



Electoral Justice Now!

Liberating Democracy from an unjust electoral system, to better reflect and serve the 'Will of the People'!

©2017 ElectoralJusticeNow.ca

EJN Newsletter #5: 'PracticalPR' + Balanced Representation!

(Why can't an electoral system produce balanced representation automatically?)

The electoral concept of balanced representation has multiple dimensions. Proportional Representation (PR) strives to produce a balance of political power that is proportionate to total votes for each party—i.e. a true expression of the 'will of the People'. PracticalPR (PPR) is the only voting system with a perfect score on this criterion!

But there's more to balanced representation than perfect overall proportionality by parties. Ideally there should also be balance by party within each region. And balance by gender, age, diversity and other demographic criteria are similarly important objectives.

Clearly some imbalances in election results are inevitable, as Citizens don't magically distribute themselves to produce political or demographic balance. Hence, it's a major improvement to electoral democracy to have the flexibility to remedy the imbalances in representation that naturally occur—without changing the political balance of power. And PPR is also the only electoral system with a perfect score on this criterion!

With PPR, it would be possible to add any reasonable number of 'At-large' or 'regional' seats to provide more balanced representation—without having any impact on its perfect proportionality. This is because, under PPR, the voting power of each party in the legislature depends only on the total number of votes it received—not on the number of Representatives it has.

Under PPR, voting in the legislature is not based on the single votes of each Representative—but rather on the number of Citizen's votes entrusted to them. The large reservoir of votes for all defeated candidates are retained by each party, and equitably reassigned among their Representatives (hence, adding regional seats only changes the reassignment of votes within a party—and not the total votes of any party).

Politically, the most serious imbalances are high levels of regional polarization and under-representation due to electoral distortion. With PPR, it's recommended that a legislature should objectively review the results after each election—to determine the appropriate number and allocation of additional seats for more balanced representation—according to a set of pre-established rules. Also, it's recommended that these seats should be filled by the top candidate of that party in the region, with consideration of demographic factors.

Analysis of the BC2017 election results shows:

- The three main parties each had about 300,000 votes for defeated candidates.
- The Greens were by far the most under-represented party—only 12.5% of their votes counted (i.e. for elected candidates) compared to about 60% for the Liberals and NDP.
- Highly polarized results due to geographic concentration of votes—the Government (NDP) was shutout in two regions, and the Official Opposition (Liberals) in one region.

The following table provides a summary of the BC2017 results (total votes and seats for each party) by region. It also proposes adding 10 seats for more Balanced Representation.

The rules used in developing these recommendations are:

- An 'At-large' seat should be added in a region where a top-three party fails to win a seat.
- The Government party should have first priority, if it doesn't have a seat in the region.
- The Official Opposition should have second priority, if it doesn't have a seat in the region.
- The third-party should have third priority—but only if it won more total votes in the region than the average votes per seat in the region.
- [n.b.: The Northern and Kootenays regions were combined (to even out the total votes).]

BC2017 Election Results by Region + proposed 'Regional' seats for Balance Representation

Region	Lib.votes	NDP.votes	G.votes	Tot.votes	Lib.seats	NDP.seats	G.seats	Votes/seat	Proposed Reg.seats
Northern + Kootenays	82,864	62,379	17,906	163,149	8	4	0	12,104	Green
Okanagan-Shuswap-Bnd	98,796	48,402	30,064	177,262	7	0	0	21,028	NDP
Thompson-Cariboo	48,942	27,846	16,506	93,294	5	0	0	15,358	NDP
Fraser Valley	105,358	73,827	31,991	211,176	7	2	0	19,909	Green
Surrey	79,469	88,706	20,632	188,807	3	6	0	18,686	Green
Richmond-Delta	53,822	44,102	13,543	111,467	5	1	0	16,321	Green
Vancouver's eastern suburbs	72,795	103,881	29,293	205,969	1	8	0	19,631	Green
Vancouver	87,470	134,241	34,357	256,068	3	8	0	20,156	Green
North Shore-Sunshine Coast	54,214	47,969	27,383	129,566	3	2	0	20,437	Green
Vancouver Island	65,583	79,510	45,733	190,826	1	5	1	27,261	
Greater Victoria	47,282	84,216	64,980	196,478	0	5	2	21,314	Liberal
Seats won:					43	41	3		
Proposed Regional seats					1	2	7		
TOTALS:	796,595	795,079	332,388	1,924,062	44	43	10		
Avg. Votes/seat	18,104	18,490	33,239						

The major benefits provided by these 10 regional seats:

- Both Government and Official Opposition would have representation from all regions.
- The Green party would become considerably more effective, with representation more commensurate to their vote-share—their average votes per seat would be 33,239 (now 110,796), much closer to the two major parties (about 18,000 each).
- Better demographic representation.

Notes:

- The BC legislature has added 30 seats in the last 34 years due to population growth.
- With PPR, there's no need to ever add seats or change riding boundaries—since every vote always counts equally—regardless of population changes or distribution (i.e. geography neutral)!
- A one-time redistricting is recommended—to make better use of seats—by freeing up some urban seats for more balanced representation (maybe also reduce some rural riding sizes).

{Refer to "[Announcing PracticalPR](#)" for more details.}