

## July 2010 / juillet 2010

[\(Cliquez ici pour la version française.\)](#)

For the latest news on voting system reform, visit [www.fairvote.ca](http://www.fairvote.ca).

- **UK electoral reform referendum in May 2011**
- **Upcoming election: new opportunities?**
- **Reform in your own backyard: does your NGO use PR?**
- **New Democrats for Fair Voting**
- **Fair Vote Canada t-shirts – fashion for fair voting!**
- **Welcome to new chapters in Calgary and Durham Region (ON)**
- **2010 AGM and election of FVC officers**

### UK electoral reform referendum in May 2011

Pending passage of enabling legislation, British voters will go to the polls in May 2011 to vote in a referendum on whether to scrap the first-past-the-post system in favour of another winner-take-all voting system, the Alternative Vote (AV), which is sometimes called instant run-off voting. With AV, voters still elect just one MP per riding, but use a ranked ballot. Studies have shown that if used in federal elections in Canada, AV would have the dubious distinction of possibly creating more distorted election results than we have with first-past-the-post.

While the UK coalition agreement between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats specified a referendum on AV, some [reformers](#) and current and former [politicians](#) are still demanding that a proportional alternative be added to the referendum.

“We’re disappointed the Liberal Democrats backed down on their long-standing demand for PR, but take heart that the British Parliament, one of the oldest legislative bodies in the world, may soon cast off first-past-the-post, the oldest voting system in the world,” said FVC President Bronwen Bruch. “Now it’s time for Canada’s political leaders to initiate a process to implement a fair and proportional voting system in this country.”

### Upcoming election: opportunity arising?

Since the formation of Britain’s first post-WWII coalition government, the possibility of coalition government in Canada has become a hot topic in political circles and the media. Columnist and television commentator Chantal Hebert recently wrote that the Liberal Party needs to “abandon their faith in short-term electoral short cuts and rethink their approach to a more proportional voting system.”

Polls continue to show that no party has enough voter support to form a majority government – and that means that opportunity is knocking! Come September – whether a fall election is on the horizon or not – Fair Vote Canada will gear up our federal campaign. Stay tuned for details.

In the meantime, please sign and continue to circulate the Declaration of Voters' Rights ([online](#) and [paper](#) versions). Fair voting is more than an "issue". It's a fundamental democratic right. Let's raise our voices!

## **Reform in your own backyard: is your NGO using PR?**

Fair Vote Canada recently helped the Toronto Cyclists Union hold its first board of directors election using a proportional voting system. One important way to build public support for PR in political elections is to spread the use of PR in civil society organizations.

Fair Vote members who sit on boards of NGOs should press for the use of fair voting systems for your own board elections. If you would like to bring fair voting to your NGO, check our website for helpful information sheets [add link] or contact the FVC office for assistance or advice: [office@fairvote.ca](mailto:office@fairvote.ca).

## **New Democrats for Fair Voting**

Attention NDP supporters – please join New Democrats for Fair Voting on Facebook [add link]. Initiated by FVC Vice President Mark Greenan, with former NDP MP Lorne Nystrom serving as honorary chair, this caucus will be working within the NDP to promote a strong party position on proportional representation – specifically, making it one of the NDP's election issues and a condition for supporting any future minority government or coalition.

FVC reps recently met with NDP leader Jack Layton and NDP democratic reform critic David Christopherson. Followup work is required, so NDPers – please join the caucus today!

## **Fair Vote Canada t-shirts – fashion for fair voting!**

Those who attended the AGM in Ottawa already know about the fabulous new Fair Vote Canada t-shirts. They were selling like hotcakes!

We have two styles. The first is a black shirt with FVC logo, available in either English or French. For those wanting an edgier look we recommend our white t-shirt with the slogan "Electoral Dysfunction: There is a cure!", showing a silhouette of Parliament, with a drooping Peace Tower. The shirts, including shipping charges, are \$30.00 each (or \$20 if you can pick them up from a Toronto location). To arrange purchase, call 416-410-4034 or email [office@fairvote.ca](mailto:office@fairvote.ca).

## **Welcome to new FVC chapters in Calgary and Durham Region (ON)**

We're pleased to announce that Fair Vote Canada now has active new chapters Calgary and Oshawa. Thanks to Calgary member Kirk Werklund and Oshawa member Jesse Cullen for initiating the chapter development process, and to the other FVC members in those areas

who rallied to the call. Other members wishing to organize local chapters please call 416-410-4034 or email [office@fairvote.ca](mailto:office@fairvote.ca).

## **2010 AGM and election of FVC officers**

We will soon have online videos of our AGM speakers with excellent presentations from activists Judy Rebick, Vanessa Gordon and Mercedez Roberge; Liberal MP Carolyn Bennett and NDP MP Paul Dewar; political consultant Walter Robinson; and political scientists Peter Russell, Henry Milner and Bob MacDermid.

After the AGM, the FVC National Council met and elected it's officers: Bronwen Bruch (Oakville, ON), President; Mark Greenan (Toronto, ON), Vice President; Jamie Deith (Courtenay, BC), Treasurer; Shoni Field (Vancouver, BC), Secretary; and Andy Blair (Ottawa, ON), At-Large.