

## On Dual Candidacy

Dual candidacy occurs when a candidate competes in a race for a single-member seat *and* appears on a party list. Most existing MMP systems allow the option of running on the list tier and at the local level.

This document outlines arguments in favour and against dual candidacy. In general there are two perspectives on this issue:

1. *Dual candidacy is fair.* Those who lose single-member races are often popular even though they did not win a plurality of the vote. For example, it is possible to win with 32 percent of the vote and lose with 30 percent of the vote. Many believe it is appropriate to award list seats to candidates who had the experience of running at the local level.
2. *Dual candidacy is unfair.* A candidate who is rejected at the local level can still be awarded a list seat. Many believe it is not appropriate to award list seats to candidates who lose at the local level, especially if they lose by a significant margin.

There are also three options:

- a. *Mandatory Dual Candidacy:* Candidates **must** run in a single-member district and on the party list.
- b. *Optional Dual Candidacy:* Candidates **may choose** to run in a single-member district and/or on the party list.
- c. *Prohibited Dual Candidacy:* Candidates **are prohibited** from running in a single-member districted and on the list at the same time.

### Mandatory

Mandatory dual candidacy ensures all candidates who appear on the party lists have run in a local electoral district. It means all MPPs will have the same experience while campaigning: they will have to knock on doors, listen to voters and compete for votes in local riding contests.

Mandatory dual candidacy is expensive because parties are compelled to run local candidates in order to get list seats. This will disadvantage smaller parties because they may have to run candidates in electoral districts where they do not expect to win.

### Optional

Optional dual candidacy gives parties and candidates the freedom to pursue the electoral strategy they think is best. Parties would be free to run candidates in local districts where they believe they have a good chance of winning but they would not be compelled to run candidates in the other districts where they do not think they have a good chance of winning. This makes a viable election campaign less expensive. In addition, candidates are not penalized for running locally by losing the chance to be on

their party's list. Parties are not forced to decide where to run particular candidates. *This is the option most common among existing MMP systems.*

Optional dual candidacy means that some of those who win list seats will be tied to local districts and others will not. Some MPPs will have experience knocking on doors, listening to voters and competing for votes while others will only have experience campaigning on behalf of the party. Many believe this will create two distinct classes of MPPs and emphasize the differences between them.

### **Prohibited**

This option creates clear distinctions between list and local MPPs. Many believe this is desirable because those elected in single-member districts will have an incentive to think and act locally while list MPPs will have an incentive to think and act regionally or provincially. It ensures that those who lost at the local level do not find a way to be elected on the list tier.

Prohibiting dual candidacy means parties and candidates do not have the freedom to pursue the electoral strategy they think is best. There is a penalty applied to those who run in a local district because they will not be allowed to run on the list. This means parties will be reluctant to run their most preferred candidates in local districts favouring the greater certainty of putting best qualified candidates high on the list. It also takes away their chance to put persons on the list who help broaden the demographic composition of the party but are not likely to win single-member seats. In addition, many believe this option will unnecessarily emphasize the difference between list and local MPPs.