

The Ballot - December 2006

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From the Chair



At this point, we've completed about half of our scheduled consultation meetings and received hundreds of written submissions. For me, reading the submissions, and listening to presentations and discussions at meetings, have underlined the importance of public participation in this process.

Whether we're hearing from those of you who have been thinking about electoral systems for a long time, or those who have just begun to think about them, every opinion we hear will inform our decision.

There are still many opportunities for you to get involved: you can [register](#) to make a presentation at a public meeting, [attend a meeting](#) and participate in the discussion, or [send written comments](#) to the Assembly.

Whichever way you choose to participate in the Assembly process, what's most important is that your voice will be heard.

George Thomson



Deadline for Written Comments Extended

The Assembly has extended the deadline for written comments until January 31, 2007. You can submit your comments [online](#), or by [mail or fax](#). You can write a few sentences, a few paragraphs, or more, so please write whatever it takes to get your point across.

Visit our [website](#) for details, and to download our consultation guide [Citizens Talking to Citizens](#) (PDF).

The Assembly wants to hear what you have to say.

Consultation Restarts in January

Assembly members are taking a short break to enjoy the holiday season with their families—we

hope you are doing the same!.

Consultation meetings will begin again on January 8 th, 2007. Check the [schedule](#) to find the one nearest you. Remember, you can [register](#) to make a presentation, or attend a meeting to participate in the discussion (no registration required). Either way, what you say will be recorded and shared with the entire Assembly to inform their deliberations which begin in February.

Update on the Students' Assembly



**The Students' Assembly
on Electoral Reform**

The Students' Assembly on Electoral Reform released its [interim report](#) (PDF) earlier this month. The report is a summary of the activities and decisions that came out of the Students' Assembly's one week of learning and deliberating in November. Phase two of the initiative involves classroom assemblies across the province, visit [their site](#) to find out how you can get involved.

The Students' Assembly will present its final report to the Citizens' Assembly in February, 2007.

Capstone Course

In a first ever collaboration, students from the political science department and Osgoode Hall Law School at York University, and students from the University of Toronto Law School, participated this past semester in a directed reading course studying electoral systems and citizens' assemblies generally and the Ontario Citizens Assembly specifically. In addition to a series of research papers written by the students, their course culminated in a final debate to determine their recommendation for Ontario's electoral system moderated by George Thomson, the Chair of the Citizen's Assembly. This debate was video taped and will be posted on our site shortly.

The Ballot with Dr. Rose



Ontario is not the only place considering making a change to its electoral system. Recently, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced that his government would introduce legislation giving citizens the ability to vote for Senators.

If passed, the legislation would allow voters to rank Senatorial candidates on the ballot. Candidates who reach a quota of the vote in each province would become the government's nominees to fill vacant Senate seats. The quota would ensure that all seats are filled and that as few votes as possible are "wasted." It

would do this by transferring the votes of the last placed candidate and redistributing those votes to the others. It would also allow votes in excess of the quota to be transferred to other candidates. If adopted, Canada would join Australia in using this method of selecting members of the Upper House.

And now a skill-testing question: What is the electoral system that the Prime Minister is proposing called? Read next month's issue of The Ballot Box to find out.

New on our Site

New content is being added to the Citizens' Assembly website every week. Recently launched areas include:

- [Summaries of Public Meetings](#) (More summaries online!)
- [Consultation Meeting Schedule](#) (Details of additional meetings are now available.)
- [Deliberation Phase Meeting Dates](#)

Contact Us

Questions or comments about The Ballot? Send an e-mail to: theballot@citizensassembly.gov.on.ca

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