



Electoral Justice Now!

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

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EJN Newsletter #11: Why "Simpler PR is Better"!

1. What makes "Simpler PR" better—than what?
2. What makes the "Simpler PR is Better" Campaign better—than what?

Simpler PR is a winner—by design. Based on the power of principle (it makes each Citizen's vote count—as the basic unit of Democracy in the legislature), combined with the power of simplicity (it gives each party in the legislature exactly the number of votes received by all of their candidates—including those who were defeated). Only **Simpler PR** can automatically produce perfect proportionality!

By contrast, the major PR alternatives, 'Mixed Member Proportional' and 'Single Transferable Vote' (MMP and STV) are proven losers, based on their design defects (much larger voting districts, and MMP's 'party lists'), complexity (STV's convoluted voting procedures) and imperfect results—which become easy targets exploited by the NO campaign to defeat them in a referendum.

What truly makes **Simpler PR** a winner—by design—is that only **Simpler PR** has no such defects that become vulnerabilities to attack and defeat by a NO campaign. And which part of making every Citizen's vote count could opponents object to? Those who object would clearly expose themselves as not being on the side of voters and fair elections—but on the side of those parties that benefit from the present unfair electoral system and its distorted results (e.g. 'false majority' governments).

Simpler PR (based on a [submission to the BC Citizens' Assembly in 2004 by John R. Kennedy of Burnaby BC](#)) is the best and most viable electoral alternative because:

1. **Simpler PR is simpler—than any other form of PR!**
 - It's much simpler to do—hence easier to understand (for the 'open minded').
 - It requires no changes to the ridings.
 - It requires no changes to how people vote, or how Representatives are elected.
 - It retains the same accountability of each Representative to their constituents.
2. **Simpler PR is better—than any other voting system!**
 - **Simpler PR** is based on the simple principle of making each Citizen's vote count—equally—with every vote in the legislature! Hence it automatically produces perfect proportionality for all parties!
 - **Simpler PR** eliminates all the undemocratic **flaws of 'First-Past-The-Post'** (FPTP): 'wasted votes', 'strategic voting', 'vote-splitting', 'wrong winners' (e.g. NDP win in 1996 when the Liberals had more votes), 'blow-out' elections (e.g. Liberals in 2001 with 97% of seats and no Official Opposition even though 42% voted for opposition candidates). And **Simpler PR** achieves all of this with none of the defects, complexities and imperfections of other forms of PR.

- **Simpler PR** is geography neutral—meaning that it’s equally fair to all voters everywhere, rural or urban, even in ‘safe seats’. Hence, no party can benefit from changing riding boundaries.
 - **Simpler PR** is also population neutral—meaning there’s no need for ridings to have the same population (so rural ridings could be made smaller). Hence, there would never be a need to change ridings due to changing population.
3. **Simpler PR will be a winner—in contrast with MMP and STV (proven losers).**
- **Simpler PR will reframe the referendum focus onto a positive and winning campaign for progress, based on principle** (i.e. by making each vote count).
 - By contrast, **other PR alternatives such as MMP and STV are always forced into fighting defensive and losing campaigns—framed by the opponents of change**—with their FUD (Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt) campaign based on criticisms exploiting the vulnerabilities of the standard PR systems.
 - **This campaign will be even far worse, with blatant partisanship** by all political parties, as **opponents also denounce the political process** (the NDP-Green backroom deal and their ongoing backroom referendum plotting, the ‘Green tail wagging the NDP dog’) of what will be portrayed as a ‘rigged’ referendum.

Analysis:

Most advocates of electoral reform focus almost entirely on the democratic superiority of PR in comparison with the FPTP. Sadly, they fail to consider how the public will respond to the chosen form of PR—under the barrage of biased criticism raised by the NO campaign—countered by reassurances from the YES campaign. It should be realized that such partisan political bickering leaves most people confused and turned-off.

Unfortunately, **most advocates of PR seem oblivious to the simple but hard reality that most people never want to even think about voting systems**—and certainly don’t appreciate being called upon to make confusing choices between them. The general public just wants a voting system that’s fair to all voters and parties (which probably most people think we already have), and as simple as possible.

Many Canadians realize that our ‘First-Past-The-Post’ (FPTP) voting system is unfair to voters and parties—which is why it has been rejected by Australia, New Zealand and the entire non-English speaking world. All voters know this system forces many of us to vote for a party that we don’t really want (i.e. to ‘hold our nose’ and vote for the ‘lesser of evils’) as best defense against getting another party that we really don’t want as government. And the specific reason for such ‘strategic voting’ is that all votes for losing candidates (about half of all votes) are effectively thrown away by FPTP.

Many Citizens recognize this as a serious defect of FPTP, and understand that this is what Proportional Representation (PR) is designed to fix. Hence, **the goal of PR is to make every vote count**. But until now there has been no PR system that can truly make every vote count. And standard forms of PR come with distressing complexity and imperfections—which is why there are so many complicated PR alternatives.

Electoral reform is such a partisan issue because FPTP is so unfair. FPTP distortions always give the winners a major unearned advantage—with an equal and undeserved disadvantage to losers. Parties that are the usual winners under FPTP never want to lose that winner’s bonus (routinely producing ‘false-majority’ governments with far less than 50% vote-share), whereas FPTP’s usual victims always want a system that’s fair. That’s why Liberals fiercely oppose PR, while the NDP and Greens have called for PR. (This time it’s also political payback for the Greens, who demanded the PR referendum in their agreement to support the NDP.)

Electoral Justice Now (EJN) is a new organization, advocating for a new and simpler form of PR—called ‘**Simpler-PR**’! EJN believes that it can play a positive role in moving BC and Canada forward with its simpler PR solution and the positive focus of its campaign—giving us a much better chance to win the referendum!

Electoral Justice Now raises two important Questions of Principle:

1. *Whose vote should be the **fundamental unit of Democracy**: the **Citizen’s vote** —or—the **Representative’s vote**?*
2. *Whose votes should be counted in the legislature: **every Representative’s single vote**—or—**every single Citizen’s vote**?*

Electoral Justice Now is proud to announce its “Simpler PR is Better” campaign!

It’s based on the premise that:

‘**No Citizen should ever need to know anything about any voting system**—but they should be assured that their voting system truly ‘**makes each vote count—equally**’!

Our proposed ‘**Simpler is Better**’ Referendum question would call on the Government to:

“**Make each vote count** equally—with every vote in the legislature
—**without changing anything else**”.

While there’s no need for Citizens to understand how ‘**Simpler-PR**’ can be accomplished, many people would probably like to know. It’s amazingly simple—here’s how:

- **Make the Citizen’s vote** (not the Representative’s vote) the **basic unit of voting in the legislature** (i.e. voting power in the legislature comes directly from the Citizen’s votes).
- The total number of votes received by each party (including votes for defeated candidates) would be equally distributed amongst their Representatives.
- In the legislature, each Representative’s vote would automatically be converted by computer into their assigned number of Citizen’s votes.
- **Perfect proportionality** is automatic—based directly on the total votes for each party.
- **No need to change the ridings or voting procedures.**
Absolutely fair to all voters (rural and urban), as well as all parties and incumbents.

With Citizen approval, the “***Simpler PR is Better***” campaign would send a clear message to the Government: ‘**Just do it**’ — ‘**Just make every vote count—equally**’!

And just do it the simpler, better and obvious way—**by assigning each Citizen’s vote to an elected Representative of their chosen party**—without changing the ridings, or how people vote, or accountability of local representatives!

This isn’t the track the Government is now on. So, if we want to save ourselves from all the nasty fighting about political motives and problems with other forms of PR, ‘*We the People*’ need to rise up and take control—by rallying around the “***Simpler PR is Better***” campaign!

Proposed outline of EJN’s “***Simpler PR is Better***” campaign!

1. EJN will support any form of PR that is chosen under the referendum process.
2. EJN will advocate for ***Simpler PR*** as the simplest, truest, and easiest to implement form of PR—which should therefore have the best chance to win the referendum.
3. EJN will strongly campaign against FPTP—exposing its many defects and adverse consequences.
4. EJN will campaign to explain the concept and significant advantages of ***Simpler PR***.
5. EJN will not campaign to explain or rationalize any other form of PR.
6. EJN will call for a referendum with two questions:
 - (1) a binary YES/NO vote to adopt PR or retain FPTP;
 - (2) a preferential vote (as per Instant Runoff Voting) to rank various PR alternatives.
7. EJN will formally submit ***Simpler PR*** for consideration by the BC Government, calling for it to be included on the PR referendum ballot.
8. EJN will campaign to have ***Simpler PR*** included on the PR referendum ballot—otherwise will campaign for voters to write-in ***Simpler PR*** on the ballot.
9. EJN will campaign for supporters of PR to rank ***Simpler PR*** first—and for those who prefer any other form of PR to rank ***Simpler PR*** second.
10. EJN will continue trying to work with other PR advocacy groups to coordinate our campaigns—but is committed to challenging and competing with them if necessary.
11. EJN is committed to winning the referendum for PR—and calls upon other PR advocacy groups to match and cooperate in this commitment.
12. EJN will next turn to calling on the federal government to fulfill its promise by implementing ***Simpler PR*** for Canada’s 2019 election—as this could simply be done through an act of Parliament—as it involves no changes to ridings or the electoral process!