

Our 2015 – 2017 Strategic Directions document, adopted by National Convention, contemplates the matter of electoral reform. It states, in part:

“This election makes it obvious that it is past time to reform Canada’s electoral system. First-past-the-post delivers lopsided majority governments. In this election, just under 40% of voters marked their ballots for the Liberals, but that party got 55% of the seats in the House of Commons. The NDP received 20% of the votes, but only hold 12% of the seats. The Liberals have made a commitment to reform the electoral process. CUPE and all Canadians have an interest in making sure we have the most representative form of proportional representation in place for the 2019 federal elections.”

Strategic Directions also specifically directs us in the direction we take on the matter:

“CUPE will initiate an evaluation of potential electoral system reforms and promote the most representative form of proportional representation for the 2019 federal election.”

Based on the foregoing, the attached resolution has been drafted for consideration by the NEB.

NEB RESOLUTION

RE: PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

CUPE NATIONAL WILL:

- Support the introduction of proportional representation in federal elections in Canada;
- Support a form of mixed-member proportional representation system that would create the most representative electoral system for Canadians;
- Oppose ranked ballots, preferential ballots and other single transferable vote systems and work to ensure that members and the general public understand that they are not true proportional representation;
- Develop materials that chartered organizations can use to explain what proportional representation is, why we support it and why we support mixed-member proportional representation in particular;
- Work with our civil society partners to be part of the conversation about democratic reform in Canada.

BECAUSE:

- CUPE is Canada's largest union and should be part of the current conversation about electoral reform that is taking place in Canada;
- The Liberals promised that the 2015 federal election will be the last first-past-the-post election in Canada;
- In the 2011 federal election, the Conservatives formed a majority government with only 39.5% of the vote, while in 2015 the Liberals formed a majority government with only 39.6% of the vote;
- Around the world, advanced democracies have recognized the flaws of this winner-take-all system and have adopted a better model;
- Democracies from Bolivia to Germany to New Zealand and Switzerland have embraced proportional representation;
- Evidence from such countries shows that parliaments that are elected through proportional representation tend to elect more women and more MPs from diverse backgrounds; as a result, they are more representative and the policies they pass tend to be more broadly supported by the public;
- Proportional representation helps to increase voter turnout, because people are more likely to believe that their vote "matters";
- Proportional representation also ensures that representation from a region is not dominated by monolithic blocks of MPs from a single party, and generally prevents the circumstance we find today in Toronto and the Atlantic and Maritime provinces where everyone is represented in the House of Commons by only one political party.