



NEWS RELEASE

Canada's first-past-the-post is the most transparent voting system, allows voters to hold governments accountable

August 30, 2016
For immediate release

TORONTO—Canada's first-past-the-post electoral system is simple and transparent and allows voters to hold governments accountable, argues a new essay released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

"With the ongoing Parliamentary committee investigating alternative voting methods, and in the discussions about electoral reform, the implication is that our present way of voting is deeply flawed," said John Pepall, essay author and writer on politics, law and Canadian history. "However, first-past-the-post is simple. Voters and candidates understand how it works, and since governments can easily be defeated under our system, it helps ensure accountability."

The essay, *First-Past-the-Post: Empowered Voters, Accountable Government*, looks at several voting systems, including first-past-the-post (FPTP), preferential voting, and proportional representation systems like mixed-member proportional and single transferrable vote.

It finds the benefits of first-past-the-post —simplicity, transparency and accountability—make it not only the best way of electing governments, but also the easiest way to defeat them by voting them out.

In fact, in countries that elect governments using proportional representation, major parties have remained in power for decades despite wide fluctuations in the vote count. For example, in the 50 years after 1945 in 103 elections in Belgium, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland, the major governing party was voted out of government only six times.

"First-past-the-post is still the most widely used voting system in democratic countries and the only system that gives the people a clear choice in deciding who forms their government," said Lydia Miljan, a senior fellow at the Fraser Institute and associate professor of political science at the University of Windsor.

"The alternatives, as we can see in examples all over the world, may cause many more problems than they claim to solve," Miljan said.

This is the third of several essays (comprising a book) on electoral reform in Canada to be released over the next several months.

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The Fraser Institute is an independent Canadian public policy research and educational organization with offices in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal and ties to a global network of think-tanks in 87 countries. Its mission is to improve the quality of life for Canadians, their families and future generations by studying, measuring and broadly communicating the effects of government policies, entrepreneurship and choice on their well-being. To protect the Institute's independence, it does not accept grants from governments or contracts for research. Visit www.fraserinstitute.org

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