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Replacing First Past the Post Proposals
Voting 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th

Preferential – Ranked Ballot Constitutionally Improbable

First Past the Post voting of one person, one vote for one Member of Parliament candidate is constitutionally entrenched by precedent, and, by specific numerous referencing in Canada's Constitution Act of 1867 and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms 1982 that are intended to reflect British convention similar in principle to that of the United Kingdom.

This simple voting methodology understood by young and old is not only a British historical tradition but a tradition and methodology shared by Robert's Rule of Order that sets rules to govern most all business world-wide, non-profits, for-profits, and most political party conduction of regular business.

Preferential-ranked balloting with first, second, third choices is constitutionally improbable. Particularly so if combined with party appointed Members of Parliament. A Constitutional challenge under Article 3 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms would be only one of several to be raised in the Supreme Court of Canada. Article 3 is clear – every citizen of Canada has the right to vote in an election of Members of the House of Commons! It does not say that citizens can vote again and again at the same time, and specifically states that Members of Parliament are voted in by election not appointed by parties.

Preferential-ranked balloting's best known application in Canada has been when political parties (all of similar mind and political disposition presumably) choose to sometimes decide to nominate candidates for upcoming federal elections by preferential-ranked balloting primarily because of time constraints of assembly for nomination purposes of nominee but with all nominees adherent to most party policies that they have expounded upon during the nomination period.

While one might question the efficacy of preferential-ranked balloting process being actualized and promoted even under these very limited circumstances, the effects of somewhat influenced outcomes are at least political party and constituency limited.

At one nomination meeting in Edmonton in particular, voting started normally, one person one vote for one round, then it went to a preferential-ranked ballot. When a flurry of emissaries of one particular candidate table-hopped from one competitor candidate's group to another strongly encouraging party members to give to their candidate at least

second choice, it was suspicious and confusing to many. It left the feeling that the system had somehow been weakened because from a time constraint aspect a ranked ballot was not needed. The question is that by giving voters more than one vote per person, does this open up the public to pressured influence for their second or third vote if not for their first.

Of most importance is that the count is done in one room for a limited number of ballots not done in a typical riding in 50 rooms scattered throughout the riding.

Instituting such a complex methodology brings to mind the billion dollar long gun registry boondoggle.

To legislate federally this methodology of 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th choices nationally would certainly affront the simplistic clarity of the one person/one vote premise of Canada's Constitution and irrevocably alter Canada's stable political landscape by inviting complicated and possible gerrymandering of voter intentions on second and following voter choices.

One must ask – How many votes do I have? Why is one person one vote not right and fair for all? For those who cannot decide who to vote for first, why give to a person 2nd, 3rd, 4th votes? Why we would ever want to promote indecisiveness to all Canadians. Surely a voter should have the conviction to stick by their first choice. Voting should be by one person one time, not often.

Canada's Constitution is clear. Canada's system of a Constitutional Monarchy has served us very well as one of the top countries in the world.

For those who call our political system archaic, I agree. It is archaic but is steeped with undeniable success. Our First Past the Post system has served us well. But if fixing, altering the system be desired, let the process to truly include the majority of eligible voters across Canada. Let all Canadians participate in the decision that will impact them positively or negatively.

The Liberal party claim of receiving a strong voter mandate to unilaterally dramatically affect electoral change is grossly exaggerated.

With only some 65% of eligible voter turnout in the last federal election, Liberals who enjoyed only some 25% of eligible voters support and of that 25% practically none were voting expressly to have the Liberals change our constitution to allow for a preferential-ranked favourable voting system to continue the Liberal government in the upcoming election.

No Liberal MPs elected even won 50% or more of their eligible constituency vote.

The Liberal Party never did receive a clear mandate for them and them alone to make unilateral government change of Canada's election methodology.

Even a quick review of published advertisements and spoken Liberal campaign promises in Edmonton and across Canada shows that the Liberals never mentioned the possibility of unilateral implementation of preferential or ranked balloting, Had they, the Liberal electoral number undoubtedly would have been decidedly less.

They certainly did not receive a blanket mandate to unilaterally gerrymander future elections with second, third, and fourth choices that favour gravitation of Marijuana Party, Green Party, NDP, Libertarian Party, etc, etc, traveling on to bolster Liberal numbers.

What is the real reason behind the Liberals preferential quest?

So, 'If it ain't broke – why fix it!

If the Liberal intention for change is to greater engage Canadians in our electoral process, the easiest, safest and secure way forward is simply to make voting mandatory as was done with the long form census issue.

However, if further reform is wanted by the Liberal majority which, let's face it, can force by numbers most anything that they want – then take it to the Supreme Court of Canada to review its constitutionality, then take it to the people of Canada either by a referendum under the rules of the Liberal Party's very own Clarity Act or by the next national election. Let Canadians speak.

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