

# FAIR VOTE CANADA - STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

*Adopted by the FVC members in August 20, 2009*

Fair Vote Canada seeks broad multi-partisan support to embody in new legislation the basic principle of democratic representative government and ultimate safeguard of a free society: the right of each citizen to equal treatment under election laws and equal representation in legislatures.

We campaign for equal effective votes and fair representation at every level of government and throughout civil society by various means including lobbying legislators for electoral law reform, litigation, public education, citizens' assemblies, and referenda.

To create an equal voice for every citizen and give democratic legitimacy to our laws we must reform our electoral institutions, political parties, public political funding mechanisms and governing processes to achieve these interdependent goals:

**Proportional representation** - The supporters of all candidates and political parties must be fairly represented in our legislatures in proportion to votes cast. Political parties should have seats in close proportion to their popular support.

**Positive voter choice** - We need fair and unrestricted competition among political parties presenting democratically-nominated candidates. A democratic voting system must encourage citizens to exercise positive choice by voting for the candidate or party they prefer. They should not find it necessary to embrace negative or strategic voting – to vote for a less-preferred candidate to block the election of one even less preferred. Never should citizens be denied representation simply because their preferred candidate cannot win a single-member riding.

**Fair Representation** - To reflect in the legislatures the diversity of society we must change the voting system and related laws to remove barriers to the nomination and election of candidates from groups now underrepresented including women, cultural minorities and Aboriginals.

**Geographic representation** - We must change the voting system and related laws to give rural and urban voters in every province, territory and regional community effective votes and fair representation in both government and opposition.

**Government accountability to voters** - Legislators representing a majority of voters must determine the laws and guide their administration.