

# THE SIMPLE VOTE PR ELECTORAL METHOD

## How it works + SVPR Outcomes

### What is the Simple Vote PR electoral method?

'Simple Vote PR' is an electoral method that achieves full proportional representation (PR) in a national or regional legislative body.

**SVPR is simple for voters**, and treats every vote equally. It achieves proportional representation without changing how Members of Parliament (MPs) or provincial Legislatures are elected, does not enlarge or change the nature of electoral districts, keeps the number of MPs close to current levels, and maintains direct local accountability of almost all MPs.

Proportional representation is achieved by adding votes in parliament to MPs of parties that were 'short-changed' in an election, so that a political party's share of votes in parliament is the same as its share of the overall popular vote in an election.

Every vote cast for a voter's preferred local candidate of a political party counts towards parliamentary voting power of that party, whether the local candidate wins or loses. 99% of all valid votes cast are counted. In contrast, in today's electoral system, if a candidate does not win, his/her vote is discarded by the system.

### How it works:

At the ballot box in each voting district, all registered political parties are listed, including those without a candidate in the district. All candidates for the district, including those without party affiliation, are listed.

1. Voters choose a single district candidate or party to represent them. The candidate receiving more votes than any other becomes the only Member of Parliament for the district.
2. Political parties receiving less than a pre-determined percentage of the popular vote (for example, 3%) are excluded from the Parliament, unless they elect a candidate to Parliament. As a respect to democracy, a low is threshold recommended.
3. Once votes across the country are compiled, the voting power of parties represented in Parliament is then (electronically, instantly) brought into line with each party's share of the popular vote, by awarding additional parliamentary votes – rather than additional MPs – to parties that were 'short-changed' in the election, based on their share of the popular vote. This "Parliamentary Vote Entitlement" (PVE), rather than each MP having one vote, is what is used for voting on items presented to parliament.
4. Additional MPs are awarded from party lists to the most under-represented parties, based on PR – for example, a party with 3% of all seats in parliament but should have 10% of all seats. The awarded seats give those parties a human presence and a functional capability. A limit to the number of party list seats is established by legislation prior to any general election (for example, a number of seats equal to no more than 5% of the total number of elected MPs).
5. Because election by plurality may result in no representation in a province (or territory) by a particular political party, SVPR enables the addition of a few 'Regional Members' selected from party lists in those provinces based on pre-determined limits, to give those parties a voice to government. It would normally be pre-set by legislation to be given to larger parties (for example, parties that have won 10% of the national popular vote).

- The average voting power of each Member of a political party in Parliament is then determined by dividing each party's total Parliamentary Voting Entitlement equally among the number of that party's Members. Alternatively, party leaders may allocate their PVE differently, to balance out inequities in gender, ethnicity, geography, etc. The end result is that the number of votes in parliament exceeds the number of MPs. In no case should an MP have less than one full vote.
- Elected Members who have no party affiliation have a vote in Parliament equal to the overall average parliamentary vote per party Member.

A summary of an example of how the votes of a national (or provincial) an election are instantly transformed from the current winner-take-all electoral system to parliamentary power based on proportional representation is shown in the table.

<b>Summary</b> (Read left to right)	Popular Vote (1)	% of all Votes	% of All Seats	Elected MPs (1)	Ratio of Seats to Popular Vote (3)	Most Advantaged Party (3)	Parliamentary Vote Entitlement (3) *	Party List Top-Up MPs (4)**	Regional MPs (5)	Total Number of MPs (6)	Average Vote Per MP (6)
Party A	900,000	37.9%	36.2%	50	0.93		90.0	0	0	50	1.8
Party B	750,000	31.6%	36.2%	50	1.12		75.0	0	0	50	1.5
Party C	400,000	16.8%	14.5%	20	0.84		40.0	0	10	30	1.3
Party D	150,000	6.3%	10.9%	15	1.68	X	15.0	0	0	15	1.0
Party E	75,000	3.2%	0.7%	1	0.22		7.5	6	0	7	1.1
Party F	40,000	1.7%	0.0%	0	Excluded		0.0	0	0	0	0.0
Party G	25,000	1.1%	0.7%	1	0.67		2.5	1	0	2	1.3
<b>Total for Parties</b>	2,340,000	98.5%	99.3%	137	1.0		230.0	7	10	154	1.5
Independent MP	25,000	1.1%	0.7%	1			1.5	n/a	n/a	1	1.5
<b>Totals</b>	2,365,000	99.6%	100.0%	138	1.0		231.5	7	10	155	1.5

\* Instantly calculated from Party D: 15 seats div.by 6.5% of Votes for parties = 230.0. 230.0 is then multiplied by each party's % of its popular vote.

\*\* Instantly calculated for (in this example) parties with less than 5% of all seats, and limited to an addition of 15% of all seats.

## Canada Fair Vote: Outcomes and Impacts

- The tradition of exactly one vote in parliament for each Member of Parliament is ended. Most Members are given additional votes, including fractions of a vote, to reflect the percentage of the popular vote received by their party. The number of votes in parliament will exceed the number of Members. Section 49 in Canada's Constitution states that "Questions arising in the House of Commons shall be decided by a Majority of Voices". However, "Voices" is not defined, and could be defined in legislation as "the expression of the popular vote as represented by the number of parliamentary votes of each Member of Parliament, and that such parliamentary votes be determined in a manner that achieves voting power in proportion to the overall popular vote for political parties as occurred in the most recent general election, and as may be modified by subsequent by-elections", or other wording to the same effect.
- Parliamentary voting power is defined by the parliamentary votes carried by each party, rather than by the number of seats held by parties. All parties carry parliamentary votes in proportion to their party's overall share of the popular vote in the most recent election.
- Full proportional representation is achieved without changes to district boundaries or district magnitudes. One Member of Parliament is elected for each electoral district.
- Provinces and territories would no longer be politically categorized as right-wing or left-wing, because there would be greater recognition that every political party and political preference is represented in the resident population.

5. Strategic or compromise voting is unnecessary (No more "I can't vote for her because she doesn't have a chance of winning."), because every vote cast at the ballot box for a candidate representing a political party counts towards parliamentary power of every voter's first choice.
6. An end of strategic voting would likely increase the diversity of representation. Voters have an effective choice in favour of parties that they see as being more representative of their views. New parties that may form around segments of society (e.g. a Women's party, a New Citizens party, a First Nations Party) have a better chance of representation.
7. Voter participation is likely to increase (No more "What's the use? The system is rigged.").
8. The number of seats in the Parliament are increased by a small percentage, to appoint a few MPs from party lists for the most under-represented eligible parties.
9. Every major political party can be represented in every province based on conditions pre-set by legislation, to ensure that the concerns of every province are heard in parliament. A Party Leader may assign a higher parliamentary vote to such Regional Members, to ensure that his/her province's concerns are more adequately addressed.
10. Except for Regional and Party List Members, all Members are directly accountable to voters in their district, and no Member directly elected in a district has less than one full vote in parliament.
11. Representation by gender, ethnicity, culture or other component of society is indirectly supported by competition from new parties, and a recognition by existing parties that the votes of all parts of society count directly towards parliamentary power.
12. The party which has the highest Parliamentary Vote Entitlement normally forms the government, unless challenged by coalitions of other parties with a higher combined PVE. However, the party with the most votes can decide to form a government on its own, even in a 'minority' situation.
13. Negotiation and compromise on legislation becomes common practice, as governments realize that with SVPR they are not likely to achieve a real majority (more than 50% of the popular vote) if they call an election when key legislation is defeated. Forcing contentious legislation to be passed using threats of snap elections becomes rare. In this way, SVPR creates more stability than minority governments under today's electoral system, where a shift of even a few percentage points can give a party majority power. Perceived threats of so-called 'fringe' parties holding disproportionate power recede.
14. Members 'crossing the floor' or being removed from caucus have no effect on parliamentary vote standings; parliamentary votes remain with the party in accordance with its share of the popular vote in the most recent general election, as modified by by-elections. Members removed from a party caucus sit as Independents, and are given a parliamentary vote equal to the average for all party Members. A Member will not voluntarily leave his/her party caucus because he/she will have no vote in parliament.
15. If there is a by-election to fill a vacant seat, the popular vote results of the by-election replace those of the previous election, and the overall voting power in parliament is recalculated. Normally, the change would be very minor.
16. Compared to the Mixed Member Proportional electoral system, there is no need to cast a party and a local/constituency vote; a candidate for a party will normally vote in parliament in adherence to party discipline. MMP also results in a very high proportion of MPs to be selected from party lists. With SVPR, there is no ranking of often unfamiliar candidates, especially as occurs in the Single Transferable Vote (STV) and the Alternative Vote (AV) systems (N.B. The AV is not a PR system, and may produce very distorted outcomes). STV and MMP require significant enlargements of voting districts, which SVPR does not. STV results in multiple MPs per voting district, which may confuse voters.

