



FIX OUR DEMOCRACY through the POWER OF OUR VOTES!

by Jeff & Diana Jewell

Common wisdom tells us: *'If it ain't broke, don't fix it'.*

But this implies: *'If we see that something is broken, we should do whatever we can to fix it'.*

SUMMARY:

- ❖ [Fix Our Democracy](#) (i.e. democracy allegedly belongs to the people—not to the politicians or parties) is a grass-roots non-partisan initiative—proposed to all Canadian voters, candidates and parties—by citizens pledged to [Fix Our Democracy](#)! By strategically using the collective power of our votes, our goal is to elect a majority of MPs who've pledged to enact the set of democratic reforms required to [Fix Our Democracy](#), by changing the balance of power to make it truly democratic—with more power to voters and their elected representatives, and less power to the parties and leaders (especially the PM).
- ❖ [Citizen's Vote Empowerment](#) is the remedy that fixes the many major problems of our voting system—with no need to replace it! It also produces the power-balance that enables us to [Fix Our Democracy](#).
- ❖ This document outlines how we can [Fix Our Democracy](#) through [Citizen's Vote Empowerment](#)!

Most people see that our democracy doesn't really work for them—and changing parties or leaders never makes much difference. That's because the political players aren't the main problem—so changing players isn't the answer. The real problem is with our democratic system itself—and it's all about power—it gives too much power to parties and the PM, and too little power to voters and their elected representatives. This top-down concentration of power is anti-democratic—and must be rectified to [Fix Our Democracy](#).

Fortunately, **the power of our vote—the true source of all democratic power**—also gives us the power to not give our vote to any candidate or party that's unwilling to publicly pledge to [Fix Our Democracy](#).

Calling on all voters, candidates and parties to make their pledge to [Fix Our Democracy](#)!

❖ Voter's pledge:

- I hereby pledge to give my vote only to a candidate who has publicly pledged to work across party lines to enact the democratic reforms that are essential to [Fix Our Democracy](#).
- If none of the candidates in my riding have pledged to [Fix Our Democracy](#), I will vote by marking my ballot as "NONE OF THE ABOVE".

❖ Candidate's pledge:

- I hereby pledge that, if I'm elected, I'll represent the interests of my constituents first (above those of my party), and I'll work across party lines to fulfill my pledge to [Fix Our Democracy](#).

❖ Party Leader's pledge:

- I hereby pledge myself and my party to [Fix Our Democracy](#).
- If I become PM, I will work across party lines to [Fix Our Democracy](#) as our top priority.
- With a minority government, we would only support those pledged to [Fix Our Democracy](#).

We the people can [Fix Our Democracy](#) by electing a majority of MPs (Members of Parliament) who have pledged to work across party lines to enact the necessary democratic reforms in three key areas:

1. **[Citizen's Vote Empowerment](#)**, recognizes **the citizen's vote as the natural source and rightful unit of democratic power**, which should therefor become **the new unit of voting by MPs in Parliament**—with each party having exactly the number of citizens' votes won by all of their candidates [as explained in Appendix 1]. This ensures that the parliamentary balance of power directly corresponds to the expressed '*will of the people*', as determined by the totality of their votes—with all votes counting equally, including those for defeated candidates (for parties with at least one seat)!
2. **[MP Empowerment](#)**, by establishing the independence of all MPs to truly fulfill their primary duty—to faithfully represent their constituents by serving their interests before party interests—with an obligation to expose any political coercion by party leadership (with 'whistleblowers' protection).
 - MP Empowerment is essential if we are to [Fix Our Democracy](#). MPs have long been bullied and controlled by party leaders, party whips and unelected political backroom operators. Sadly, such systemic abuse has long been silently endured by most MPs, without public awareness. It's the political equivalent of spousal abuse, and is yet another dimension of abusive practices so often inflicted by those with power over those they control, as recently exposed in so many prominent institutions. Parliament must stand up and confront such disgraceful practices (perhaps a '#We too' movement for elected representatives)—by proclaiming their political independence, and demanding an end to such domination by party leadership.
 - The need for parliamentary reform, and recommended solutions, have been well documented, as in the ***MP exit interview reports by Samara Canada*** and their book ***Tragedy In The Commons: Former MPs speak out about Canada's failing democracy*** by Loat and MacMillan; and also the book ***TEARDOWN: Rebuilding Democracy from the Ground Up*** by Dave Meslin.
 - The party-whip position ought to be abolished, and a new Parliamentary Reform Act should be adopted, to protect MPs against political attempts to intimidate or interfere with their democratic duty—to serve their constituents and their conscience above any dictates by party leadership.
 - MP Empowerment should also facilitate greater collaboration and less partisanship—a veritable cultural revolution—as MPs work together across party lines to make a new and better Parliament!
3. **[Reduced powers of parties and leadership to prevent dictatorial control](#)**, and enhance democratic accountability, by establishing a power structure based on democratic principles, with the leadership accountable to their caucus, and representatives accountable to voters.

In particular by reducing the concentration of power in the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's Office (PM/PMO), and by ensuring the primacy of Parliament over the PM, PMO and Cabinet.

 - [Citizen's Vote Empowerment](#), by preventing false-majority governments, will substantially reduce the risk of quasi-dictatorial rule by a PM/PMO, operating secretly behind closed doors (since a minority government would require support from other MPs not controlled by PM). This should thereby reduce their susceptibility to pressure from corporate lobbyists, donors etc.
 - MP Empowerment measures would also restrain quasi-dictatorial rule by a PM/PMO.
 - With [Citizen's Vote Empowerment](#) and MP Empowerment, all parties should be motivated to work together with much less partisanship and much more cooperation across party lines.

Citizen's Vote Empowerment is achieved by making the citizen's vote the new unit of voting by MPs in Parliament, thus ensuring that the voting power of each party is exactly equal to their total number of citizen's votes won by all of their candidates (including those defeated).

- ❖ As such, **Citizen's Vote Empowerment** is scrupulously fair to all voters, all candidates (including Independents and incumbents) and all parties.
- ❖ **Citizen's Vote Empowerment** is the simplest and best way to fix all major problems caused by our First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) voting system, specifically including:
 - **FPTP's wasted-vote problem**, where all votes for defeated candidates (about one-half of all votes) count for nothing;
 - **FPTP's strategic-voting problem**, whereby many voters (about one-third), not wanting their vote to be wasted, are coerced into 'holding their nose' and voting against their will for a 'lesser of evils' in an attempt to block some other party they deeply detest;
 - **FPTP's vote-splitting problem**, where similar parties competing for similar voter segments usually ensure their mutual defeat, as FPTP deprives all of their supporters of any fair representation;
 - **FPTP's spoiler problem**, where minor parties have little or no chance of winning—but might draw sufficient votes from other parties to indirectly determine the winner;
 - **FPTP's safe-seat problem**, where only one party has any realistic chance of winning—meaning that no voter in such a riding (about two-thirds) has any good reason to vote;
 - **FPTP's false-majority problem**, where a party can win a majority government with fewer than 50% vote-share (typically 40% or less); this electoral distortion by FPTP usually produces the excessive concentration of power that underlies quasi-dictatorial rule by a PM/PMO;
 - **FPTP's wrong-winner problem**, where a party can win an election and form government (sometimes with a false-majority) with fewer votes than a losing party.
- ❖ FPTP is deeply flawed, antidemocratic and fundamentally dishonest. FPTP always cheats most voters, most candidates and most parties. But no government ever wants to change FPTP, because its distortions always work to the winners' advantage (and losers' disadvantage).
- ❖ Fortunately, FPTP's flaws can be removed by **Citizen's Vote Empowerment**—an amazingly simple fix—without the costs, complications, and issues of other electoral reform alternatives.
 - no changes required to ridings or how people vote;
 - no changes in how MPs are elected, or their relationship/accountability to constituents;
 - voting changes only in Parliament—where computers convert MP votes into citizens' votes.
 - democratic legitimacy assured by a majority of citizens' votes (no need for any referendum)
- ❖ **Citizen's Vote Empowerment** ensures that all laws passed by Parliament automatically have true democratic legitimacy—supported by MPs representing a majority of citizens' votes. By contrast, under FPTP with its usual false-majority governments, many if not most of our laws have been passed by governments imposing their will of a minority over the majority of citizens—violating the most fundamental principle of democratic government—majority-rule.

APPENDIX 1: The basics of **Citizen's Vote Empowerment**

Citizen's Vote Empowerment (CVE) is a simple voting reform that works with our "First Past The Post" (FPTP) voting system to fix its many serious problems, by empowering the citizen's vote, to make it count where it really matters—in Parliament!

Citizen's Vote Empowerment transforms FPTP into an honest voting system that's truly fair to all voters, all candidates (including incumbents and independents), and all parties— with no need to change ridings or voting procedures. Hence no need for a lengthy study to determine which electoral reform alternative should be chosen, and no need for a confusing referendum with a highly partisan debate about complicated technicalities of different voting systems.

The most important result of a general election is to decide which party forms government, and which leader becomes PM. In a true democracy, citizens ought to have the right to make that decision themselves, by a majority of their votes. Alas, under Canada's colonial version of the British Westminster system of so-called parliamentary democracy, Canadian citizens have always been deprived of their fundamental democratic right to choose their government, by a majority of their votes. Instead, it's Parliament that holds the power to make this crucial decision—with the problem being that the body of MPs elected to Parliament under FPTP is always a distortion of the 'will of the people' (as expressed through the totality of their votes).

It's precisely this distortion of FPTP that **Citizen's Vote Empowerment** corrects—by empowering the citizen's vote to become the true source and rightful unit of democratic voting power in Parliament—so that the total votes cast by MPs is the exact number of citizens' votes for each party.

How **Citizen's Vote Empowerment** can be implemented by Canada's new Parliament:

- ❖ Parliament enacts appropriate legislation to adopt the citizen's vote (rather than MP's seats) as the official unit of Parliamentary voting power.
- ❖ Each MP retains all votes they personally won.
- ❖ Each party retains all votes won by their defeated candidates—and equitably reallocates these votes among their caucus of elected MPs.
- ❖ Each party leader retains any remaining votes that aren't reallocated to their MPs; hence the total votes in Parliament for each party is exactly equal to the total votes won by all of their candidates.
- ❖ In Parliament, each MP's single vote is automatically converted by computer into the total number of citizens' votes assigned to them (i.e. the votes they personally won plus their allocation of votes won by their party's defeated candidates).

[Please see **APPENDIX 3** for possible future enhancements to **Citizen's Vote Empowerment**]

APPENDIX 2: [Fix Our Democracy](#) & CAMPAIGN 2019

Most Canadians can see that our political system, a so-called democracy, is not really working for the people—and switching parties or leaders never makes much difference. That's because the problem is with the system itself—how political power is distorted by our colonial-era voting system, then abused by a Prime Minister who has total power to control powerless MPs and an impotent Parliament—typically with the government having less than 40% vote-share (i.e. about 25% of eligible voters).

Hence, it's our contention that our system of democracy is broken. And it's up to us, *'We the People'*, to fix it ourselves—since the political powerholders and backroom powerbrokers will always find ways to avoid fixing a system that is the very basis of their excessive and undemocratic power and control. It's all about power—and this system gives too much power to the parties and their leaders—especially the PM, and too little power to voters and their elected representatives.

Fortunately, the power of our vote, the true source of democratic power, gives us the power to withhold our vote from candidates or parties that are unwilling to [Fix Our Democracy](#).

CAMPAIGN 2019:

- ❖ A non-partisan citizens' initiative committed to [Fix Our Democracy](#), through a grassroots campaign to channel the collective power of our votes to achieve true democratic reform!
- ❖ The campaign should be self-driven by the people, through word of mouth, social media, and reporting by the print and broadcast media; fundraising for commercial advertising should hopefully not be necessary.
- ❖ All voters, all candidates and all parties are called upon to pledge to work together to [Fix Our Democracy](#).
- ❖ A special call will be made to Canada's youth and younger voters as the future inheritors of our democracy, whose idealism and desire for a better life in a better world should inspire participation to [Fix Our Democracy](#)! As a particular goal, it's recommended that eligibility to vote in future Canadian elections should be 16 years of age, and schools should strengthen student appreciation of the importance of democracy and citizen participation as a social/political value.
- ❖ It's anticipated that the [Fix Our Democracy](#) initiative should be enthusiastically embraced and promoted in the 2019 campaign by most smaller parties, Independent candidates and their supporters.
- ❖ The 2019 election is likely to be a nasty contest with strongly negative campaigns by the two major parties, with a strong likelihood of a minority government. All parties are vulnerable to FPTP's "vote-splitting" problem—which [Citizen's Vote Empowerment](#) would fix—which should make our campaign to [Fix Our Democracy](#) much more relevant to all parties and voters.
- ❖ The potential of the [Fix Our Democracy](#) campaign to succeed depends on raising sufficient levels of awareness and commitment of the voting public. Participation should be stimulated by democratic reform activists, and hopefully also by the campaigns of Independent candidates and the smaller parties, motivating others to pledge. (Major parties should see that resisting progress is not a winning long-term strategy, and eventually commit to [Fix Our Democracy](#)!)

- ❖ Any party unwilling to pledge to [Fix Our Democracy](#) would be publicly exposing themselves as being antidemocratic and unworthy of our vote—thereby losing credibility and potentially their viability as a political party.
- ❖ FPTP naturally degenerates into a ‘two-party’ system, so the major parties come in pairs. If one of them would see that their best future would be to work with the people to [Fix Our Democracy](#), this would give them a competitive advantage—putting greater pressure on the other major party to also work with us to [Fix Our Democracy](#). However, if the major parties collude in refusing to [Fix Our Democracy](#) (as they have often done to defeat electoral reform), the people's victory over them would require a sufficient number of voters to switch their vote to a party or Independent candidate that has pledged to [Fix Our Democracy](#).
- ❖ PM Trudeau could become the poster boy for raising public awareness of Canada’s need to [Fix Our Democracy](#). In particular, the problem of excessive concentration of power in the PM/PMO, and his quasi-dictatorial rule, has been repeatedly exposed by his unilateral betrayal of his solemn promise to deliver electoral reform, and his shameless/shameful lack of integrity in his expulsion of two of his most capable and respected cabinet ministers because they called him out for his lack of integrity. These issues are certain to get great attention in the Canada's 2019 election, which should generate greater popular demand to [Fix Our Democracy](#)!
- ❖ Can the [Fix Our Democracy](#) campaign succeed? YES!!! While it's unknown how many voters would need to pledge to [Fix Our Democracy](#) to obtain major party support, it's quite clear that voters possess the power to make a decisive difference in many ridings, and hence our potential to have major impact in this election.
- ❖ In addition to our direct appeal to all voters, all candidates and all parties, the [Fix Our Democracy](#) campaign should also appeal to all organizations committed to progressive social and political activism. We all need to pull together on this to change how politics works in Canada, and to bring our democracy into the 21st Century!
- ❖ However, even if the [Fix Our Democracy](#) campaign might not fully achieve its goals in this election, our efforts should at least succeed in raising public awareness and building the foundation for future efforts that must ultimately enable us to [Fix Our Democracy](#)!

Analysis:

It's our view that Canada's democracy is dishonest and needs to be fixed. Justin Trudeau recognized this when he so solemnly promised that *"2015 will be the last federal election conducted under the first-past-the-post (FPTP) voting system"*. That was when FPTP distortions in the 2011 election had cheated the Liberals out of 24 seats (based on vote-shares).

But in the 2015 election, FPTP distortions gave the Liberals an overwhelming majority with 50 seats more than their vote-share (only 39.5%). After wasting considerable time and money studying electoral reform alternatives (an all-party committee held meetings across Canada, with 90% of the experts recommending some form of proportional representation), PM Trudeau unilaterally decided to break his vow to replace FPTP.

Hence Canada remains stuck with FPTP and its many serious flaws. So it's up to us, as Canadian voters, to use our limited but invaluable capacity of democratic expression in the upcoming election, to elect a body of representatives who have publicly pledged to [Fix Our Democracy!](#)

Trudeau's betrayal on electoral reform, along with his various ethics violations and scandals (e.g. his free vacation to a private island owned by a lobbyist/friend who receives millions in government grants; and the SNC-Lavalin scandal with his termination of a Minister of Justice who refused to allow political pressure to compromise her integrity and the rule of law) are among the many examples that clearly show how excessive power concentrated in a PM so often leads to the abuse of power by a PM and the political backroom operators of the PMO.

As Lord Acton famously stated: *"Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."*

Both Trudeau's Liberal government, and the previous regime under Harper's Conservatives, were effectively run as quasi-dictatorships by the PM/PMO—with 100% of the power from less than 40% vote-share—thanks to FPTP's distortions of the 'will of the people'. Indeed it's the systemic problem of excessive concentration of power in the PM/PMO that leads to such arrogant and domineering regimes.

Most Canadians know that our so-called democracy is not really working for them. Abraham Lincoln defined democracy as *'government of the people, by the people and for the people'*.

Instead, we find ourselves trapped in a fraudulent system with a democratic façade, which always produces, *'government over the people, by political powerbrokers, for their wealthy patrons, corporate sponsors and themselves'*.

This sad outcome is only too predictable—regardless how people vote and which party wins. Leaders may be replaced, and the major parties may swap places. But the game of power and politics remains the same—Big Money always wins, and the People always lose.

The major problems with our democracy arise from design flaws in our colonial-era Westminster parliamentary system—specifically the electoral distortions caused by the FPTP voting system, and the undemocratic concentration of power in the PM/PMO. The adverse consequences are compounded when the temporary holders of these positions of government power are predictably played by the lobbyists—the influence-peddler hirelings who serve the interests of private wealth and corporate power, by subverting the democratic interests of the people.

Democracy will always be an unfinished project—in need of continual improvement—in the endless pursuit of our rights as citizens. Democracy has never been gifted to the people by those who've ruled over them. Democracy evolved slowly—through its long history of struggle and resistance. It's time now for us to take the next step in our democratic advancement—with the transfer of more power to the people—to make leaders more accountable and to better serve the people, and to meet the increasing needs and expectations of citizens in the 21st century!

Context:

In Canada and indeed all nations, this is a time of great change, immense challenges, political malaise and public discontent.

Over recent decades, Democracy has been failing to serve most people well, as reflected in the following facts:

- Inequality is rising—both within and between nations.
- Despite unprecedented wealth generation, there has been significant decline of the middle-classes of the 'first world', as reflected in their size, prosperity and financial security.
- Debt has risen sharply for all levels of government—as well as many households and students.
- Much of the debt burden is being dumped on the younger generations—which are also facing unprecedented problems of reduced employment opportunities, reduced incomes and financial insecurity, along with substantially increased housing costs.
- Loss of jobs to globalization and automation.
- Loss of tax revenues to tax-havens, policies of tax reduction, and subsidies to corporations.
- Failure to seriously address the challenges of climate change etc.

Citizens have been losing faith in governments, parties and politicians—even in democracy itself, as the system seems to be increasingly untrustworthy and incapable of solving the major problems of our times, as reflected in the following:

- Environmentalism, populism and nationalism are on the rise, as frustrated citizens are rejecting the status quo.
- Climate change and immigration are issues of increasing political concern and consequences.
- Many governments have been defeated, as frustrated/fed-up voters turn to different parties and new leaders.

Further suggestions to [Fix Our Democracy](#)

Democracy will always be an unfinished project—in need of continual improvement—in the endless pursuit of our rights as citizens. Democracy has never been gifted to the people by those who've ruled over them. Democracy evolved slowly—through our long history of struggle and resistance.

[Fix Our Democracy](#), as presented, is proposed as the next step—but certainly not the last step—in an ongoing process of democratic advancement. It's based on a viable plan that would transfer more power to the people, and transform Parliament (from a dysfunctional body of MPs bullied into serving as rubber-stamps and bobble-heads nodding whenever their leader recites the talking points prepared by party spin-doctors). It would also make leaders more accountable and more focused on serving the people—perhaps sometimes even putting the people's interests above those of wealthy donors and corporate lobbyists. Further, it will elevate the quality of our democracy and the effectiveness of our government, to meet the increasing needs and expectations of citizens in the 21st century!

Most likely other good ideas will emerge as the [Fix Our Democracy](#) campaign unfolds—which we greatly encourage. A few further suggestions:

- ❖ A **Citizens' Assembly** is recommended (perhaps using the BC model) to consider further steps in democratic advancement:
 - It's important that such work should not be left to politicians (and not controlled by governments), due to inherent conflicts of interest.
 - It's important that such work should be undertaken by a non-partisan group, with the time and resources to determine the best solutions.
 - It's recommended to avoid referendums—because the issues involved are quite complex, and the vast majority of citizens will never have the time or interest to acquire a sufficient understanding to cast informed votes.
 - While [Citizen's Vote Empowerment](#) works with FPTP to effectively resolve its wasted-vote problem, which is the underlying cause of the strategic-voting problem, as long as votes are cast under FPTP some degree of strategic-voting will persist. Hence, consideration should be given to the potential benefits of replacing FPTP with a voting system that eliminates strategic-voting (e.g. Alternative Vote, Approval Voting), while retaining [Citizen's Vote Empowerment](#) as the basis of voting in Parliament (for its many other benefits).
 - The future of the Senate should be reviewed; it should either be abolished or radically reformed.
 - The digital age is here, and democracy must go digital, sooner or later (the sooner the better). Millennials will soon be in charge, and our 'horse and buggy' era electoral system has to go. [See **Appendix 4: Digital Age Democracy with [Citizen's Vote Empowerment](#)**]

APPENDIX 3: Potential enhancements to **Citizen's Vote Empowerment**

Citizen's Vote Empowerment can easily be adapted to include new features, such as:

- **Citizen's Vote Empowerment**, as proposed, works with FPTP to fix its many serious problems by not wasting any votes for parties that elect at least one MP. Hence it avoids proliferation of small parties, which is an issue with most forms of proportional representation. However, future consideration should be given to providing some representation for small parties that failed to win a seat but achieved a specified threshold—e.g. 5% vote-share.
- Another possible enhancement might be the creation of a small number of *non-partisan* seats, perhaps to be filled by ombudspersons without political affiliation (maybe a distinguished citizen or student intern), to provide some parliamentary representation for all citizens' votes that would otherwise be wasted.
- All MPs could be assigned equal voting power, to preserve the spirit of equality among MPs, by adjusting the number of votes reallocated to each MP, with the remainder retained by the leaders.
- Gender balance in parliamentary voting power could be facilitated by adjusting the number of votes reallocated to each MP (i.e. regardless the numbers of male and female MPs, it would be possible for each party to allocate half of their total votes among their MPs of each gender).
- FPTP's 'regional polarization' problem often results in a major party having little or no representation in a region, despite having significant vote-share there. With **Citizen's Vote Empowerment**, the problems of regional imbalances and under-representation of smaller parties could easily be reduced by creating a small number of regional seats (e.g. 10%), which might be filled by the leading defeated candidate from the most under-represented party in each region (i.e. no need for another election). As their voting power would come from that party's retained votes for defeated candidates, such regional seats could be flexibly created if/as needed, perhaps decided after an election—with no impact on the parliamentary voting power of any party.
- FPTP's 'Speaker appointment' problem can arise in a close election where no party has a workable majority. With **Citizen's Vote Empowerment**, the appointed Speaker would keep only one vote—with the remainder retained by the party and reallocated as appropriate. Also, because voting in Parliament would be based on the citizens' votes, there would be virtually no risk of a tie vote.
- If an MP is unavoidably absent, their votes could be temporarily reallocated (easily done by computer) within the party (avoiding the need for "vote pairing") so that those voters would not be temporarily disenfranchised.
- To maintain the same level of government stability as FPTP, and to avoid the "tale wags the dog" problem of a small party holding power over a minority government, votes of non-confidence should require a 'double majority' (i.e. a majority of both citizens' votes and MP's seats).
- **Citizen's Vote Empowerment** enables much more flexible democracy in the digital age. For example, the election process could be reinvented—general elections might be replaced by continual series of byelections, and voters could be invited to vote periodically (perhaps annually, on their birthdays). This would facilitate much greater accountability of the parties, leaders and MPs, which would make them much more motivated to fulfill their promises and truly serve the public interest.

APPENDIX 4: Digital Age Democracy with **Citizen's Vote Empowerment**

Beyond automatically providing perfect proportionality (with none of the complexities, costs and issues of the various proportional representation alternatives), **Citizen's Vote Empowerment** also enables unprecedented potential and flexibility to evolve—and to elevate our democracy into the digital age!

Citizen's Vote Empowerment enables the concept of elections to be reimagined, to take advantage of the potential of online voting that would serve citizens much better and greatly improve the performance and accountability of politicians and governments.

With the citizen's vote as the operative unit of democracy in Parliament, and with the citizens' votes being cast as proxy votes by MPs, this breaks the rigid limitation of each MP having only one vote (nominally their own). With the voting power of each party determined by their total number of citizens' votes, rather than their number of MPs, this would enable an ongoing recalibration of the parliamentary balance of power, to reflect changing public satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the parties/government—without changing the MPs! This would provide an enormous improvement in accountability—with an enormous motivation for the politicians/government to fulfill their promises and avoid scandals!

Hence, with a digital age voting system, it would be possible for citizens to be empowered through secure online voting procedures to vote more frequently, as in byelections. Indeed, in the true sense of democracy, the voting power of each party should correspond to their actual level of popular support on an ongoing basis—as a timely reflection of public satisfaction/dissatisfaction) with their actual performance—rather than remaining pegged at the level of trust voters had at the last election.

Elections should be reconceptualized for the digital age. Consideration should be given to replacing our traditional practice of general elections (which have degenerated into futile exercises in hollow democracy—bad political theatre and a great waste of time and money on confrontational campaigns serving up spin-doctored speeches and phony promises that may never be fulfilled). Also, even our paper based general elections have become fat targets for hacking by cyber warfare experts of one's enemies (external or internal).

Instead, we could have a perpetual cycle of regularly scheduled byelections (e.g. 7 per month, with MPs each serving non-congruent 4-year terms), and convenient online voting, noting that such byelections would greatly reduce the risks of hacking, and could be effectively audited to ensure integrity.

With the voting public empowered to express their changing levels of satisfaction with the parties and their representative, accountability would be vastly improved—as the government and individual MPs would be much more motivated to fulfill their promises and truly serve the people! Also, governments would be much less inclined to precipitate scandals by doing unethical favours for corporate donors.

Citizen's Vote Empowerment was first proposed for consideration by the government of British Columbia, prior to BC's 2018 Referendum on Proportional Representation.

<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/271/2018/02/Citizens-Vote-Empowerment.pdf>

[Q&A, Citizen's Vote Empowerment](#), further analysis of PR and CVE.

We acknowledge that **Citizen's Vote Empowerment** was inspired by the work of Mr. John R Kennedy of Burnaby BC.

https://citizensassembly.arts.ubc.ca/public/get_involved/submission/K/KENNEDY-740.htm

APPENDIX 5: Fix Our Democracy through Canada's 2019 election campaign

Will Canada's 2019 election be:

- Another dreadful degradation of democracy, by Canada's major parties controlling the electoral options presented to a passive/disengaged population of frustrated and leaderless voters?
- Or a glorious victory for grass-roots democracy, by voters pledged to Fix Our Democracy?
- ❖ degradation of democracy
 - both major parties squeezing voters to do strategic-voting for them—because the other choice is so dreadful
 - minor parties squeezed in this play
 - minor parties unavoidably playing roles as spoilers, due to vote-splitting
 - Liberals' vulnerabilities
 - The PM
 - His/their record
 - Gap between 2015 promises and results
 - Integrity and credibility
 - Liberals' attacks
 - Smear Scheer as like Ford only weaker
 - Smear Scheer's party as racists, anti civil rights (women, LGBTQ etc.)
 - Conservatives' vulnerabilities
 - Weak leader who most voters don't know
 - The bozo factor that attracts the intolerant radical right
 - Conservatives' attacks
 - The PM
 - His/their record
 - Gap between 2015 promises and results
 - Liberal leader/party lack of Integrity and credibility; ethics violations
 - Minor parties' campaigns/promises
 - Promises irrelevant—since they cannot possibly form government
 - Promises forced to be more costly (e.g. climate change plan)—to expose inadequacy of major party platforms—making them seem too radical/expensive to most voters
 - Feeding off the discontent/disgust with the major parties
 - Leaders lack leadership experience—don't seem ready for the job of PM
 - NDP fighting for survival
 - Greens on the rise
 - Greens/NDP vote-splitting on centre-left
 - CPP vote-splitting on the right
 - Climate change & carbon taxes

- ❖ Elections under FPTP are effectively a referendum on the PM—the question being whether the public is sufficiently disgusted with their pseudo-dictator to vote for a ‘regime change’—i.e. to yet another pseudo-dictatorship by the designated ‘government in waiting’.
- ❖ The other parties and candidates may try to raise issues important to them and their followers, but they have hardly any chance to play a significant role, unless they happen to hold the balance of power in a minority government.
- ❖ The 2015 election was an ideal ‘regime change’ election—most voters were thoroughly fed up with the incumbent; the new PM personified hope and came with an elite political pedigree, name recognition, exceptional charisma, good acting skills, and promised a new way of doing government under the catchy slogan ‘Sunny ways’. He turned out to be an incompetent con artist. His politically crafted image was almost the opposite of who he turned out to be, and what he delivered was almost the opposite of what he promised on many key issues.
- ❖ The 2019 election is a dreadful choice between:
 - the incumbent whose dishonesty, poor leadership, incompetence and bad judgment has exposed his phony image
 - the other two established parties have new leaders with no leadership experience and no name recognition.
 - A new right-wing party can only be a spoiler, drawing votes from the Conservative ‘government in waiting’
 - The major minor party (NDP) are fighting for survival, with many of their MPs choosing to retire; they will doubtless lose many votes to the Greens and the Liberals.
 - The Greens are on the rise—with climate change working for them; they will take votes from the many disaffected supporters of Liberals and NDP. But their electoral success will be greatly reduced, as always, due to FPTP’s strategic-voting and vote-splitting problems.
- ❖ But voters will have a choice with the [Fix Our Democracy](#) campaign!
 - Instead of voters accepting to play their designated role as passive consumers of the political campaigns and hopeless choices served up by the major parties—voters can instead become active participants in a non-partisan campaign whose goal is Fix Our Democracy—by establishing a truly democratic power relationship—with more power to the voters, their elected representatives, and less power to the parties and their leaders (especially the PM/PMO).
- ❖ The [Fix Our Democracy](#) campaign has enormous potential to leverage off such a dreadful election:
 - The dreadful choices for PM (None of The Above could be a winner)
 - The dreadful negative/nasty campaigns with each major party attacking the unacceptability of the other party and particularly its leader—as the best reason to vote for them.
 - The dreadful squeeze play on voters to waste their vote on strategic-voting—rather than wasting their vote on a party/candidate with little or no chance of winning.
 - The dreadful electoral outcome which will inevitably not be a true reflection of what the people really wanted, or how the people voted.
 - The dreadful prospect that **future elections—even with different leaders and candidates—won’t likely present better choices or produce a better result.**

RECAP: How voters can [Fix Our Democracy](#) through Canada's 2019 election!

The goals of this analysis are:

- ❖ To inspire Hope in Canadian voters:
 - That a better system of democracy is possible—but the political parties will never want to reduce their powers—so the political system will never reform itself—so it's up to us to [Fix Our Democracy](#).
 - That together we the people can use the collective power of our votes to [Fix Our Democracy](#).
 - That we should take an active role to [Fix Our Democracy](#) through the 2019 election campaign.
- ❖ Identified the undemocratic concentration of power as the main problem with our so-called democratic system:
 - Too much power to parties and leaders, especially the PM
 - Too little power to voters and their elected representatives
- ❖ Identified the solution to [Fix Our Democracy](#), by establishing a truly democratic power relationship:
 - Give more power to voters and MPs
 - Reduce power of parties and leaders, especially the PM
- ❖ Identified a path enabling a grass-roots initiative to [Fix Our Democracy](#)
 - Call upon all voters, candidates and parties to publicly pledge to [Fix Our Democracy](#)
- ❖ Is there a better analysis or plan to [Fix Our Democracy](#)?
 - Great ideas are always possible and always welcome!
 - This or something better—but doing Nothing is never acceptable.