



PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION REFERENDUM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the pro rep referendum?

Proportional representation (pro rep) is a voting system in which political parties gain seats in proportion to the number of votes cast for them. Pro rep voting systems are in contrast to “winner-takes-all” systems like our current First-Past-the-Post system where voters select one candidate in their riding and, whichever candidate receives the most votes, wins (even if this is a plurality). Pro rep guarantees that every vote counts.

A referendum will be held from October 22 to November 30, 2018 for BC voters to decide what voting system we should use for provincial elections. The referendum voting is by mail and registered voters will receive a package in the mail from Elections BC between October 22 and November 2, 2018. Elections BC must receive your ballot before 4:30 p.m. on Nov. 30. Mail your ballot early to ensure it meets the deadline or drop off your ballot in person (elections.bc.ca/rso)

What are we voting on?

Voters will be asked two questions on the referendum ballot (see example ballot from Elections BC). The first question asks if we should keep the current First-Past-the-Post voting system or move to a system of pro rep. The second question asks voters to rank three pro rep systems.

Why should I vote for pro rep?

- With pro rep, every vote counts.
- Governments that better reflect all of us: Pro rep democracies elect more women to office.
- Increased public funding for health care and social services: Pro rep democracies spend an average of 4.75 percentage points more than majoritarian democracies like BC.
- Better public policy and less inequality: pro rep democracies perform better in a range of policy areas, including reduced inequality and higher scores on the UN Human Development Index.
- More co-operative politics: Pro rep often results in minority or coalition governments where multiple parties have to work together to pass policy. Canada’s most popular social programs – Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, and even public health care – were created under minority federal governments where parties had to work together.

What’s wrong with our current First-Past-the-Post voting system?

- First-Past-the-Post is an outdated system used by few democracies. The US, Canada, and the UK Parliament are outliers that use First-Past-the-Post. However, within the UK, the devolved national governments of Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and London use various pro rep voting systems.
- Over 90 countries use a pro rep voting system including over 80% of OECD countries that are comparable to BC and Canada based on their level of socio-economic development. Specifically, the main problem with First-Past-the-Post is it routinely delivers 100% power to parties with less than

2018 Referendum on Electoral Reform
Ballot

Instructions: To vote, fill in the oval to the right of your choices, like this:
Use black pen or marker. Do not use pencil.

Question 1
Which system should British Columbia use for provincial elections? (Vote for only one.)

The current First Past the Post voting system

A proportional representation voting system

Question 2
If British Columbia adopts a proportional representation voting system, which of the following voting systems do you prefer? (Rank in order of preference. You may choose to support one, two or all three of the systems.)

	1 1st Choice	2 2nd Choice	3 3rd Choice
Dual Member Proportional (DMP)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rural-Urban Proportional (RUP)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>





a majority of the popular vote, and gives parties without majority support the ability to pass laws and policies that are not supported by the majority of the electorate. For more information, see the HSA Pro Rep Research Brief and recommended websites below.

What are the four voting systems on the ballot?

- First-Past-the-Post is our current system in which voters select one candidate and the candidate who receives the most votes wins.
- Mixed Member has voters elect 60% of MLAs from their ridings (as we do now), and the other 40% from regional party lists, such that each party gets a number of seats that corresponds to their share of the popular vote.
- Dual Member would see parties nominate two candidates for each riding. The first seat will go to the first candidate of the party with the most votes; the second seat would be allocated based on the provincial and local popular vote.
- Rural-Urban is a mixed system in which rural MLAs would be elected using the Mixed Member model above, and urban ridings would be combined and elect five to seven MLAs by ranking candidates in order of preference.

What is the best pro rep system on the ballot?

The three pro rep voting systems on the ballot would dramatically enhance fairness and proportionality in our democracy, and each system delivers local representation. For more information, see The Tyee video, the Vote PR BC or Fair Vote Canada websites below.

How were the three pro rep systems determined?

In addition to the public consultation, four principles (proportionality, local representation, simplicity, and size of legislature) were applied in evaluating voting systems for suitability for inclusion on the referendum ballot.

How do I ensure that I can vote in the referendum?

You should make sure that your information is current, especially if you've never registered to vote, moved recently, or changed your name. This will ensure you get your voting package. You can contact Elections BC by

visiting elections.bc.ca/ovr or calling 1.800.661.8683.

Why is there a referendum?

The BC NDP and BC Green Party committed to holding a referendum. Between November 2017 and February 2018, the BC government held a public consultation that was one of the most successful government engagements ever conducted with over 90,000 questionnaire responses and 46 written submissions.

Will I lose my local MLA under pro rep and will rural BC lose representation?

No. All of the pro rep systems on the ballot protect local representation and enhance local accountability. In all three pro rep systems, every MLA will be accountable to either a local riding or region.

If BC votes to switch to a pro rep voting system and we don't like it, can we go back?

Yes, you should feel comfortable voting in favour of pro rep because voters will have a chance, after two elections, to decide on whether to keep pro rep or return to First-Past-the-Post.

Where can I find more information?

- The HSA Pro Rep Toolkit provides resources to help you and your HSA colleagues make an informed decision. www.hsabc.org/pro-rep
- Elections BC is the non-partisan election authority and provides referendum information. You can register to vote in the referendum or update your registration. www.elections.bc.ca/referendum
- Vote PR BC is the official proponent group encouraging British Columbians to vote for pro rep and has many resources and shareable materials available on their website. www.voteprbc.ca
- Fair Vote BC has useful resources on the different pro rep voting systems. www.fairvote.ca/pr4bc
- The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has short commentaries making the case for Pro Rep and why it is likely to produce better public policy than our current system. www.policynote.ca/pr4bc
- The Tyee provides an excellent video that breaks down the three pro rep systems. www.thetyee.ca/News/2018/07/03/BC-Options-Proportional-Representation-Explained/

