



# MAKE EVERY VOTE COUNT—ALWAYS!

PPR 123: ‘Perfect Proportional Representation’ + ‘Instant Runoff Voting’ = ‘True’ Democracy!

## Questions & Answers

1. What is **PPR 123**, and how does it differ from other voting systems?

- **PPR 123** is a *hybrid* voting system that combines the best features of ‘preferential voting’ (voters simply rank their preferred choices as **1-2-3**) and ‘proportional representation’ (**PR**, which produces results in Parliament that are proportional to each party’s share of total votes).
- What makes **PPR 123** unique is that it’s the *only* voting system that is *truly* honest—and scrupulously fair—to all voters, political parties and candidates.

2. What was the *inspiration* for **PPR 123**?

- Under the leadership of PM Trudeau, the Government of Canada is committed to electoral reform, and will adopt a new voting system for the 2019 election, in fulfillment of their campaign promise to “*Make Every Vote Count*”.
- This promise provided the direct inspiration for **PPR 123**, which extends upon it to “*Make Every Vote Count—Always!*” [Indeed there is no other way to *truly* fulfill the original promise.]

3. What is *wrong* with Canada’s existing voting system?

- Canada’s voting system is called ‘First-Past-the-Post’ (**FPTP**). It’s a relic of Canada’s colonial past. FPTP was never chosen by the people, anywhere, and it has been rejected by all the newer democratic nations and many former colonies, due to its many atrocious defects. FPTP ought to be relegated to the scrap heap of history, asap, by all people and leaders with integrity.
- At its core, **FPTP** is a fundamentally dishonest voting system: it fosters a *dishonest expression* of the ‘will of the People’, and it produces a *dishonest misrepresentation* of the expressed ‘will of the People’.

4. How does FPTP foster a *dishonest expression* of the ‘will of the People’?

- FPTP rewards parties and politicians for engaging in divisive politics, inflammatory rhetoric, personal attacks and negative campaigning. That’s why such strategies and negative behaviours have become common practice.
- Under the *adversarial* political climate fostered by FPTP, many voters are driven to engage in so-called ‘strategic voting’—which is often described as ‘*holding their nose*’ and voting (defensively but *dishonestly*) for the ‘lesser of evils’—rather than voting ‘*for*’ the party that they *truly* prefer (that is thought to be a likely *loser*, which becomes a self-fulfilling expectation due to ‘*strategic voting*’).

5. How does FPTP produce a *dishonest misrepresentation* of the expressed ‘will of the People’?

- Under FPTP, all votes for defeated candidates (typically more than half the total votes in a country with multiple regional and small parties like Canada) become *wasted votes* that count for nothing.
- Under FPTP, the winning party is invariably the beneficiary of a large distortion in their favour, that very unfairly magnifies their power, as a blatant misrepresentation of the expressed ‘will of the People’.

- Sometimes the distortion is so great that FPTP may even produce a ‘*wrongful*’ winner (i.e. with fewer votes than a *defeated* party which, on the basis of the expressed ‘*will of the People*’, should have become the ‘*rightful*’ winner of the election—e.g. BC election of 1996).
6. What makes **PPR123** the *only* voting system that is *truly* honest—and scrupulously fair to all voters, politicians and parties?
- It’s based on *honest voting*, along with the preservation of *all* votes—by *not throwing any votes away!*
  - Based on a preferential ballot, **PPR123** liberates voters to express their *true 1<sup>st</sup>-choice*—with no coercion (as under FPTP) to waste it through the *dishonest* practice of ‘*strategic voting*’.
  - **PPR123** is the only system that can fulfill the promise to “*Make Every Vote Count*”—and it even goes beyond this to “*Make Every Vote Count—Always!*”
  - **PPR123** also goes beyond what has previously been accepted as PR (with varying degrees of imperfection and other issues) to guarantee *Perfect Proportional Representation (PPR)*!
7. Claims that **PPR123** is the *only truly* honest voting system, that it’s scrupulously fair to everyone, and that it guarantees some new and *Perfect* form of PR, this all seems too good to be true. How can such bold and unique claims actually be true?
- It’s with great pride that we make such unprecedented claims about **PPR123**. But **PPR123** is in fact a truly unique and unprecedented voting system, and such claims are indeed objectively *true!*
  - Again, it’s based on *honest voting*, and preservation of *all* votes—*throwing no votes away!*
8. What is it about **PPR123** that makes every vote *truly* honest, and how does it preserve all votes?
- What makes every *1<sup>st</sup>-choice* an *honest* vote is that the preferential ballot gives everyone three choices! And voters will understand that, if their *1<sup>st</sup>-choice* is eliminated, their vote automatically switches to their next choice (i.e. *2<sup>nd</sup>-choice* or *3<sup>rd</sup>-choice*). So everyone is free to vote for their *true* preference as their *1<sup>st</sup>-choice*.
  - Every vote is preserved by simply *not throwing any vote away!* And the process by which this is ensured is the unique *magic* of **PPR123** that produces *Perfect Proportional Representation!*
  - Specifically, each party keeps all their honest 1<sup>st</sup>-choice votes (not 2<sup>nd</sup>-choice or 3<sup>rd</sup>-choice votes) earned by *all* of their candidates—i.e. those who were *defeated* and those *elected*. And the national vote total for each party becomes their exact voting power in Parliament—which is how **PPR123** produces *Perfect Proportional Representation!*
9. What? That seems quite strange, and way too simple. How does **PPR123** actually “*Make Every Vote Count*”—and how does it *preserve* all votes?
- Every elected representative keeps all their *1<sup>st</sup>-choice* votes (not their *2<sup>nd</sup>-choice* or *3<sup>rd</sup>-choice* votes).
  - Each party retains all *1<sup>st</sup>-choice* votes (not *2<sup>nd</sup>-choice* or *3<sup>rd</sup>-choice* votes) for their *defeated* candidates.
  - Each party reassigns *all* of their retained *1<sup>st</sup>-choice* votes amongst their elected representatives.
  - For every vote in Parliament, each representative casts *all* the Citizens’ votes entrusted in them.
  - For every vote in Parliament, **each party has aggregate voting power derived directly from—and exactly equal to—the total number of Citizens’ votes (honest 1<sup>st</sup>-choice votes) received by all candidates of that party.**

10. So under **PPR123**, MP's would no longer have equal votes. How can that be right?

- Our democracy now faces a fundamental question of principle: should it be based on equal votes for all elected representatives—or equal votes for all Citizens?
- **PPR123** raises this issue, and stands firmly on equality of the Citizens' votes. It proposes this to be recognized as "The Primacy of the Citizen's Vote"; the Citizen's vote should be recognized as the fundamental and irreducible unit of Democracy—never to be compromised or extinguished!
- The problem is that there can never be any voting system that will elect just the right number of representatives so that the votes of all Citizens have equal value and equal representation.
- Fortunately, in the computer age, it is just as easy to count millions of Citizens' votes as a few hundred MP's votes.

11. What are some of the other *benefits*, under **PPR123**, from representatives having *unequal* numbers of votes in Parliament?

- Firstly, such *inequality* is actually only *equitable*! Much of what has been *inequitable* all these years under FPTP is directly linked to the *equality* of MP's votes. Some ridings have considerably more voters than others. And some representatives receive considerably more votes than others. Hence, if all representatives have one equal vote, that means all Citizens' votes are not equal.
- Secondly, **PPR123** eliminates the need for any future redistricting. It removes the importance of population in determining riding size—hence, riding boundaries could be realigned with natural boundaries. Also, there's no longer any need for excessively large ridings in remote areas with small population. Under **PPR123**, each representative will always have the appropriate voting power, automatically.
- Thirdly, under **PPR123**, the formula for each party's vote reassignment (i.e. for the votes received by their defeated candidates) could be designed to enhance demographic balance (e.g. gender balance etc.)

12. How are the representatives elected under **PPR123**?

- In each riding, Citizens vote for their *three* top choices (candidate/party), ranking them as **1-2-3**. The vote counting process works the same way all parties elect their leader:
  - All *1<sup>st</sup>-choice* votes are counted first.
  - If no candidate has a majority (i.e. 50%+1), the bottom candidate is eliminated, and those votes are switched to those voter's next choice (i.e. *2<sup>nd</sup>-choice* or *3<sup>rd</sup>-choice*) on each of those ballots.
  - The process continues until the winner is elected as MP with a majority of votes.
- This procedure ensures that every elected representative is the *rightful* winner with *true* democratic *legitimacy*—being the one most acceptable to most voters (i.e. more than half).
- This is a well-recognized voting system called *Instant Runoff Voting (IRV)* that everyone understands; if it's the right way to elect leaders, then it must also be the best way to elect all representatives.

13. Some advocates of PR have a negative opinion of IRV. Is that justified?

- The short answer is “NO!”
- Those who dismiss IRV fail to recognize its importance in ensuring that those elected are rightful winners, but even much more importantly that IRV enables honest voting.

- However, the advocates of PR are quite right that, by itself, *IRV alone* would provide very *disproportional representation*—and that would make it objectively much less acceptable than any form of PR [as stated elsewhere on this website].

14. So please explain how **PPR 123**, in which all representatives are elected under IRV, turns its very disproportional results into *Perfect Proportional Representation*?

- Again, **PPR 123** is a hybrid electoral system—combining IRV with **PPR**, which makes all the difference!
- Under **PPR 123**, the parliamentary voting power of each party is determined directly by, and is precisely equal to, their total number of Citizens' votes—not by their number of elected representatives (all rightful winners). That's how **PPR 123** always produces *Perfect Proportional Representation*!

15. How does **PPR 123** compare with the most widely used form of PR, called *Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)*?

- In simple parlance, **PPR 123** beats the 'you-know-what' out of MMP!
- MMP is also a hybrid electoral system—combining FPTP (which is notoriously disproportional) with a 'Party List' system of some kind (a veritable 'band-aid' treatment that fails to address the underlying problem, and creates new problems in the process).
- As the underlying voting system, IRV provides some extremely important advantages and is objectively far superior to FPTP—which is why Australia switched from FPTP to IRV almost a century ago.
- As the proportionality component, **PPR** is objectively superior to any 'Party List' system in so many ways:
  - **PPR** provides *Perfect Proportional Representation*, whereas a 'Party List' does not.
  - **PPR** is truly democratic (based only on the Citizens' votes), whereas a 'Party List' (which gives more power to the parties, and allows defeated and hence under-represented parties to reward their privileged few with seats in Parliament) is not.
  - Under **PPR 123**, all MPs are *rightful winners* and representatives of a riding where Citizens can hold them accountable. By contrast, under MMP, typically two-thirds of the MPs are elected under FPTP, with some of them *not* being *rightful winners*, and the 'Party List' MPs are not representatives of a riding and hence cannot be held to account by the electorate.
  - **PPR** would never require any changes to riding boundaries (even as population changes), whereas MMP either requires 50% or more new MPs (i.e. for the 'Party List' seats) or corresponding increases in the size of each riding (or some combination of these two problematic alternatives).
  - **PPR 123** provides the potential to enhance the overall quality of local representation (e.g. reduced riding sizes in remote areas, offset by small increases in densely populated urban areas), whereas MMP reduces the quality of local representation (unless the number of MPs is almost doubled) while creating two classes of MPs.
- Despite its defects, MMP is still clearly superior to IRV by itself, which is clearly superior to FPTP.

16. What are the other forms of PR, and how do they compare with **PPR 123**?

- The next best-known form of quasi-PR is the *Single Transferable Vote (STV)*; **PPR 123** also beats the ‘you-know-what’ out of STV (though it’s a much more respectable contest)!
- Another alternative (proposed by MP Stéphane Dion) is called **P3: Proportional, Preferential, Personalized**. This also is a very worthy alternative, but no match for **PPR 123**.
- STV and P3 are objectively the best attempts to achieve approximate proportionality in a truly democratic way, where all MPs are local representatives who are accountable to an electorate. Hence, STV and P3 are clearly superior to MMP. [STV was chosen over MMP by 80% of the members of the Citizens’ Assembly of BC, a randomly selected group of 160 citizens who spent almost a year studying electoral reform.]
- However, what both STV and P3 demonstrate most clearly are the limitations and negative consequences of a conceptually flawed approach; specifically, the futility of focusing on the members seats rather than on the Citizen’s vote.
- Both STV and P3 involve clustering a number of ridings (typically between three and seven) into electoral districts, where the voters in each district collectively elect that number of MPs.
- Both STV and P3 allocate seats on a proportional basis within each electoral district.
  - A mathematical formula (called the “*Hare quota*” under STV) determines how many votes are required to be elected. For a district of 5 ridings, it takes only about 17% to be elected.
  - This criterion for election is quite problematic in two ways. Firstly, the requirement is too high to enable small parties to get any representation—hence all votes for them would still be wasted. Secondly, the granularity of proportionality is too coarse—hence the leading parties would likely be lumped together (e.g. if one party had 50% and another 34% in a 5 member district, they would both win two seats).
- Under both STV and P3, voters are confronted with a much larger and more confusing ballot. And understanding their vote counting and vote transfer processes is a mystification well beyond the interest, patience and capacities of most Citizens.
- With so many problems and such mediocre results, STV and P3 must objectively be seen as valiant but misguided efforts, doomed by mental enslavement to the flawed concept of conventional PR (i.e. ‘one-member = one-vote’). By contrast, **PPR 123** is liberated by its principle of ‘*The Primacy of the Citizen’s Vote*’—enabling it alone to guarantee **Perfect** Proportional Representation—with *none* of the unfortunate complications or defects of *all* other forms of PR.

17. How could **PPR 123** preserve the votes for independent candidates and the small parties without elected representation?

- Under FPTP, and all other electoral alternatives, all these votes are always wasted.
- However, it cannot be disputed that the promise to “*Make Every Vote Count*” is a very worthy principle—hence, it’s a promise that *ought* to be kept.
- The vote reassignment process of **PPR 123** provides the model. This works well for all major parties with elected representation. But some special accommodation would be necessary to preserve all the votes that are unaffiliated with a represented party. The simple solution would be to acclaim a small number of “*Members-at-Large*” (perhaps one per province or region), as strictly *non-partisan* representatives, to cast the votes for those independents and small parties. These positions could be filled by the leading independent candidate, or perhaps by a

distinguished citizen. Such special representatives may well provide a very beneficial service as a public *watch-dog* or parliamentary *Ombudsperson*!

18. How can people have confidence in an electoral system that has never been tried before?

- All progress requires people to make a prudent '*leap of faith*'.
- But **PPR123** is not an unproven system. It's a hybrid system based on two components—that both have long been established as the only *right* way to run the most *responsible* elections.
  - Every representative will be elected under IRV—the well-proven process used to elect party leaders.
  - With every vote in Parliament, the elected representatives will be casting 'proxy' votes on behalf of every Citizen—which corresponds directly to the well-proven process of corporate shareholder democracy. In a democracy, the Citizens of the nation are its shareholders—with every Citizen holding one equal voting share! Under **PPR123**, when our elected representatives vote in Parliament, they are not simply casting their *own* single vote—but through it they are also casting *all* of the *Citizens'* votes that have been entrusted to them!

19. Does PR have a problem of producing *minority* governments that are unstable and ineffective?

- Canadian politics must live with a *multi-party* Parliament, reflecting Canada's size and diversity. It's almost impossible for the '*will of the people*' to produce a *majority* government—except for the systemic distortions of an unfair voting system such as FPTP.
- Minority governments (often with *coalitions*) are common in countries with PR. Their stability and effectiveness depends upon the politicians—and the political climate.
- As previously noted, **PPR123**'s preferential ballot facilitates a much less negative and more cooperative political climate. And its *Perfect* Proportional Representation should remove the temptation of any opportunistic political strategies to gain partisan advantage by instigating a premature defeat of the Government.
- Optionally, consideration could be given to a '*double majority*' rule (i.e. more than 50% of both the *Citizens'* votes *and* the *MP*'s votes) as a requirement to defeat the Government; given that members would be elected under IRV, this would produce more stable governments than even FPTP—or indeed any other electoral system!

20. So what's the '*bottom line*' on electoral reform?

- FPTP is the worst of all electoral systems, and can no longer be considered acceptable.
- Objectively, the simple fact is that there are no worthy competitors to **PPR123**!
- Every effort should be given to refining the details of **PPR123** implementation (especially related to the formula for vote reassignment and enhanced demographic representation), and overcoming any obstacles as may be required.
- **PPR123** would probably become the most historically important and lasting '*legacy*' accomplishment of this Parliament and its leadership—or whichever leadership in whichever nation adopts it first!