On June 7th 2016, the House of Commons undertook a motion to establish an Electoral Reform (ERRE) committee. The Special Committee on Electoral Reform (the ERRE Committee) engaged Canadians nationwide to obtain their views on how to reform the federal election system. The ERRE Committee's mandate was to "identify and conduct a study of viable alternate voting systems to replace the first-past-the-post system, as well as to examine mandatory voting and online voting, and to assess the extent to which the options identified could advance".

The students in Prof. Tracy Coates' CDN1101 Introduction to Canada Studies course studied the voting reform issue throughout the Fall 2016 semester. After completing various internal studies among the members of the CDN1101 class, the class submitted the following report to the ERRE Committee. Following the issuance of the ERRE Committee's recommendations, a short in-class comparative review found considerable overlap between the class' findings and the findings of the ERRE Committee. As a final step in the learning process for the class, we attended Question Period at the House of Commons in December 2016 where the class learned that the government would likely not be moving forward on the ERRE Committee's recommendations.

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In the survey carried out by class, majority of the participants are within the voting age group. 38.5% of the respondents are male, 57.7% are females and 3.8% identify as non-binary. Majority of the students understand the existing First-Past-the-Post system and they oppose it. Majority of the class proposed that the current voting system be replaced with a form of proportional representation, where the number of seats in parliament approximates each party’s share of the vote. About 50% of the class participants believe that the Mixed Member Proportional system is an excellent choice for Canada. The current voting system is problematic because it creates an unfair amount of power for the winning party. 57.7% of the participants suggested that a large share of votes should count to elect representatives in line with voter's’ political preference. The mass of the class wants their vote to matter equally in safe ridings or swing ridings. A fraction of the class also believes that mandatory voting will help Canada prosper and they would like to see strategies formed to ensure that younger voters and indigenous people have easier access to vote.

In the survey conducted in class, the majority of our class believes that it would be in the best interests for the Electoral Systems and Electoral Reform committee to recommend to Parliament in their report that government move forward on Electoral Reform by adopting a Mixed Member Proportional electoral system. This recommendation would ensure that every vote counts, and that every single Canadian has a voice in Parliament that reflects their values.

The group polled in our survey also proposed youth voter incentives and Indigenous voter incentives to encourage more voter turnout. Our survey results suggest that if the government and Elections Canada was to initiate the process of reaching out to young Canadians using the mediums that the younger generation uses it would help to increase the overall voter turnout among young Canadians. The inclusion of more Polling Locations on Reservations, initiatives to make it easier to register to vote or to vote on election day would increase the voter turnout of Indigenous Canadians and young adults.

This questionnaire and survey allowed for an in-depth analysis of a small scaled concentration group of the millennial generation. It showed that out of 26 people, only 26.9% understood Canada’s existing First-past-the-post system and how governments are elected under this system, while 34.6% understood it quite well, leaving 38.4% not being familiar with it or understanding it at all. 53.8% thought that it was mostly unfair with the current system including all voters and political parties, while 26.9% found it acceptable, 15.4% finding it very unfair, and 3.8% not knowing. 53.8% find the fact that there is no requirement for the winning party to have majority voter support to form a majority government as being problematic as it gives an unfair amount of power to the winning party, and 34.6% agreeing that is profoundly undemocratic and that the share of seats should be equal to the share of votes. 73.1% of people found or thought that the government should be obligated to consult with other parties and make compromises.

As per principles and values on a scale of 0 through 4 — 4 being the highest agreement and 0 completely disagreeing, 38.5% of participants found that voters should be voting strategically. 24 people fell between 3 and 4 (12 for 3 at 46.2% and 12 for 4 at 46.2%) thought that the number of parliamentary seats of each party should correspond to its share of the popular vote. Majority found that as large a share of votes as possible should count to elect representatives in line with the voters’ political preferences (57.7% at 4), and found that votes should matter equally in safe ridings or swing ridings (46.2% at 3 and 46.2% at 4).
For voter engagement, 76.9% agreed that there would be more reason to vote by making all votes count equally. While majority agree that we should encourage collaboration and compromise among parties and greater civility when discussing policy options. Majority disagreed that we should make it easy to have majority governments led by the party with the greatest share of seats with or without a majority votes of cast. 84% off the group sat on neutral ground to encourage the formation of coalition governments representing a majority of the electorate. As for making it easier for independents to be elected, majority of the concentration group found that it should be made easier — 57.7%. It was at disagreement that it should be easier for new parties to form and prosper. It was neutral at 50% the avoid the election of MPs from too many small parties and at agreement to avoid the dominance of two major parties at 46.2%.

For accessibility and inclusiveness, 65.4% agreed that the process of voting should be as easy as possible for voters. 30.8% of participants sat neutral on avoiding increasing the frequency of elections, while another 30.8% were for this. It was unilateral that more women should be elected to parliament at 57.7%

61.5% agreed that our democratic system should ensure that it is based on strong principles of integrity and that measures are taken to safeguard every aspect of the process.

34.6% sat neutral on prioritizing having one simple MP per riding, while 57.7% agreed that we should prioritize multi-member ridings or top-up regions large enough to ensure proportionality. 73.1% agreed that voters should elect representatives across the country in proportion to their share of votes in each region. 46.2% agreed that there should be surety of the loyalty of MPs to their local constituency does not override their duty to work for the public good at the national level. 57.7% agreed that MPs should be elected based on them being attentive to local issues and can help constituents with personal issues. 76% said that politicians should be encouraged to take long-term policy perspective. 36% sat neutrally on avoiding large policy swings due to small change voters preferences, while 48% agreed on this. 88.4% agreed that the best representatives are elected in each party.

69.2% were familiar with the proposal to introduce ranked ballots while retaining the winner-take-all approach that we have now, while 26.9% were not too familiar with it. 76.9% are familiar with the proposal to introduce a Mixed Member Proportional system (MMP), based on larger ridings combining with the use of top-up seats on a regional basis to ensure proportionality. 42.3% were unfamiliar with the Single Transferable Vote system (STV), while 57.7% were familiar with it. 50% were unfamiliar with the hybrid options being put forward to combine multi-member ridings in cities with single-member ridings in cities with a single-member or to member ridings in rural areas, while adding a small number of top-up seats to ensure proportionality while 42.3% were familiar with it. 80.8% agreed to change the current First-past-the-Post system with some form of proportional representation, where the number of seats in parliaments match the number of votes.

73.1% agreed that some version of Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) would be an excellent choice for Canada. 38.5% sat neutrally on some version of single transferable vote (STV), while 38.5% somewhat agreed to this. 38.5% sat neutrally on a rural-urban hybrid option involving a mix of multi-member ridings, while 38.5% also somewhat agreed to this. 34.6% sat neutral on whether compulsory voting might be good to boost voter turnout, while 30.8% highly agreed
with this being beneficial. 38.5% agreed that online voting might be a good way to boost voter turnout.

With these statistics, the medium of the concentration group fell between the ages of 20-29, 57.7% being female, 38.5% being male, and 3.8% being non-binary or LGBTQ2. Majority of voters reside in Ontario at 80.6%, while 19.4% being outside of Ontario. Majority reside in a city of over 100,000 residents at 80.8%. 50% said to have voted for their first choice as opposed to the 15.4% that voted strategically and the 34.6% that did not vote.