

Submission to:
Ontario Standing Committee on Justice Policy
Regarding Bill-218

by

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Please remove the section on prohibiting ranked ballots from Bill-218.

The Premier of Ontario famously claims to work “*for the people*”. Ontarians hope - nay, *expect* - that this would necessarily include *listening* to them.

Our elections are supposed to be one essential means for the people to “*have their say*” yet our legacy institutions in Canada reliably turn a deaf ear to half of the people who are trying to have their say to our governments. This is true at all levels but in Ontario our municipalities are “*children*” of the province: you set the rules they have to play by and, so, you are responsible for the successes and failures of municipal democracy. Let's try to succeed.

Two changes to our electoral institutions would enable voters to more clearly and more inclusively “*have their say*” and to have politicians *mind* what they say: *multi-member districts* and *preferential ballots*. Many municipalities already have multi-member or at-large elections. The legislation of the previous Ontario government opened the door for them to facilitate their constituents to meaningfully raise their voices and be heard in greater numbers... to elect governments “*for the people*”.

Toronto, for example, has a long history of multi-member wards and has only recently moved away from these for the time being. However, the language in your Bill-5 robbed the City's long-standing self determination in this regard. With different language, Toronto would have retained the power to re-establish multi-member wards even whilst remaining within your 25-councillor limit. With preferential ballots in those multi-member wards Toronto could materially enhance its “listening” ability.

Taking both of these options away from Ontario municipalities makes voting more of a crap shoot and government much, much *less* “*for the people*”.

Respectfully, I request that you remove the prohibition on ranked ballots from Bill-218.

Instead, perhaps you can give Toronto back a degree of self-determination in the form of the power to choose to use multi-member wards... just like every other municipality in the province.

I'd be happy to elaborate at your convenience.

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