

The Electoral Reform for Women toolkit:
Hosting your own PINK TEA!
Ontario 2007

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BACKGROUND Why we need MMP

Once upon a time, women in Canada were seen but seldom heard.

Canada became a nation in 1867; women could not vote in federal elections until 1917. And women weren't even persons eligible to provide sober second thoughts until 1929.

The involvement of, and participation rates for women in elected office have indeed improved since that early dawn. And yet, and yet ... in 2007 are women fairly represented in the legislatures of the land? Hell, NO!

Women are highly functioning and contributing members of society; on October 10, the citizen of Ontario will have the opportunity to vote for a fairer, more representative way to elect the legislature. **THE PINK TEA HOUR – MMP information sessions** are designed to provide women, and other voters, with information about the merit, and the necessity of the MMP electoral system.

Some background:

When women were campaigning to receive the vote in the early 1900s, opponents frequently disrupted their suffrage meetings. Husbands and fathers forbade many women from attending the meetings, and other women simply were afraid to do so because of the strong, chaotic opposition.

Pink Teas developed as a way for women to gather and discuss various issues including suffrage. Only women were invited, and frilly decorations and pink doilies festooned the tea tables, so if opposition appeared, the women changed the subject!

As a result, the opposition, usually men, felt uncomfortable about attending a tea, particularly a **Pink Tea**, and would generally avoid interfering to avoid embarrassment.

In honour of the Famous Five, the women of Equal Voice for MMP are hosting small – about 20 guests - **Pink Tea Hours** across the province to talk to other women about electoral reform and getting more women elected to the legislature.



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What you can do!

Please consider hosting a **Pink Tea Hour** in your own work, school or home. We provide all the written materials about MMP, samples that include an invitation, script, FAQ's and web links for further, in-depth information, a sample of the October 10 ballot, and even a thank you note for you to email to your guest list. We provide you with all the information you need to talk to the group yourself. Remember, you're not expected to provide a polished lecture – rather, the **Pink Tea Hour** is an exposition to understanding Mixed Member Proportional representation.

Pick a date, or two. Invite your friends/family/colleagues. You can provide the refreshments, if you wish – we will even send you a checklist for refreshments– it's that simple! Once you contact us about hosting a **Pink Tea Hour**, we will send you everything and run through the steps with you. **But time is of the essence. 'Touching' as many voters as possible in each riding will make or break the referendum. It's easy, it's quick, it's important. Democracy is worth it.**

Find a place to host the **Pink Tea Hour – MMP Info session**. We recommend that the **Pink Tea Hour** lasts no longer than 60 minutes. If you have more than 20 woman interested, consider hosting several teas.

Contact info:

Pink Tea Hours: Audrey Lemieux at audrey.lemieux@gmail.com or Jan Divok at jmdivok@sympatico.ca.

To find out more about the Equal Voice campaign for Mixed Member Proportional visit: www.equalvoiceinpolitics.ca.



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INVITATION to attend A **PINK TEA HOUR**



Please join us for an overview of the provincial referendum question on electoral reform and to learn more about the Mixed Member Proportional system. Invest only ONE hour. The result could change the face of politics in Ontario.

When...[Insert] Time ... (one hour only!) Where...[Insert]

Tea and cake will be provided (only if you wish to provide refreshments)

Pink Tea Background Information

When women were campaigning to receive the vote in the early 1900s, opponents frequently disrupted their suffrage meetings. Husbands and fathers forbade many women from attending the meetings, and other women simply were afraid to do so because of the strong, chaotic opposition.

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AGENDA PINK TEA HOUR – MMP INFO SESSION

1. **Welcome and Introductions – Serve tea/pink cakes** 15 minutes
2. **Presentation on Mixed Member Proportional** 15 minutes
3. **Q&As** 15 minutes
4. **Networking, dialoguing, more tea/cakes** 10 minutes
5. **Challenge, handouts, adjourn** 5 minutes

THE SCRIPT MMP PINK TEA HOUR

I'm here to tell you "Everything you wanted to know about Mixed Member Proportional but were afraid to ask!" How many people here are familiar with this term?

Thank you to everyone for coming today to learn about Mixed Member Proportional. I got this Pink Tea Hour toolkit from the Equal Voice website, to learn about the proposed electoral reform for the October 10th Referendum. There are a number of Resources listed on the handouts and on the website for further research, if you want more in-depth information

Please say a few words at the outset about why you are speaking at this Pink Tea Hour about electoral reform (your personal story!)

Today, I'm going to touch on the following:

1. Why this electoral reform is important;
2. Briefly describe the process that got us to this Referendum;
3. Describe how MMP works, 2 decisions to make – 1 is the Ballot Question for October 10th [1st decision] and ultimately number 2 – what the Ballot will look like in the 2011 election;
4. Identify ways in which you can help; and,
5. Respond to your questions.



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1. WHY THIS ELECTORAL REFORM IS IMPORTANT. WHY CHANGE THE CURRENT ELECTORAL SYSTEM?

If it ain't broke, why fix it?

Well, we see increasing **voter fatigue and voter apathy**, especially amongst our youth.

People believe that it doesn't really matter whether they vote or not as it doesn't make a difference. We believe that the Mixed Member Proportional system could invigorate the public to vote if they start to see democracy in action, fairer results, and they see "themselves"/"ourselves" represented.

Now ... you have a reason to vote!

Canada is still one of the few modern democracies still clinging to our old Westminster model of electing Members from local ridings. We **rank 48th in the world** in terms of the number of women in our House of Commons (just under 21%). In recent years, the numbers of women standing and being elected has started to decline.

Only 18 countries worldwide have achieved the UN goal of having 30% or more women represented in national parliament. All of these countries use some form of proportional representation, including the MMP system. United Kingdom, Scotland, Wales, New Zealand and Germany all use the MMP system.

As for Ontario, there are now only 26 women (25%) in the 103-seat Legislature and only 8 members who are visible minority. Both figures are half what they should be based on provincial demographics.

The October 10th Referendum could throw open the doors of the male political club!

A victory for MMP in our Province would likely set off a domino effect in other provinces as electoral reform efforts in PEI, New Brunswick, Quebec and BC have either failed or floundered.

Many of the decisions that impact women disproportionately – such as childcare, home care, and reproductive choice – lie so largely in the hands of men. It is time more women were in office helping men make decisions that often affect women more often!



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We believe that the proposed MMP system will provide a better democracy with more choice, fairer election results and stronger representation.

2. HOW DID WE ARRIVE AT THE OCTOBER 10th REFERENDUM?

There has been discussion about electoral reform for a long time now in this country. Fair Vote Canada/Fair Vote Ontario has been instrumental in working on Electoral Reform for a number of years.

Elections Ontario selected 103 ordinary Ontario citizens at random, one from each of Ontario's ridings. They formed The Ontario Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform.

The provincial government asked the Citizens' Assembly to consider 2 issues:

- i) To assess Ontario's electoral system – the way votes translate into seats in the legislature for Members of Provincial Parliament; and,
- ii) Whether Ontario should keep our current system OR adopt a different one.

It is important to note that they worked independently of government and political parties.

They spent 8 months of intensive study, consultation and deliberation, to arrive at the MMP recommendation. The Assembly believes that MMP will continue to produce stable and effective governments by building on our strong tradition of Members of Provincial Parliaments while adding new features to increase voter choice and to make election results fairer.

3. HOW DOES MMP WORK?

First Past the Post

You probably know that our current system is called "Single Member Plurality" or "First Past the Post". The party with the most votes wins the seat.

This system results in a **real disparity between a party's percentage of the vote versus the number of seats won**. The leading party usually gains more seats than their share of the vote, while second and third place parties can have many votes, but end up with few or no seats at all.

From the Vote for MMP website (Carolyn Bennett, Hugh Segal and Ed Broadbent are key spokespeople for this), they talked about "phony majority" governments



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in Ontario – the last legitimate one was in 1937; current government won 70% of the seats with only 46% of the popular vote; previous government won 57% of the seats with only 45% of the vote; in 1990, the governing party received only 38% of the popular vote which translated into 57% of the seats

Conclusion: governing parties have no interest in changing the current system, but the citizens of this province do!

Decision #1 - October 10th Referendum

Right now we are being asked to decide whether or not we want electoral reform in the Province of Ontario.

[SHOW THE BALLOT QUESTION FOR OCTOBER 10TH FROM www.yourbigdecision.ca] (Attached in the toolkit).

Decision #2 – MMP for 2011 Election!

Under the MMP system, election results will be proportional: a party's share of seats in the legislature will reflect its portion of the vote.

The Citizens' Assembly proposed 129 seats in the legislature. 90 seats will be allotted to local candidates and 39 will be allotted to party list members.

I want to add that the Legislature was reduced to 103 seats by Mike Harris from 125 MPPs. The Citizens' Assembly proposal above would be 22 more seats than we will have in the Oct. 10th election as there is an increase already planned to 107 MPPs. Some experts argue that we are under-served now.

ONE BALLOT, TWO VOTES! The MMP system gives you more choice. Your ballot gives you **two votes**. You vote for the party of your choice and for the local candidate you prefer. You can vote for a local candidate from a **different** party if you prefer!

Essentially, there are 3 steps in the MMP system:

- STEP 1** You vote for a local candidate AND for a party.
- STEP 2** The votes are counted. The party vote determines the total share of seats a party wins in the legislature



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STEP 3 If a party doesn't have enough local members elected to match its share of the party vote, it gets a "top-up" of seats in the legislature.

These seats are filled by party list members elected by voters across the province through the party vote side of the ballot.

The list seats are used to compensate for lack of proportionality in the election of local members. A party must have clear support – at least 3% of the total party vote – to get list seats.

Prior to the election, each party publishes a list of candidates, in the order they are to be elected. Candidates can run locally and be included on the list. If they win in their district, their name is crossed off and the position falls to the next person on the list. This allows a party to ensure that its priority candidates will have a seat.

[SHOW SAMPLE BALLOT for 2011 ELECTION]

By ranking women high on their lists, parties can boost their chance of securing a seat in the legislature. Because these lists will be made public, voters can see which party has the strongest slate of women and visible minority candidates.

5. HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- i) On October 10th 2007, vote IN FAVOUR OF THE NEW SYSTEM.
- ii) Tell your friends about the referendum. Tell everyone you know to educate themselves about the issues, so they are making an informed decision on October 10th.
- iii) Request a meeting or send a letter to your MPP telling them why you are choosing Mixed Member Proportional, and why it's the better choice for Ontarians.
- iv) Participate in MMP Week of Action from October 1-7. We are asking Ontarians from across the province to take a few minutes, a few hours, or a few days to canvass their communities and let their neighbours, colleagues, friends and family know about MMP and why it will change our electoral system for the better.



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- v) Organize a lunch-time meeting or a Pink Tea Hour - in your place of work/school or in your community centre or even at your Book Club.
- vi) Hand out our brochures at your school, workplace, mall, etc.
- vii) Put up posters at your local community boards.
- viii) Send a letter or op-ed piece to your local newspaper.
- ix) Organize an information forum.
- x) If you've got any other ideas – let us know if we can help.

We're happy to provide support and resources to any projects that promote MMP and its benefits for women.

In closing ...

Thank you again for attending this Pink Tea Hour, and we look forward to a Victory – for women and visible minorities and the citizens of our province - on October 10th. The government has not made our task easy – the proposed new system must get 60% of the votes in 60% of the ridings! This is our opportunity to change the status quo.

Now ... we have a reason to vote!!

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS – MMP

Below is a list of commonly-asked questions about MMP. There are many misconceptions and misinformation tossed around about MMP. It's ok to disagree with the issues, but it's important that you have the right information!

If you have a question that's not on the list, email it to us at info@equalvoiceinpolitics.ca, and we'll answer your question. The most frequently asked questions will be posted on our website - www.equalvoiceinpolitics.ca.

Won't this just create more conflict in the Legislature?

With parties only rarely able to form a majority, any government that wants to hold on to power will have to negotiate with other parties for their support. In other countries, this has led to more consensus-building and a less adversarial atmosphere.



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We are going to have more politicians than before!?

Before the Legislature was reduced to 103 seats by Mike Harris, there were 125 MPPs in Ontario. The Citizens' Assembly has proposed 129 seats, which would be 22 more seats than we will have in the Oct. 10th election, when the Legislature is being increased to 107 Members. Most jurisdictions have a higher proportion of legislators to serve their constituents. Some experts argue that we are under-served now.

Won't Mixed Member Proportional just create gridlock with endless minority governments?

We already get minority governments, and they often work well. Studies have shown that minority governments are more productive of major legislation than are majority governments. In a reformed Legislature, parties would form coalitions in order to govern, thus reducing the prospect of gridlock. The coalition style has worked well in New Zealand and Germany, which both have "mixed" systems such as the Citizens' Assembly proposes, with a majority of local constituency seats, and a minority of seats elected by proportional representation.

Won't there be less representation, as a certain number of MPPs will only represent backroom partisan interests, and not have a geographical constituency?

A mixed system offers more representation since those "List" MPPs who do not have constituencies get assigned to work in the seats their party did not win. This means that voters can appeal to their elected local MPP for assistance, or may turn to the List MPP assigned by another party. Voters will have a choice.

How will this increase the presence of women and minority MPPs?

The "mixed" system proposed by the Ontario Citizens' Assembly will include 39 "list" seats and 90 constituency seats elected as usual. Once a party has won its constituency seats, its total will be "topped up" by a number of list seats, according to the party's share of the popular vote. Candidates on the lists will be chosen by the parties - possibly at party nominating conventions - to represent the team intended to attract voters. Parties will want to use the lists to reach out to voters who traditionally have been under-represented -- women, visible minorities and Aboriginals. So, the list seats will increase the number of women and minorities elected, better representing the actual makeup of the population.

How is it more democratic if MPPs are being parachuted in?



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Seventy per cent of MPPs will be locally elected, as they are now. The remaining 30 per cent will be elected too, only they will be elected from party lists. They will represent voters at large, and will be freer to represent all Ontarians, not just their constituencies. They will likely be assigned to some constituency work, either assisting local MPPs in several ridings, or shoring-up party representation in ridings that were lost.

If the List MPPs are chosen by their parties, won't this just enhance the power of the back-room boys?

The Citizens' Assembly recommended that List MPPs be chosen by a transparent process, and that parties must demonstrate the selection was fair and transparent to the Chief Elections Officer. Therefore, parties are likely to hold province-wide nomination conventions to elect their list candidates, which will empower delegates rather than backroom party honchos. In Ontario, the three major party leaders have committed themselves to the election of more women. They are not likely to permit their backroom boys to put up lists of all white male professionals.

RESOURCES - Web links

For more information about MMP and on why this is a historic event visit:

<http://www.citizensassembly.gov.on.ca/en/default.asp>

Equal Voice is a group of more than 1200 women and men nation-wide, who have formed a multi-partisan non-profit organization devoted to the still-bold idea that more women must be elected to every level of government in Canada.

www.equalvoice.com

Vote for MMP is now the registered campaign to support the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) voting system proposal in the October 10 electoral reform referendum in Ontario <http://www.voteformmp.ca/>

The Doris Anderson Fund is devoted to woman-friendly electoral reforms that assist women to be nominated, to finance their campaigns, and to get elected to all levels of government in Canada. For more information about Doris Anderson, or to make a donation please visit:

<http://www.equalvoice.ca/idx.php?rl=335&lid=1>

Recommendation of Ontario's Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform at <http://www.citizensassembly.gov.on.ca/assets/One%20Ballot,%20Two%20Votes.pdf>



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The Elections Ontario website: www.yourbigdecision.ca

THANK YOU AFTER PINK TEA HOUR

Dear [Chantelle],

Thank you for attending my Pink Tea Hour.

I hope that the presentation on Mixed Member Proportional will be helpful for you when you make your decision on October 10th, and that the Q&As and Resources were useful too.

I would be pleased to assist you if you would like to host your own Pink Tea Hour. If you have friends or colleagues who might be interested, please let them know that Equal Voice volunteers like Marilyn, Audrey and Jan, are available to assist them with a Pink Tea Hour.

Everyone is trying to get the word out so that people can make an informed decision on October 10th. I know that I will be voting in support of Mixed Member Proportional, and I hope you will too.

Yours very truly,

REFRESHMENT CHECK LIST - PINK TEA HOUR – MMP info session

In the spirit of the Famous Five ladies who strategized electoral reform under the guise of ‘pink teas’ here is checklist of refreshment items you may need, if you choose to offer refreshments.

- Cups and saucers for the number of guests expected
- Two or three teapots
- Hot water kettle(s)
- Pink paper napkins (cocktail size)
- Milk jug, sugar container
- Side plate for lemon slices
- A couple of teaspoons



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- Red Rose Orange Pekoe tea bags
- One lemon, halved lengthwise and then thinly sliced; fork
- Milk, Sugar
- Pink cupcakes (recipe follows)

Basic Vanilla Cupcake recipe

In order to give these cupcakes a pink hue, you can use puréed beets instead of food colouring. If you are using puréed beets, use the purée and butter in equal measures

150 gram butter, softened (or 75 grams butter and 75 grams puréed beets. Boil beets until fork tender; cool and then purée in food processor)

150 grams sugar

175 grams self-raising flour

3 eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350 degrees

Line a 12 cup cake pan with cup cake liners (medium to small cup cake pan)

Crack the eggs into a cup and beat lightly with a fork.

Place all ingredients in a large electric mixer bowl.

Beat with electric mixer for 2 minutes, until batter is creamy.

Pour the mixture into the cup cake forms; do not fill more 2/3.

Bake for 18 – 20 minutes until an inserted toothpick comes out dry.

Remove from oven, allow to cool for a few minutes before removing the cupcakes to a wire cooling rack

RESOURCES – Senator Hugh Segal on MMP

Senator, Kingston-Frontenac-Leeds

Wednesday September 12, 2007

Economic Club of Toronto



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I am pleased to take part in your speaker series. My topic is democracy whose core infrastructure is legitimacy. My worry is that we take its infrastructure for granted. My hope is that my presentation will underline why that is a bad thing.

This room understands better than most the relationship between corporate profits, efficiency and proper governance. You understand that legitimacy and accountability are not trivial to success and progress in business. Annual general meetings bring shareholders, directors and management together – as they are the owners and operators of any public company – and offer them the opportunity to express their views by casting their votes, votes plural, for the auditor, the board of directors and for any special resolutions requiring their approval. The right of management to manage, to spend, to invest, to innovate and plan is based on this core process of electing directors, one by one, and choosing the framework of corporate oversight and shareholder protection.

My question to you is this - why are taxpayers and voters not accorded the same rights when choosing their government's board of directors (our parliaments), their leaders (our governments) and their representatives in what is usually the largest corporation, effecting all aspects of our lives and livelihoods? As taxpayers, we are the majority shareholders and stakeholders of the "government" corporation and also the investors - providing the necessary dollars for operational and capital expenditures. And the notion that we are prepared to "invest" our hard-earned dollars – albeit not always voluntarily – and then be hamstrung in voicing displeasure by not having the option of meaningfully changing the board of directors goes against all good common sense. But this is what our 'first past the post', old and hoary electoral 'winner take all' system actually ensures when a majority of votes are wasted in almost every riding.

On October 10th, we get our chance as Ontarians to say with a simple ballot that we want a system where every vote and every voter counts. Ontario today is a good deal different than the Ontario of 200 years ago – more diverse and populace. Yet we continue to elect our representatives in much the same way as we did two centuries ago. And until now, politicians elected under the old system, have largely and not surprisingly refused to update how we choose our parliament. On October 10th we have a chance to say as taxpayers what our preference is. The Minister Dr. Maria Bountrogianni who led this process is here today, I regret she is leaving politics. I salute her clarity and individual leadership.

The next Ontario election will allow Ontarians to do as they have always done, choose their local MPP. The party who ends up with the largest numbers of MPPs is most likely to form a government. I, without being partisan here today, will be voting for Mr. Tory and the Conservatives – because Ontario cannot muddle through with mediocre leadership that costs us jobs, excess taxes,



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quality healthcare and reduced investment. Others here will vote Liberal or Green or NDP for their own valid reasons. That is your right – and I defend it absolutely. But out partisan choices is not why I am here.

This election, the referendum ballot we will get on election day also offers voters the opportunity to significantly modify the way future governments will be selected – the opportunity to deliver real fairness to a system that currently and effectively discards a great percentage of votes cast under the present system. As it stands today, unless a voter happens to cast his or her ballot for the candidate of the winning party in their riding, their vote is in point of fact lost. It counts for zero. In the current system, results are rarely proportional - a party's share of seats in the legislature rarely corresponds to its share of the popular vote. This distortion causes some parties to receive more than their share of seats, while other ones receive less than their share, if at all. This detracts from the fairness and legitimacy of Ontario's electoral system. Seldom has a majority government in Ontario been elected with a majority of voter support – this has not happened since 1937. The most glaring example of inequity occurred in September of 1990 when the New Democratic Party rose to power in Ontario, much to the surprise of everyone - including the New Democratic Party, with 37.6% of all ballots cast. They went from 19 to 74 seats – a 279% gain. And this was in an election with a 64% voter turnout. So in effect, 37% of 64% - which equals 24% of the slightly more than the 4 million people who voted, about 1 million electors - imposed an NDP majority government in Ontario – something for which some might say we are still paying!

How many times have you, as a voter in a particular riding, scanned the roster of candidates and wanted to cast your ballot for the individual you knew for certain would make the most effective provincial representative - but unfortunately, also knew for certain that he or she represented a party that had no hope of coming to power? We are consistently asked, as voters, to cast just one ballot with which to express our preference as to who should represent our riding and as to who should form the government.

Oftentimes these are not one in the same. Many voters have been faced with the dilemma of wanting to support a local candidate but not his or her party, or wanting to support a party but not its local candidate. Many a superb local candidate has been sunk because of a province-wide trend against their party or their leader. Ontario's parliament does not currently reflect the way people actually vote. The Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform (a non-partisan, province - wide group asked to reflect on our electoral system), put forward their proposal as to how this inequity might be managed and I am an ardent supporter of their final recommendation. It is that recommendation that we get to vote on, on October 10.



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The Citizens' Assembly was independent of government and made up of 103 randomly-selected citizens – one from each of Ontario's electoral districts. With the Chair, 52 of the members were male and 52 were female and at least one member was Aboriginal. Members of the Assembly were selected at random by Elections Ontario from the Permanent Register of Electors for Ontario and every registered voter was eligible to participate, with the exception of elected officials. Their process was open and honest.

All views were canvassed. Their recommendation was well reasoned and, largely keeps in place the geographic district representative process we have always had. The Assembly members examined Ontario's electoral system – the system that structures how votes are combined to elect the Members of Provincial Parliament. In a nutshell, the final recommendation of the Assembly is to institute a Mixed Member Proportional system for Ontario – voters would get two votes at election time – one for their preferred local MPP and one for their preferred governing party. The result would actually reflect how people voted.

The “first past the post” system discounts all votes locally that were not cast for the “local” winner – in most ridings that is a majority of the votes cast. These “losing votes” now have no impact on how our legislature is divided up. In my view, this creates two classes of voters - those who voted for local winners and those who voted otherwise. The winner-take-all status quo has, up until now, allowed for majorities to be formed in parliaments when voters had absolutely nothing of the sort in mind. A federal example was in 1993 when Jean Chretien's Liberals received 38 percent of the votes but 60 percent of the seats in Parliament. One might deduce that this may be efficient, neat and even conclusive – but it is certainly not very democratic. The proposed reformed system would ensure that the share of votes any one party receives on Election Day would actually correspond to its final number of seats in the legislature. MMP gives you two votes on Election Day, one local and one province wide and creates one class of voters whose votes all count equally.

Wild swings in government and regulatory policy every four years is simply bad for everyone as individuals and businesses as a collective. Remember the aforementioned Rae majority government of 1990 (elected by a minority of voters) who altered the Labor Standards Act - at great cost to business? Remember the subsequent Harris government, also a majority elected by a minority, who changed it back? If political parties had been forced to work together because there was no artificial majority creating an undeserving "king of the road" (despite voters having voted otherwise), the swings would either not have happened, or been more moderate. Apply this to taxes, regulation, environment, business practices etc... Artificial and illegitimate majorities do not



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help business or political stability. Business may prefer the taxation or trade policies of one party, may even contribute financially to the party or the candidates.

But on Election Day, it is the individual who marks his or her X on a single ballot. The option being presented, the ability to concretely state with both your Xs who should represent you and who should govern you provides a level of balance that is beneficial to the individual and to the collective. It would force bi-partisan cooperation; it would give voice to the campaign platforms of all parties and ensure the accountability of the representative MPP and the promises made by the separate parties. And to those entrenched defenders of the inequitable status quo – who argue that two ballots will be confusing to the average voters – let me say politely, how dare you attack the intelligence of Ontario’s voters – we all deserve more credit than that.

The MMP system would combine the old with the new - the familiar and important tradition of each riding having its own accountable MPP would be complemented by province-wide party lists for the second ballot that reflects our party preferences. And under the new proposed system, locally elected MPPs will have the mandate necessary to speak their minds. It would be a unique combination of 90 locally elected representatives and 39 “list members” and would provide Ontario with a more reflective representation – more women, visible minorities and a guarantee that all cities and regions have some representation in the legislature. Those proposed lists of 39 proportional members would be public record long before election day, and their quality and composition will tell us all more about the competence and ‘representativeness’ of our political parties. This system in New Zealand, Germany, Wales and Scotland has proven the point through its historical records.

The new proposal for Ontario would include 39 “list members” who would be chosen to proportionally balance the final outcome of election results. The list of members would be open - made freely available by each party and could be scrutinized by the voting public. Electors would be well aware in advance of who might be taking a seat in the Legislature after all the results are tabulated. Any of the parties who do not seek out the best candidates and build their lists on balance, competence and quality, would be crushed like a bug. And I agree with the notion that if these lists are made up by the “back room gang” based on blind party loyalty, it would be a retrograde and unhelpful step. Any party that did not have an open process – transparent and even-handed – in the compilation of this list, so that the full face of Ontario, gender-balanced, rural, multi-faceted, from all walks of life and from all the rich hues and diversity of this province, would pay a serious price with electors. The proposed change and the scrutiny of the voting public would actually force political parties to be more open and accountable than



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they are today. And the ability to reach out to scientific, business, cultural, artistic and specialist leaders who might not win a nomination in what are often closed and manipulated Riding Associations would be broadly enhanced, as would gender balance – a vital and important concern.

The new proposed MMP system would provide voters with options – the make up of government and legislature at Queen’s Park would no longer be an accidental result of a ballot cast for the local Member of Provincial Parliament. Individual electors need not have to “hold their nose” and vote against their conscience in order to obtain their desired outcome – or as so often happens, the least objectionable outcome. A reasoned and thoughtful society need not be subjected to the “lesser of two evils” approach when making the most central decision of their democratic futures for the next 4 years.

The MMP system would ensure that each voter has at least one effective vote. Even with no chance of winning in the single member constituency, the second vote for the preferred party would offer them a say through the “list member” – or vice versa. And finally, the separation of the ballot allows the voter to voice either approval or disapproval – something not possible under the “first-past-the-post” system. The individual can use his or her ballot to support a candidate without necessarily helping out the candidate’s party.

We have a rare chance here in Ontario to show leadership and take the simple position that every vote counts; that governments should not be chosen by accident; that the electoral system should not guarantee distortion and misrepresentation of how the voters actually voted! We have the chance to modernize, democratize, legitimize and upgrade the democratic process in Canada’s largest, most diverse province.

Winston Churchill wrote that, “It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried.” Throughout history and civilizations all the others have been tried. Democracy is a good thing – governments formed by the people, through election are the cornerstone of a free and open society. The media coverage of the excitement of young Iraqis and Afghanis and especially the women, who were able to cast their votes for the first time, was a testament to the power of the ballot box. This sense of empowerment in areas of the world where powerlessness ruled for decades truly brought home the magnitude of the democracy that we, in the developed world, take for granted. But democracy is not stagnant – it must adjust with the people and the times.



On October 10th Choose MMP!

It is time to adjust two hundred years of status quo and more fully reflect the true nature of this province and allow the electorate to be accurately represented. To give equal time to a vocal anti-conservative, let me quote Sydney J. Harris, the American journalist for the Chicago Daily News and the Chicago Sun-Times whose work landed him on the master list of Richard Nixon's political opponents, "Democracy is the only system that asks the 'powers that be' whether they are 'the powers that ought to be'". This is a chance for all of us, who are the taxpaying public, the voters, parents, church and community volunteers, investors, employees and employers, farmers, seniors, students and funders of our Parliament and Government to vote yes on MMP; to take the government back from the governors and make it clear that it is us who will decide, now and in the future, who will govern and who will be elected – and who will be our local representative – and that we have the competence to assert our democratic right to do so. It is time to step into the sunshine and vote for a stronger democracy, the equal right of each and every voter to decide who will govern our province and who will represent our local ridings and neighbourhoods in the process. -30

THE REFENDUM QUESTION



On October 10th Choose MMP!

SAMPLE BALLOT, OCTOBER 10 2007



More Choice.

Fairer Results.

Stronger Representation.

"The right of decision belongs to the majority, but the right of representation belongs to all."

Ernest Naville (1865)

Sample Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) Ballot

You have two votes			
X	Party Vote	Local Candidate Vote	X
↓	This vote determines what share of seats each party will receive. Vote by putting an X next to the party of your choice.	This vote determines which candidate will be elected to represent your district. Vote by putting an X next to the candidate of your choice.	↓
Vote Here	Vote for only one party	Vote for only one candidate	Vote Here
<input type="radio"/>	Party C <input checked="" type="radio"/> C	Oliver Olive <input checked="" type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Party E <input type="radio"/> E	Tony Tangerine <input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Party B <input type="radio"/> B	Veronica Violet <input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Party A <input checked="" type="radio"/> A	Yasmin Yellow <input checked="" type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Party F <input type="radio"/> F	No local candidate	<input type="radio"/>
		Thérèse Turquoise Ind.	<input type="radio"/>



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Authorized by the CFO of Vote for MMP