



3. They say under BC-STV, MLAs will be elected with unequal levels of popular support.

FALSE.

Supporters of the current system often argue that MLAs under BC-STV will need a different percentage of the vote to get elected in different districts.

It is true, that in a two-member district a candidate will need 33.3% of the vote to get elected and in a seven-member district a candidate will need 12.5% of the vote to get elected.

This use of percentages obscures the simple fact that some districts will have more MLAs than others. So while the percentage of the vote necessary to get elected differs, the actual number of votes does not.

If voter turnout is similar to the 2005 election, the vast majority of MLAs will need the support of approximately 20,000 voters in order to get elected. In the predominantly rural districts they will need less (just like the current system) as exceptions to representation by population are made for northern and rural electoral districts.

For the first time in BC we will see most MLAs elected to the Legislative Assembly with reasonably equal support. This is a stark contrast to the flawed current system.

In 2005, Shirley Bond was elected in Prince George-Mount Robson. Shirley Bond held only 5,885 votes, while John Nuraney was elected in Burnaby-Willingdon with 8,754 votes. In the same election, Andrew Black lost in Comox Valley with 13,261 votes and Virginia Green lost in Vancouver-Fairview with 12,114 votes.

How is that equal?

4. They say BC-STV is too complex and complicated for British Columbians to understand.

FALSE.

If you can list things in order of preference, you can understand BC-STV. Suggesting that BC-STV should be rejected

because people cannot understand anything other than placing a single "X" beside a single candidate insults the intelligence of voters.

To say that British Columbians aren't capable of using a system that the Australians and Irish have used for almost 100 years is ridiculous. British Columbians are just as smart as voters in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Australia, Malta and the Republic of Ireland. If they can do it, we can too.

5. They say under BC-STV, political parties who "lose" the election will have too much power.

FALSE.

In fact, it is our current defective system that gives too much power to "losing" political powers.

In 1996, the political party that lost the popular vote nonetheless won a majority government. With First-Past-The-Post only 40-50% of voters have an MLA for whom they voted including those who were forced to vote strategically. Why is throwing away half the people's ballots sensible? Our electoral system shouldn't be about creating losers; it should be about giving as many people as possible an MLA. That way the legislature truly represents the province. With STV, 80-90% of voters will have an MLA they voted for, now that makes sense.

6. They say we can't risk being fair to the voters during the economic downturn.

FALSE.

People who want to preserve the status quo imply that we have to sacrifice fairness to the voter in the interests of good government. They are wrong. By more accurately representing the voters' wishes, STV greatly improves accountability, makes local representation more responsive and will shift us from the extreme policy swings of our current First-Past-The-Post system to consistent and stable policy formation that represents the wishes of the majority. Fairness to the voter leads to better government - we simply can't afford to go without either of them.

This is why we need BC-STV, now more than ever.

7. They say local representation will be reduced.

FALSE.

Rural voters told the Citizens' Assembly that they liked the idea of local representation but that there is plenty of room for improvement. This wish was a key reason the Assembly recommended STV. Currently 50-60% of voters are not represented by the MLA for whom they voted. With so many votes wasted MLAs can concentrate on the largest centre/group in their constituency and ignore everybody else.

With STV, no rural district will be larger than the current federal riding, but there will be more than one MLA to represent them. In addition, over 80% of voters will have an MLA they voted for, so it's not possible for all MLAs to be concentrated in the largest centre. With no safe seats and increased competition, MLAs will only be re-elected if they are responsive to their electorate. If you want your local representation, both rural and urban, to be responsive and effective then vote for BC-STV.

8. They say that all the MLAs in a district might come from the same town.

FALSE.

Under the current First-Past-The-Post system only 40-50% of voters elect an MLA of their choice. This is why MLAs are almost always from the largest community in a constituency. By comparison, 80-90% of voters have an MLA they voted for with BC-STV. Political parties can't afford to waste votes, so in an effort to appeal to as many voters as possible they choose candidates from across the whole district. With almost every voter electing an MLA, the votes in surrounding communities finally count. As with the example of Ireland, MLAs will be spread across the entire district rather than clustered together.

9. They say STV isn't proportional.

FALSE.

Proportionality is not something we have to be subjective about. There is a measurement called the Gallagher's Index that measures disproportionality. Anything with less than 5% disproportionality is considered a proportional system.

STV, which nicely balances proportionality and local representation, scores between 3.5 - 4.5% and is considered a proportional system.

Our current system has a grotesque average of 20% disproportionality. If we want proportional representation, we need BC-STV.

10. They say they're not against electoral reform; they're just against STV.

FALSE.

Actually, the only thing they are for is preserving the status quo. The most vocal opponents of STV have consistently come out against electoral reform. This cynical attempt to divide those citizens who want electoral reform should be seen for what it is – defending the status quo at all costs. Voters from across the country are looking to BC because they know if BC-STV doesn't pass then electoral reform is off the table for a generation. Different systems work best for different jurisdictions; Canadians may well find that, like the United Kingdom, we will end up using several different systems at the provincial and national levels. But in order to keep the promise of electoral reform alive in BC, and in Canada, we have to pass BC-STV on May 12th. Even in BC, electoral reform will still be open for discussion. The Citizens' Assembly required that BC-STV be reviewed after three elections.

Opponents to STV are against electoral reform because the distortions of the current First-Past-The-Post system work in their favour, rather than working for the voter.