

### Proposed Federal NDP PR policy resolution

The federal New Democratic Party reaffirms its commitment to reforming Canada's electoral system through a mixed member proportional representation system for Canada.

The federal NDP will make electoral reform and proportional representation a priority issue within Parliament and in communities across Canada.

This will be a fundamental plank of the next NDP election platform. An NDP government will get elected with a strong mandate to make this needed reform a reality.

Recommended by New Democrats for Fair Voting:

Cec Makowski (Chair), Doug Bailie (Edmonton), Andy Blair (Halifax), Margaret Hoff (London), Michael Polanyi (Toronto), and Wilf Day (Northumberland).

(A similar resolution has already been passed by the Northumberland--Quinte West NDP AGM.)

Explanation:

#### Existing NDP Policy

Renewing Canadian Democracy (Policy Book, sec. 5.2)

New Democrats believe in:

- a. Reforming Canada's electoral system through mixed member proportional representation
- b. Ensuring electoral reform is based on a transparent process with wide citizen involvement
- c. Assisting under-represented and marginalized groups to participate fully in the political process
- d. Protecting the right to vote by ensuring that regulations on voter identity do not unduly restrict a citizen from casting a ballot; and
- e. Investing in public education addressing democracy and politics, primarily for young people.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the federal New Democratic Party make electoral reform and proportional representation a priority issue within the next Parliament and in communities across Canada (NDP Convention Resolution - Adopted June 2011)

#### Tom Mulcair's commitment

This resolution echoes Thomas Mulcair's standard comment during the leadership campaign:

"Coming from Quebec, where we used to see the Bloc Quebecois win twice as many seats as their share of the vote would suggest, I've seen the problems with first-past-the-post up close and personal. We're committed to a fair, proportional voting system. We're not going to abandon that commitment simply because we now benefit from first-past-the-post ourselves. Specifically, the NDP has been advocating a mixed-member

proportional system and I share that objective. This will be a fundamental plank of our next election platform. Canadians are well aware of the pitfalls of our electoral system. They agree with us that change is needed. When we get elected, we will get elected with a strong mandate to address those shortcomings. If needed, we will cooperate with other parties in the House of Commons and the Senate in order to make electoral reform a reality.”

Note: the resolution states no details, but the proposed MMP system will in our opinion include:

- a) Party lists to be nominated, in the four larger provinces, at a regional level rather than a provincial level, just as Ontario NDP policy already states;
- b) voters to have the option of either endorsing the party’s regional list, or casting a personal vote for a candidate within the regional list, as stated in the recommendation of the Law Commission of Canada in 2004.

This will differ from the model defeated in the 2007 Ontario referendum by having lists at a regional rather than provincial level, and giving voters the option of casting a personal vote for a candidate within the regional list.

The Law Commission explained “Based on the feedback received during our consultation process, many Canadian voters would also most likely desire the flexibility of open lists in a mixed member proportional system. Allowing voters to choose a candidate from the list provides voters with the ability to select a specific individual and hold them accountable for their actions should they be elected.”

The similar Ontario NDP PR Policy is:

That the ONDP reaffirms its endorsement of a system of Proportional Representation for Ontario and that it should include these elements:

- a) preservation of the traditional link between voter and MPP by keeping constituency seats;
- b) two votes: one for a local constituency candidate and one for a Party's list of candidates;
- c) Party lists to be developed and applied at a regional rather than provincial level;
- d) restoration and enhancement of democracy through the provision of additional seats in the Legislature;
- e) additional seats to be filled from Party Lists so as to offset disproportionality between the constituency elections and the popular Party vote.”