



OUR ELECTION SYSTEM IS UNFAIR. BUT WE CAN MAKE IT BETTER!



CUPE

Notes for Electoral Reform Town Hall

Before you go

Thank you for taking the time to go and express your opinions on Electoral Reform to your MP at their town hall!

This kit includes detailed materials that explain different ways of electing MPs, and why CUPE is supporting Proportional Representation. Please read them!

For the town hall, make sure you know the exact location and time and give yourself lots of time to get there. Check to see if you have to RSVP to attend. If so, please RSVP.

When you arrive

1. Check whether you have to register or sign up to speak. If you do, please register or sign up.
2. If there is a staff person for the MP in attendance, ask for their contact info. After the meeting, you can email them your comments so they have it in writing.

When it's your turn to speak

1. Introduce yourself as a resident of the riding – you want the MP to know that you are their constituent – so feel free to tell them which neighborhood you live in.
2. Be respectful. If you are given a speaking time – often 2-3 mins – stick to it.
3. Points that you might want to make:
 - Express support for changing the way we elect our representatives.
 - There are two principles that any new system should respect: a local connection to the MP and about the same proportion of seats in the House of Commons as the proportion of votes each party receives.
 - The best way to make this happen is Mixed Member Proportional Representation. It sounds complicated but it is not: it just means, one ballot with two votes.
 - With one vote, we elect a local MP. With the 2nd vote, we select a party. The MP can be with the party you voted for. Or not.
 - Locally elected MPs would be elected in exactly the same way as they are now. They would function in the same way too.
 - The 2nd vote would go toward electing an MP from a party list. These lists could be broken down by province or region so that MPs selected would still be accountable to voters in that province or region.
 - We could elect up to 2/3 of MPs locally.
 - Party list MPs could have extra duties such as committee or regional work.
 - The details of the exact numbers can be worked out by a neutral third party such as an Electoral Commission.

- Mixed Member Proportional Representation has been used since the 1950s in Germany. It is also used in Scotland, Wales and New Zealand.
- It is not just CUPE that supports MMP – in 2004, the non-partisan Law Commission of Canada recommended that we switch our voting system to it.
- Ranked Ballots are not a solution because they do not result in a parliament that is proportionally representative of all votes cast in an election.
- With Ranked Ballots, the 1st or 2nd choices of 50% of voters get counted but with Proportional Representation, many, many more voters get to see their choices represented in Parliament.
- Mixed Member Proportional Representation is the best solution – repeat these two points at the end of your speaking time:
 - One ballot – two votes.
 - Two principles: local connection to the MP and proportionality.

Some other questions that MPs are discussing and where CUPE is at on these issues

1. Should Canadians support Ranked Ballots or Alternative or Transferable Votes?

Like the Law Commission of Canada, CUPE considered but decided not to support Ranked Ballots or other forms of Alternative or Transferable Voting, because these are not proportional systems. We believe it is important for parties to have roughly the same percentage of seats in the House of Commons as the votes they received across the country.

2. Do we support having a referendum?

We want to see what legislation government proposes first before we take a position on that.

3. Do we support mandatory voting?

We support more voter engagement and participation but do not know that mandatory voting will make that happen. We're interested in hearing what people have to say about this.

4. Do we support electronic voting?

It is an option that should be considered – we're looking forward to hearing from other people and from the government about how this would work.

After the town hall

- Do email the MP with your comments – it is important to have a written record! You can reach them at firstname.lastname@parl.gc.ca or use their staff person's contact info if you have it.
- Let them know that you attended the town hall and remind them that you live in their riding and are following up with written comments regarding Election Reform.
- CUPE also wants to know how your town hall was, so please return the enclosed report by email to politicalaction@cupe.ca or fill out the report form online at cupe.ca/mmp

Thanks again for taking the time to do this. It is important for MPs to hear from Canadians about the changes to the electoral system that we want.

We look forward to hearing about your experiences at your MP's Town Hall!