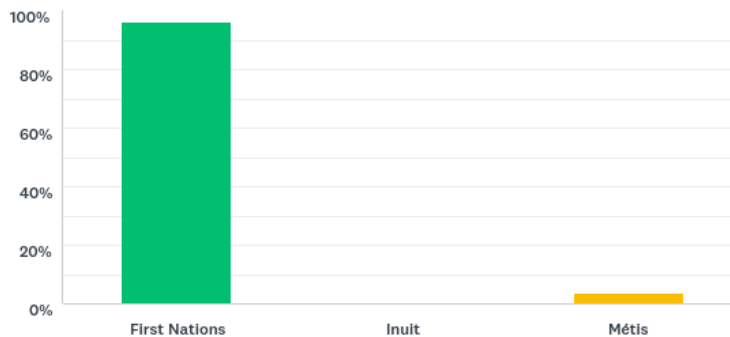


Even though a large majority of respondents had not yet visited the Provincial website, 35% of survey respondents felt that a website is the most effective method to reach community members. Further, 23% wanted to see community meetings, 20% wanted to see TV commercials, 11% wanted newsprint articles or ads and just over 1.5% wanted radio advertisements. Another 8.5% of respondents listed other options, which included:

- Social media with short videos.
- All of the above.
- A mixture of community meetings, community newsletters and information on community social media websites.
- Mail outs for those that don't have access to internet.
- CBC radio, social media, website and press releases.
- Email from trusted newsgroup source.
- Digital advertising (social media).
- First Nations Community newsletters, posters to all band offices, flyers in the mailboxes
- Visits door to door.

15. With which of the following indigenous groups do you identify?

Q15 With which of the following indigenous groups do you identify?



For this survey, 96% of respondents identified as First Nations and almost 4% were Metis.

16. *Are there any comments you would like to make about voting systems or the upcoming referendum?*

For this question, 20 respondents provided written answers. Below is a summary:

- The current political system is corrupted by its accepting corporate funding of the parties and candidates. This causes the candidates and elected parties to be under influence of the corporate and wealthy interests and not those who have elected them. You can see the results in the terrible legislation created like in mining and Mt. Polley. This system has been compromised for generations and is in dire need of updating to be more representative of the people not corporate interests.
- There should be a designated number of Indigenous MLAs that represent the regions throughout the province.
- Need FNs in the seats.
- Regional set aside or FN MLA's.
- What referendum?
- Teach in school, have updates and candidates come to communities before voting to tell people why they are running.
- Any improvements to voting is good.
- Include both on-reserve and off-reserve representation. On-reserve Chiefs still want control of their tribal members, but the BC body of Chiefs, and the First Nations Health Authority are too out of touch with the off-reserve population, and have too much red tape to move on governance issues and service provision. The majority of people don't have faith in the First Nations Health Authority.
- Stop separating Nations on their own lands.
- Proper Aboriginal representatives.
- Cut salaries and benefits for politicians, get the money grubbing scumbags out of there.
- My main challenge to voting is I live in a semi-remote community that does not show up on their "voting maps". When I go to vote, it usually takes me an hour for them to be able to confirm that my riding is where it is.
- Yes, Indigenous Peoples need to be able to vote on all matters affecting their rights. Indian Act elected chiefs and council only have jurisdiction for on-Reserve. The True holders of Aboriginal Rights need to be the ones that benefit from all agreements of all kinds, that is why an online voting system created for all First Nations peoples, and tribes to user for band elections, and other stuff like impact management benefit agreements.
- The voting system should also include that the elected are responsible to the people of the province and not just the industry/business interests.
- The current system is colonial in nature and does not provide benefit to Firstborn Nations. What does reconciliation mean when it appears nothing changes #racism.
- I found that Elections Canada is more involved and interested in reaching Indigenous voters. I wonder if the BC government is less inclined to hear from Indigenous voters - why is there a lack of effort to ensure 200 plus First Nations communities are able to vote. Many First Nations individuals live in poverty, and do not have a way to get to

polling stations (no access to a vehicle, no gas money, no money to eat in town, etc.). I understand that the First Nations population is small, and that it would cost more to ensure the individuals with little to no means to get to a municipal polling station are provided with more accessible options. However, a little more effort should be made in BC to promote full participation of the voting public. BC is making a conscious decision to sit low on the democratic spectrum.

- Proportional representation models should address the guaranteed participation of First Nations in the Legislature - as members of parliament or through other collaborative government models.
- I appreciate colour pamphlets and flyers with the information narrowed down - I think that is a great way to disseminate the information to a larger group.
- There should be an indigenous representation that is chosen by the indigenous nations (UBCIC/AFN) who will have voting power. Your questionnaire assumes there are no other option of representation in BC and national. There has to be options for looking "outside the box" as this is a colonial process. Look at the bigger picture.
- No matter what way we vote- the system still oppresses First Nation by keeping INAC operational, abolish INAC.

Appendix J – Written Submissions

Forty-six organizations or individuals associated with an institution made written submissions to the How We Vote public engagement. Their submissions are posted in full on the How We Vote public engagement website.

Organizations:

Alliance4Democracy
All Votes Count Canada
BC ACORN
BCGEU
BC NDP
BC Symposium on Proportional representation
British Columbia Federation of Students
Broadbent Institute⁷
BMC Motorworks Ltd.
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
Canadian Association to Restore Democracy
Committee for Voting Equity in BC (Voting BC)
Citizen's Vote Empowerment
Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform
 Alumni Association
Comox Valley Council of Canadians
CUPE BC
Dogwood BC
Keith Edmonds, PhD, Langara College
Electoral Framework Association
Equal Voice
Fair Voting BC
Fair Vote Canada (BC Steering Committee)
Fair Vote Canada (Greater Victoria)
Fair Vote Comox Valley
Fair Vote Greater Victoria
Fair Vote Kamloops
Fair Vote Nelson
Fair Vote South Okanagan Similkameen
Fair Vote Sunshine Coast
Fraser Institute
Health Sciences Association of BC
Hospital Employees Union
Leadnow
LEAP Victoria
Ronna-Rae Leonard, MLA
Make Every Voter Count Society
Elizabeth May, MP
MoveUP
New Democrat Caucus and B.C.
 Green Caucus
No BC Proportional Representation Society
Dr. Stephen Phillips, Langara College
Dr. Dennis Pilon, York University
Public Service Alliance of Canada,
 BC Region
Sierra Club BC
Unifor
YES PR BC

⁷ Over 300 individuals also submitted a form letter sponsored by the Broadbent Institute.

Individuals:

208 individuals made written submissions to the How We Vote public engagement website during the engagement period. The submissions included substantive comments and proposals respecting voting systems and the referendum campaign as well as comments on the website and questionnaire.

The submissions are posted on the How We Vote website with personal information redacted.

Robin Annschild	Gloria Dandridge	Rhys Goldstein
David Anson	Alan Danesh	Carol Gordon
Megan Ardyche	Marc Dansereau	Charles Gould
David Arnot	Jim Darcel	Sean Graham
Rob Arnstein	Joseph Darcel	Brian Grainger
Tia Atkinson	Stephen Davis	Rand Granbois
Tyler Bacon	Jill De La Salle	Art Green
Matthew Baldwin	Hestor DeSousa	David Green
Alan Ball	Rick Dignard	Stephen Green
Shirley Ball	Michael Divine	Arlyn Greig
Jim Bell	Glenn Dobie	Daniel Grice
Barbara Berger	Art Duhome	Theo Hart
Peter Black	Donald Durrell	Barry Haynes
Uwe Borgmann	Jeff East	David Heath
Yvon Brassard	Keith Edmonds	Craig Henschel
Paul Brenneisen	Leonid Elbert	Mark Henschel
Joe Breslaw	Rosita Elena	Ryan Hinton
Don Bright	George Evans	Diane Hobelaid
Marc Andre Brzustowski	Denis Falvey	Judy Hoepfner
Luca Buss	Dave Ferguson	Terry Hoffman
Janice Carscadden	Kala Bryson	Greg Holloway
Vladimir Certik	Aden Fisher	Gordon Hsu
C.B. Chapman	Susan Fletcher	Tim Hubberstey
Adrian Chaster	Lynne Forrest	Geordie Hungerford
Kyle Chen	David Fort	David Hunter
Tony Chestnut	Ray Fortier	David Huntley
Bryce Chevallier	Stephen Foster	David Hutcheon
Carson Chura	David Fraser	Taiga Iida
Terry Clark	Jenny Frith	David Inwood
David Collins	Brendan Gallagher	Diana Jewell
R Lindon Coutts	Julie Gardner	Jeff Jewell
James Cox	Paul George	Tamara Jones
R. Crompton	Don Giberson	Terry Joy
Dave Crozier	Dianne Globe	David Kelln
Veronica Dahl	Gerald Goldie	John Kendler

Kris Kingston	Arne Mooers	Judith Stapleton
Brett Kirby	Ken Murray	William Stocks
Rolf Kullak	David Nelson	Frances Stocks
Daniel Kyba	Richard Ortega	Thomas Sullivan
Gregory Lang	Len Parkin	John Tapio
Sabina Lautensach	Steve Pelkey	Kath Taylor
Lawrence Lee	Diane Pelletier	Rod Taylor
August Lehmann	Marcio Penner	Joanne Thibault
Bruce Lemire-Elmore	Joy Pillipow	Ian Thompson
Pat Lewin	John Plummer	Jennifer Tomek
Beverley Linseisen	Sadie Quintal	Matthew Topham
Paul Lock	Robert Radford	John Tucker
Patrick Lockert	Norma Reimer	John Twigg
Nick Loenen	Terence Reynolds	Martin Uitvlugt
Richard Lung	Jim Robertson	Anton van Walraven
Brian Lutz	Tom Robinson	Ian Vantreight
Iain Macanulty	Roy Roope	Herbert Vesely
Donna Macdougall	Philip Round	Terry Vulcano
William Macey	Ron Rowley	M. Ward
Christina Mader	Norm Ryder	Mike Ward
Albert Madsen	Nataniel Schmitt	John Warner
Paul Margetts	Jack Schouten	Jim Webb
Richard Marr	Muriel Schroyen	Silas White
John Martin	Markus Schulze	Jim Wight
Garth Martin	Jim Sharpe	Paul Williams
Fraser McArter	Iliya Shekarchi	Anthony Willingdon
Lawrie McFarlane	Elisabeth Silvester	Doug Wright
Barb McGillvray	Glenn Smith	Anthony Zammit
Iris Meehan	Lee Smith	G. Zilm
Cam Mkneil	Roy Snell	Dan Zubkoff

13 submissions were received with either no name attached or with only an email alias.

