

About voting alliances

I have a little debate going on the trollbusters list (<http://www.fairvoteginger.qaz.ca/>) about strategic voting and strategic alliances. Below is what I am arguing against, and below is my argument against.

re. electoral alliances: while people like to do things when they see a problem, doing the wrong thing can make matters worse - like bloodletting as a cure for diseases. Electoral alliances are another form of strategic voting and we've all seen how those campaigns have only served to elect more Conservatives. Putting strategic voting on steroids will guarantee Harper another phony majority.

To take local examples, Oshawa has continually been targeted as a potential take-away from the Conservatives yet the Conservative vote goes up more than the minor party votes go down.

In Ajax-Pickering Mark Holland was targeted to hold the riding against a Conservative challenge. He got the same number of votes that he did in 2008 while the Conservatives got an additional 6,000 - the bulk of the increase in voter turnout (about 3/4).

Crunch the numbers. Strategic voting campaigns against the Conservatives only serve to bring out thousands of Conservative voters to defend their party. The more in their face you get about it, the stronger the pushback.

Moreover, strategic voting sends two unfortunate messages. One is that the candidates or their parties aren't strong enough to stand on their own. The other is that our voting system can be fixed if only people voted smarter. Neither is an inspiring message for supporters of either progressive parties or fair voting.

Against

I am not sure just what to do about Dale and his obsession with permanent conservative government. Maybe he should just join the conservative party, or if he already is in it, stick to it and leave FVC alone.

His arguments against strategic voting and voting alliances are ridiculous. It is like saying at the start of a foot race that you can't run too fast or the opponents will think you are trying to win and run faster. This is the ultimate loser attitude.

I wonder where these magical conservative voters come from who pop out of the ground whenever the opponents of conservatives try seriously to win? Are they in Dale's imagination or do they exist on a hard drive somewhere in the office of the chief returning officer of every riding with a tory incumbent?

This incidentally is an important issue that needs to be addressed by people dealing with voter suppression. It is a weakness of our voting system; the incumbent appoints the chief returning officer for the riding. This is why it is important to get voting reform fairly soon and get ideological fanatics like the Harperoids out of office.

I have often wondered just why it is that the opponents of hard line neo-con candidates for office so often seem to be trying to lose. I wonder even more about it when I listen to Dale and his strange numbers which are supposed to show that we will lose if we try to win.

All the voting numbers I see show that the conservatives have a core vote who will vote for them no matter what, and who tend to turn out at elections. But they are a distinct minority and can never get a majority of seats unless they can 1) divide the opposition and 2) suppress the opposition vote. These they have done with a lot of assistance from the opposition leaders.

A voting alliance is something very obvious as a strategy, but takes some doing to put into operation. Strategic voting requires that the strategic voters be as well organized and funded as a political party, in order to be able to track the voting trends and communicate information to its followers. In some places this may be possible. In Canada it seems to be difficult.

A voting alliance could be easier to implement, but still requires a lot of organizing. Some outright intimidation of refractory opposition would be necessary. There is a lot of groundwork to do between now and 2015.

But Joyce Murray seems to have a pretty good plan. It would go into effect only in ridings where a voting alliance local organization can get itself together and request it. Then, the opposition parties agree to some sort of primary and the most effective candidate is supported by all.

In each riding, one Harperista, one alliance candidate, once. After that, we have a new system to work with.

If Joyce Murray gets in as Liberal, fine. If Trudeau gets in, then the campaign is on. He needs to be told very clearly that his nonsense about AV is not acceptable, as is any other kind of phony reform. He must cooperate in an alliance or be on the outside of it.

I think you would be surprised at how quickly the libs drop the AV thing and fall into line with an alliance when they see that there is an effective organization on the ground behind it. Especially, one that can and will work very hard against any defaulter from the alliance.

The basic aim is to clearly brand the defaulting party as the wreckers of the alliance, who would rather keep nation wrecking Harperites in office that put the political games on hold for the good of the nation. Note that you never call it the conservative government or the Liberal party or the NDP. It is the Harper globalists party, the defaulters, party, the cooperators party.

You can have a lot of fun thinking up ways to run the defaulters right out of town at election time. I would get stickers printed up and put them over the D party's signs. I would picket their campaign office, passing out leaflets to their workers asking them why they are working for a party which will not win, but would split the vote. "Come on, don't be a splitter".

If the defaulter candidate goes out door knocking, follow her around with kazoos and cow bells. But of course the most important thing is to have

enough literature to cover every door, explaining the alliance and voting reform.

One other thing that would be important; try and have the cooperating candidate paired up with someone from the other cooperating party wherever she goes. Put two faces on the campaign signs and literature.

So there! It will be interesting to see what these parliament take backers at the democracy salon will come out with. I will be there to report back to you about it.

But as for Gary, it is about time he got it that the vast majority of voting reformers also favor an alliance, and are not convinced by his arguments against it. People get tired of somebody repeating the same thing over and over. You know the definition of a fanatic; someone who won't change his mind or the subject.

This is how a cognitive agent is detected, he or she keeps making the same old arguments, usually shotgun type arguments, ignoring counterarguments. Pretty soon I am going to start thinking that Gary is for the conservatives what Meslin has been for the liberals.

Enough said.