



## **MAKE EVERY VOTE COUNT**

In a democracy, every vote should count equally. But that's not how it works - in the 2015 federal election, it took just 38,000 votes to elect each Liberal MP compared to 57,000 for each Conservative, 79,000 for each New Democrat MP, 82,000 for each member of the Bloc Québécois and 603,000 votes for one Green MP.

Overall, nine million votes were wasted – meaning they were cast for a candidate who didn't win in our first-past-the-post system. This fundamentally unfair system is now up for review, as Prime Minister Trudeau has pledged 2015 will be the last election run in the traditional “first past the post” method. Trudeau says he prefers Ranked Ballot voting, but that is very different than Proportional Representation (PR), where the party representation in Parliament reflects their share of the votes. The vast majority of OECD countries elect their governments through PR, resulting in stable administrations that rule effectively.

Labour Council has long supported Fair Vote Canada in its efforts to win electoral reform for Proportional Representation. There are different variations of PR. In 2007, Labour Council supported the recommendation of the Ontario Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform to move to a Mixed Member Proportional system (MMP) with the following guiding principles:

- Legitimacy
- Fairness of Representation
- Voter Choice
- Effective Parties
- Stable and Effective Government
- Effective Parliament
- Stronger Voter Participation
- Accountability
- Simplicity and Practicality

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The MMP system features one ballot with two choices: a local representative and a party choice. Voters elect their representatives in two ways: in local districts and province-wide. All elected members would serve together in the Legislature.

**Local members** are elected in MMP in the same way they are elected under the current system. Local candidates are nominated by parties or run as independents. The votes are counted in each electoral district and the candidate with the most votes is elected. The winning candidate represents the district in the legislature.

**List members** are elected through the party vote on the ballot. Each party nominates a list of candidates, in the order it wants them to be elected. Candidates at the top of the list have a better chance of being elected than candidates farther down the list. This helps voters decide which party to vote for because they know which candidates will be elected if a party wins list seats.

MMP won't guarantee that pro-labour candidates will prevail – the elites will still do everything possible to shape the outcome in favour of business. But it will provide the opportunity for political voices that speak for the interests of workers and their communities to be elected more often. It has also been shown to increase both voter turnout and diversity of winning candidates. We have been saddled with false majorities for too long. It's time that Canada moves to a more representative system that ensures that every vote counts.

The Executive recommends that Labour Council:

- Continue to support Fair Vote Canada as a long-term partner for electoral reform
- Support the work of the Broadbent Institute to educate the public about the value of electoral reform, and endorse the EveryVoterCounts campaign
- Publicize and urge the adoption of a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system of reform among affiliates, community allies, and with Members of Parliament

July 2016

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