

# DMP reflects Islanders' values

Voters should judge plebiscite options on actual merits, not where their inventors are from

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RE: Editorial off base in support of DMP. As the inventor of the Dual Member Proportional (DMP) voting system, I would like to respond to Peter McKenna's opinion piece from November 2nd. McKenna's first criticism of DMP is that I am from Alberta. It's a puzzling objection. P.E.I.'s current electoral system, First-Past-the-Post, wasn't created on the Island. It doesn't even have its origins in Canada. In fact, all of the options in the plebiscite are versions of systems from other continents — except for DMP, which I developed to reflect the values Canadians have expressed they want to see in their voting system.



In particular, DMP reflects many of the values Islanders have expressed in this debate. DMP retains local representation and accountability, as each MLA would represent a two-member district.

This would not only build on P.E.I.'s history of using twomember districts, it would also result in more people being represented by a candidate of their choice.

Indeed, based on past elections in P.E.I., more than 70 per cent of Islanders, on average, would have a local representative that they voted for in their district.

While McKenna rightly points out that an NDP or Green Party candidate may be elected to a second seat in a district with only 20 per cent support, he fails to mention that the candidate elected to the first seat would most often capture more than 40 per cent of the local vote.

Therefore, at least 60 per cent of the voters in such a district would be represented by a candidate they voted for, rather than 20 per cent as McKenna implies or 40 per cent as is typical under the current system. Most importantly, DMP would ensure that every Islander's vote is reflected in the makeup of the Legislative Assembly.

Islanders should judge the five plebiscite options based on their actual merits, not where their inventors are from. Excellent resources for DMP have been put together by Elections P.E.I. at

www.yourchoicepei.ca and the P.E.I. Coalition for Proportional Representation at peipr.ca. I have also posted my research and educational resources at DMPforCanada.com. However, since McKenna has chosen to cast the fact that I am from Alberta in a negative light, I would like to say a few words about it.

Just over a year ago, I submitted my work to P.E.I.'s Special Committee on Democratic Renewal for consideration. I did this not as an Albertan wishing to meddle in the political affairs of P.E.I., but as a Canadian who is deeply committed to our democracy. I started working on the issue of electoral reform because I firmly believe that citizens must be the basis of our governments' authority and that every vote cast in an election should mean something.

Unfortunately, as a consequence of the First-Past-the-Post voting system, that second democratic value is not a reality in Canada.

Everyone's vote, whether they are from Alberta or P.E.I., should matter come election time, and I am committed to assisting in making this a reality.

That is why I responded to questions posed to me by members of the Special Committee when DMP was chosen for further study, why I worked with staff at Elections P.E.I. when they needed clarification on how DMP works, and that is why I have spent hundreds of hours over the course of this year to make sure Islanders have the educational resources they need to make an informed decision in this plebiscite.

Regardless of the outcome of the plebiscite next Monday, it has been an honour to volunteer my time and to be of service to Islanders in making this important decision.