



KEEP OUR ELECTORAL PROCESS
SIMPLE, STABLE + SUCCESSFUL

News Release

December 20, 2018

No BC Proportional Representation Society elated at 3rd BC electoral system referendum victory for First Past The Post!

VANCOUVER – The No BC Proportional Representation Society – the official opponent group in the BC electoral systems referendum – is elated at the voters’ decision announced today to retain First Past The Post – the third time in 13 years!

61.3% of valid returns voted to keep our current First Past the Post system. 42.6% of registered voters in BC returned their ballots.

“We argued from day one that British Columbia was well served by our simple, stable and successful First Past The Post electoral system – and we are elated that a majority of voters again agreed!” said Society President Bill Tieleman.

“We thank the hundreds of thousands of voters who supported First Past The Post and the thousands of volunteers and donors who backed our strong campaign,” says Tieleman, a veteran New Democrat who led opposition in both previous referenda. “This was a non-partisan campaign that brought together people from all political persuasions and those with none at all.”

“It’s time now to focus on voters’ priorities and not on complicated and confusing electoral systems that have been repeatedly rejected. It’s time to work on issues that matter – from jobs and the economy to health care and education to social programs and the environment,” Tieleman said.

Society Vice-President Suzanne Anton, a former BC Liberal Attorney General, said the campaign win came with support right across the province and from all communities.

“We want to particularly thank our very active Chinese language volunteer campaign and our Indo-Canadian volunteer campaign, who worked tremendously hard to get our message out in all languages and parts of BC,” Anton said. “And our success shows that politicians should not make this a partisan issue but leave it in the hands of citizens, where it should be.”

Bob Plecas, Society Treasurer and a retired veteran deputy minister under many different governments and parties, and a veteran of all three referenda, said despite an unfair referendum process set up for Proportional Representation to

win, the voters struck back. The second lowest turnout in referenda history of only 41 per cent demonstrates voter disgust with the process.

“This biased process was fundamentally unfair from the get go. A ballot that did not give the most important details about the three Proportional Representation systems proposed: no riding boundaries; no decision on whether ridings would have one, two or up to seven MLAs; not even a decision on whether we would have one or two votes,” Plecas said.

“Let it go – the people, the ultimate speaker of truth to power—are clearly saying let Proportional Representation finally disappear from the agenda because voters clearly have very different priorities than the NDP or Greens in this regard - and they should not be asked to tolerate yet another attempt to foist this foreign system on our province.” Plecas concluded, “If you want electoral reform, fix it within the current system, and that is possible”.

Tieleman also thanked the Society’s campaign coordinator, Kent Verge, and advisor Jess Ketchum for their strong efforts.

“Kent Verge did a great job, pulling together many strings in this campaign and ensuring we stayed on track throughout – we are indebted to him for his dedication and expertise,” Tieleman said. “Jess Ketchum added his enormous political strategist skills to our campaign and made a huge difference.”

Anton thanked the Society’s marketing and advertising agency, Curve Communications, for creating television and online ads and handling social media advertising throughout the campaign.

“We gave Curve Communications an extremely difficult assignment at a time when public opinion polls appeared to show majority support for Proportional Representation,” Anton said. “We didn’t believe that and Curve went out and helped us prove it – we are extremely grateful.”

Plecas added thanks for the Society’s pollster – Ipsos. “We hired Ipsos based on its stellar reputation, to help inform our campaign and keep us connected to voters – they did a great job throughout,” he said.

Anton said the Society will continue to function for the immediate future in case the issue is not finally considered to be decided.

“We deeply hope that all parties both understand and respect the will of BC voters – to put Proportional Representation away for good,” Anton said. “But in the unhappy event that any party continues to pursue this bad dream, we will be there to alert voters.”

For more information: Bill Tieleman, cell 778-896-0964 or Suzanne Anton, cell 604-970-6961 or Bob Plecas, cell 1-250-507-5790 or Amanda Bates – Curve Communications – cell 604-306-0027

Website: <https://nbcprorep.ca/>