



©2017 ElectoralJusticeNow.ca

# Electoral Justice Now!

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

## Announcing 'AccountablePR'!

**AccountablePR** (APR) is a breakthrough in the design and implementation of PR (Proportional Representation). APR is a *hybrid* solution based on a very simple idea: *why not combine the best of both PR and FPTP* (our existing 'First Past The Post' voting system), to escape the worst defects of both FPTP and PR by themselves! **AccountablePR** is the only way to achieve perfect proportionality with full accountability, and it's by far the simplest and best way to fix the many problems of FPTP.

- ❖ **For Voters, AccountablePR requires NO changes to familiar FPTP electoral processes:**
  - No need to change ridings (ever!).
  - No need to have enlarged electoral districts or additional Representatives.
  - No changes to the way Citizens vote and Representatives are elected.
  - No changes to the accountability and responsibilities of Representatives to Citizens.
  - No costs or complexities in switching from FPTP to **AccountablePR**.
  - No risks with **AccountablePR**—as switching back to FPTP would be just as easy and cost-free.

**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 all voting within the Legislature: **each Representative's single vote**—or—**each Citizen's vote**?*

- ❖ **The only change with AccountablePR is whose votes are counted in the Legislature:**
  - FPTP counts only the single votes of each Representative.
  - **AccountablePR** counts the votes of all Citizens who voted for a party that won a seat!
    - As a basic principle, the fundamental unit of Democracy should be the Citizen's vote!
    - With APR, the number of votes for each party in the Legislature equals their total votes (including votes for defeated candidates—which don't count under FPTP); this automatically ensures perfect proportionality!
    - Each Representative is assigned an equitable share of their party's total votes.
    - Each Representative's single vote cast in the Legislature is automatically converted by computer into their assigned number of Citizen's votes.

- ❖ **AccountablePR—perfect proportionality—and perfectly fair to all voters and parties:**
  - No possibility of any partisan or regional advantages—and no risk of any rural-urban bias (i.e. since ridings are unchanged—and every vote always counts equally).

Given that the goal of PR is for each party to have voting power in the Legislature that's as nearly proportional as possible to their share of total votes, by far the most logical and accurate way is to directly **use the Citizen's votes for voting in the Legislature**—as the natural unit of Democratic voting power—with **each party voting with the total number of Citizen's votes they received!**

**AccountablePR** is clearly superior (accountability, proportionality and practicality) to other PR forms—Mixed-Member Proportional, Single Transferable Vote and derivatives—that typically involve:

- Larger ridings (MMP) or much larger electoral districts (STV); unfair to incumbents.
- Changes to voting procedures that are more complicated (MMP) or very complex (STV).
- Reduced accountability to voters and increased party control (MMP party lists).
- Reduced standards for election (MMP ‘threshold’ typically 5%; STV ‘quota’ typically 20%).
- Increased costs—especially if additional members are required (MMP).
- Imperfect results (i.e. MMP is only approximately proportional, STV even less).
- But the saddest part of these flawed PR alternatives is their almost certain referendum defeat (due to their defects and complexity) by a NO campaign that has a proven playbook against both MMP and STV— deviously using negative campaigning to exploit their vulnerabilities, and by raising doubts with dubious criticisms and allegations of partisan or regional bias.

**AccountablePR** avoids all of these problems; without such defects or complications, and perfectly fair to all, **AccountablePR has no such vulnerability to referendum defeat by a NO campaign.** After all, which part of ‘*doing Democracy right*’—by directly using the Citizen’s votes in the Legislature—could any party reasonably oppose? Would anyone publicly stand against the ‘*Will of the People*’—against giving the Citizen’s vote the full power that it really ought to have?

But the greatest gift of AccountablePR is that it makes elections truly honest. Voters, assured that their vote will count for their chosen party (if it wins at least one seat), are liberated from the dishonest practice of ‘*strategic voting*’ (i.e. ‘*holding their nose*’ and voting for a party they see as the ‘*lesser of evils*’, trying to block a ‘*more evil*’ party). APR is equally honest to all parties—as each will have parliamentary voting power precisely equal to their total number of Citizen’s votes.

In BC’s 2017 election, 2.5% of the vote went to independent candidates and 15 small parties—with none of them winning a seat. Should **AccountablePR** be modified to provide some representation for those presently unrepresented? In principle YES—but not at this time. This would provide a secondary improvement of the electoral system, and should be considered at some point. But it would raise controversial issues and complications—providing ‘rocket fuel’ for a NO campaign to burn APR. We recommend implementing **AccountablePR** now—fixing all major flaws of FPTP (e.g. ‘*wasted votes*’, ‘*strategic voting*’, ‘*vote splitting*’ between parties, ‘*safe seats*’, *distortions*, ‘*wrong*’ winners, ‘*false majority*’ governments)—and defer consideration of further refinements.

**N.B.: AccountablePR’s major advantages over the other PR systems and FPTP include:**

- **AccountablePR** is more accountable than FPTP because: (1) voters are liberated from ‘*strategic voting*’, giving them more power to hold Representatives accountable; and (2) discouraged voters in ‘*safe seats*’ finally have the opportunity to make their votes count!
- **AccountablePR** is more accountable than FPTP since no party can benefit (or suffer) from ‘*strategic voting*’—as every vote counts equally—making parties more accountable!
- **AccountablePR** is more accountable than any other form of PR because all Representatives are directly elected by voters (no easy seats via MMP’s ‘*party lists*’ or STV’s low-percent *quotas*).
- **AccountablePR** is more accountable than most forms of PR because it does not make it easier for ‘*fringe parties*’ to enter the legislature (i.e. they must actually win a seat under FPTP).
- **AccountablePR** can quite simply be made as stable as FPTP—and more stable than any other form of PR—by adopting the ‘*double majority*’ rule for ‘*confidence votes*’ (i.e. requiring a majority of both the *Citizens*’ proxy votes as well as the *Representatives*’ individual votes).

*N.B.: Electoral Justice Now acknowledges that our vision of AccountablePR was inspired by [submissions to the BC Citizens’ Assembly in 2004 by Mr. John Kennedy](#) of Burnaby BC. We believe that AccountablePR would clearly be the best choice—with the best chance to become the BC2018 PR Referendum winner! However, we’ve also developed a comprehensive and flexible set of electoral reform options called ‘[AccountablePR+](#)’ which merit consideration as possible future refinements.*