



NEWS RELEASE

British Columbia Civil Liberties Association
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BCCLA supports Single Transferable Vote in referendum

The B.C. Civil Liberties Association endorses the Single Transferable Vote system, which will be considered by B.C. voters in the upcoming May 12 BC Electoral Referendum. The referendum will select one of two formulas to translate votes into seats in the Legislature.

The referendum question asks: "Which electoral system should British Columbia use to elect members to the provincial Legislative Assembly?" Voters are then given a choice between "The existing electoral system (first past the post)" and "The single transferable vote electoral system (BC-STV) proposed by the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform".

"There are many different voting systems, all of which represent voter preferences to some extent," says Tom Sandborn, executive board member of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association. "The BCCLA believes that STV strikes a better balance between local representation, proportionality and voter choice than first-past-the-post."

This is the second time that an electoral reform referendum question has been posed to B.C. voters. In 2005, voters elected to endorse the STV system by a vote of 58% to 42%; however, a margin of 60% of the popular vote was required in the referendum, and the referendum failed by 39,262 votes.

The BCCLA acknowledges that there are many different potential voting systems, but has chosen to endorse STV over the current First Past the Post system because the results of the STV system more closely reflect the actual voting preferences of British Columbians.

"The systems we choose to govern ourselves should seek to maximize a citizen's ability to participate effectively in the democratic process," said Sandborn.

The BCCLA has supported the principle of one person-one vote in the creation of electoral boundaries (see: www.bccla.org/positions/political/85boundaries.html) and the rights of non-aboriginal persons within aboriginal jurisdictions (www.bccla.org/positions/political/00nonaboriginal.html).

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