

The electoral referendum

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We're a little wary about the proposed changes that may come to Ontario's electoral laws. A citizens' assembly, appointed by the government last year, overwhelmingly decided Sunday that the referendum question put to voters in the Oct. 10 election should ask whether they want to adopt the system used in Germany and New Zealand called "mixed member proportional".

What exactly is mixed proportional representation? According to a Canadian Press article: "Under the proposed system, voters would have two choices on a ballot - one for a local representative and another for a political party.

"The number of seats in the legislature would swell from 103 to 129 - 90 politicians would be elected in enlarged ridings across the province using the current first-past-the-post system and another 39 would be appointed by parties from a public list of candidates according to the percentage of popular vote they received."

The voter will want to know how a change in the electoral system will impact them directly. The onus will be on the government to outline the pros and cons in an unbiased way. That will be a tough task when you consider the limited attention span of many citizens accustomed a diet of sound-bites and negative advertisements.

We should care about electoral reform, the big question is will we?

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