Fair Vote Presentation Summary

Proportional Representation 101
Making a Case for a Country that represents Everyone!

Heart of the Problem: the Winner-take-all Principle. Only a Winner gets sent to Parliament. Every other voter who doesn't vote for the winner loses. Those votes are effectively wasted.

In a typical federal election, about 7,000,000 votes are wasted, that is, about half. 50.4 % of the votes in the last election were effective; 49.6% of the votes were wasted. Wasted Votes by party: CPC-1,455,077; NCP—23,133,579; Liberal Party of Canada—2,211,697; BQ—828,805; Green Party—540,205; Other—129,703

What is Proportional Representation (PR)? Proportional Representation is any voting system designed to produce a representative body (parliament, legislature, or council) where voters elect representatives in proportion to their votes. Therefore, every vote counts.

PR is important to address low voter turnout especially among young people, a staggering public apathy and indifference bordering on contempt toward the whole process, a growing concentration of power in the PMO, and hyper-partisanship and unrelenting party discipline.

PR attempts to match results in representation with the voting percentages by party. PR tends to produce legislatures which better reflect the diversity of voters—because a single party rarely earns more than 50% of the vote, two or more parties usually govern together in a coalition, representing the genuine majority of voters.

A study by Arend Lijphart (2012) compared majoritarian (first past the post) and "consensual" (PR) democracies: The results observed were as follows: a) voter turnout was higher, b) government policies were closer to the view of the median voter, c) citizens were more satisfied with democracy, even when the party they voted for was not in power, d) countries with proportional systems were faster to ratify the Kyoto protocol, e) their percentage of world total carbon emissions decreased, while it increased in other countries or remained static, f) significantly more women were elected, g) countries with proportional systems scored higher on the   UN Index of Human Development, which looks at health, education, and security—basically how well government takes care of its citizens, h)governments in countries using moderately proportional systems were less likely to have deficits and more likely to have surpluses, and i) governments with some PR tend to reduce income inequalities, whereas majoritarian institutions have the opposite effect.

People in PR countries have more power. There are different models: Plurality-Majority, Semi-PR and Proportional Representation. See model at http://www.idea.int/esd/systems.cfm adapted from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. The Law Commission of Canada produced a study called *Voting Counts* which examines and explains the issue in detail is available online. They have recommended the semi-PR for Canada. In making its recommendation, the Commission's goal was to balance the benefits of introducing some element of proportionality into the existing system with the capacity to maintain accountable government, most notably as a direct

link between elected politicians and their constituents, while recognizing that there is little appetite for increasing the size of the House.

The Commission, therefore, recommends adding an element of proportionality to Canada's electoral system, and Canada adopt a mixed member proportional electoral system.

The Ballot:

Constituency Vote This vote will help to decide the constituency Member of Parliament for your riding. Vote by placing an X beside the candidate of your choice.		Party/Provincial/Territorial Vote This vote will help to decide the total number of seats for each party in your province or territory. You may vote either for one party, or if you wish, for one of the listed candidates. A vote for a listed candidate will also be counted as a vote for that candidate's party.	
Vote for One Candidate Only		**Eithe**r put an X against the Party of your choice **OR** Put an X against the candidate of your choice	
Candidate A Red Party		o Red Party OR	o Gilles Purple o Emily Orange o Ivan Pink
Candidate B White Party		o White Party OR	o Candidate Name o Candidate Name o Candidate Name
Candidate C Blue Party		o Blue Party OR	o Candidate Name o Candidate Name o Candidate Name
Candidate D Green Party		o Green Party OR	o Candidate Name o Candidate Name o Candidate Name

Sound link

PR 101
http://soundcloud.com/wingwo/activist-workshop-proportional/s-SvxdV