

Putting the BC electoral reform referendum in perspective:

Post-referendum poll shows British Columbians appear ready to scrap first-past-the-post and replace it with a fairer voting system

Those who defend the status quo and politics-as-usual will be deeply disappointed to learn that support for a fairer voting system is quite strong in British Columbia, according to a recent poll commissioned by Fair Vote Canada, a national multi-partisan citizens' campaign for electoral reform.

"In the May 12 BC referendum on electoral reform, only 39% voted in favour of the BC-STV voting system that was proposed as a replacement for first-past-the-post, but it would be a mistake to conclude that 61% of voters actually support the status quo," said Bronwen Bruch, President of Fair Vote Canada.

In a post-election survey of 1,000 B.C. residents, conducted by Vancouver polling firm Strategic Communications, 44.3% of those who voted for first-past-the-post in the referendum responded they are in "favour of replacing first-past-the-post with a voting system in which the percentage of seats a party gets in the legislature is more in line with their percentage of the popular vote". For younger voters, those in the 18-34 age range, 52.8% who voted for first-past-the-post in the referendum said they support replacing it with a fairer and more proportional alternative.

"In addition to the 39% who were ready to adopt BC-STV, this means another 27% of the BC electorate appear ready to scrap first-past-the-post for a fairer system," said Arjun Singh, President, Fair Voting BC. "While we didn't get the big breakthrough in the May 12 referendum, we are delighted to see this level of support for electoral reform. The challenge now is to keep working with voters to learn about fair voting systems and to ensure everyone has the information necessary to make an informed decision on electoral reform."

"This poll illustrates how politicians and the media have misread electoral reform referendum results across the country in recent years," said Larry Gordon, Executive Director of Fair Vote Canada. "Those who want to protect the status quo have been effective in attacking specific alternatives proposed in electoral reform referendums. But despite the referendum results, Canadians still understand at a gut level that the current electoral system is unfair and that a fairer and more proportional alternative is needed."

The survey was conducted online, using a standard 'survey panel' of more than 450,000 potential respondents, from June 22-29, 2009. The final sample of 1,000 interviews is proportional (by age, gender, and region) to the adult B.C. population as reported in the most recent (2006) census.

[Fair Vote Canada](#) (FVC) is a national multi-partisan citizens' campaign to promote voting system reform. FVC was founded in 2001 and has a National Advisory Board of distinguished Canadians from all points on the political spectrum.

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