

11 September 2009

Electoral Boundaries Commission
Suite 100,
11510 Kingsway Ave
Edmonton, Alberta
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St. Albert, Alberta.
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Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit two ideas for your consideration in your work in revising the Alberta electoral division boundaries to make this province the most democratic in Canada. These suggestions when adopted will support democracy in Alberta.

I am extremely disappointed that your mandate is to ensure that the population in each electoral division is within 25% of the provincial average. This is inherently undemocratic as it allows for as much as a 50% discrepancy in the number of voters in any two divisions - one 25 % under and one 25% over the provincial average. While there is allowance for special circumstances such as the northern part of the province, with these few exceptions 25 % allowable difference should be reduced to 10%.

The second suggestion is to eliminate the practice of combining rural and urban parts in the same electoral divisions. Experience shows that urban and rural voters have different priorities and concerns. They also tend to vote in different proportions for different political parties. Thus, for example, by putting an equal number of rural and urban voters in an electoral division, the voting patterns of rural voters will swamp the voting pattern of the urban voters (e.g. if 70% of rural voters vote for political party "X" while only 40 % of the urban voters vote for party "X" that party wins. This is undemocratic as it gives one section of the constituency more voting power). In addition, the elected MLA must try to balance often conflicting concerns and attitudes between rural and urban voters. The MLA can find himself/herself in the difficult position of trying to reconcile irreconcilable points of view. Separate urban and rural electoral divisions will resolve these problems. This suggestion does not reduce the political views of rural Albertans any more than it enhances the voting power of urban voters. It is simply more democratic.

Once again thank you for the opportunity to provide input to your task of revising the electoral boundaries. I expect that the results of your work will be the envy of all who believe in a democratic process.


Bryan Corbett

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chief electoral office