

Fair Vote Ontario anticipates Vote Yes campaign launch in May

A major grassroots campaign for a Yes victory in an October 2007 referendum will likely be launched in May, according to Fair Vote Ontario, an electoral reform group.

Today the Ontario Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform identified its preferred alternative voting system for Ontario – a mixed member proportional (MMP) system. The Assembly will decide on April 15 whether to recommend that system over the status quo, a decision that would trigger an electoral reform referendum to be held with the next provincial election on October 10, 2007.

"We are delighted to see this Assembly of ordinary citizens, one from each Ontario riding, after an extensive education and consultation process, settle on a voting reform that is democratic, fair and proportional," said Joe Murray, Chair of Fair Vote Ontario. "If they decide on April 15 to trigger an electoral reform referendum, a grassroots Vote Yes campaign will be launched soon after."

The Mixed Member Proportional system chosen by the Assembly is similar to those used in Germany, New Zealand, Scotland and Wales. In 2004, the Law Commission of Canada, after a two-year study, recommended an MMP system for federal elections. Likewise, commissions in New Brunswick, PEI and Quebec have recommended MMP systems for those provinces.

The model favoured by the Ontario Assembly expands voter choice. Voters can make two marks on the ballot -- one for the local representative they prefer, and the other for their favorite provincial party. The second vote will be used to allocate 30 percent of the seats from party lists to make results in the Legislature proportional to the parties' overall support.

"Ontarians are tired of casting wasted votes that elect no one and voting strategically rather than sincerely. Ontarians are tired of watching parties without majority support get majority control and seeing legislatures with too few women and minorities," said Larry Gordon, Executive Director of Fair Vote Canada. "The status quo has to go. Ontarians deserve a truly democratic and fair voting system. Thanks to the Citizens' Assembly, we soon may have one."

Fair Vote Ontario is a campaign of Fair Vote Canada, a national multi-partisan citizens' campaign for fair voting.