



Learning Phase Meeting Notes

Weekend 2- Sept 30 & Oct 1 2006

In Attendance Members, Public & Staff

- 104 Assembly members, including the Chair
- 13 Secretariat staff
- 11 small group facilitators
- 29 public observers

Guest Speakers

- Working groups facilitator: Ailsa Henderson, Political Science Department, University of Toronto
- Former MPPs: Dianne Cunningham, Joan Fawcett, Floyd Laughren
- The Students' Assembly on Electoral Reform: Taylor Gunn and Peter MacLeod

Advisors & Technical Support

- Evaluator: Gail Motsi, Institute on Governance
- Process advisor: Amy Lang, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Technical support: TV Ontario, Seneca College, Mediaco, and Osgoode Hall Law School; Raw Edge Photography
- Simultaneous translation: International Conference Interpreters
- American Sign Language: Canadian Hearing Society

Objectives for Session

- Learn basic concepts about government, legislatures and political parties and begin to think about their connection to electoral systems
- Learn about different types of political representation
- Discuss principles to consider in electoral system design
- Establish working groups and procedural advisory committees
- Achieve consensus on key elements of the public consultation process

Proceedings

1. The session began with approval of meeting notes from the previous session. An 'open forum' followed where members could raise issues on any topic. The Assembly then viewed the 'Billy Ballot' animation¹ which gives a simple overview of the four families of electoral systems.
2. The Assembly agreed to establish four working groups to review what the research says on the impact of electoral systems and to report back to the full Assembly on the following topics: *women and other under-represented groups; geographic representation; political parties; stable government.*
3. The Assembly agreed to establish four advisory committees to provide advice related to the Assembly process on the following topics: *evaluation; consultation submissions; deliberation phase planning; final report.*
4. Jonathan Rose made three presentations, each of which was followed by small group discussions. The topics were: *The Structure and Functions of our Legislature (and how we are represented); The Role of Parties and their Relationship to Electoral Systems* and *What Principles Matter when Designing Electoral Systems.*
5. A panel of three former Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) answered questions from Assembly members about "*The Work World of the Legislature*".
6. Susan Pigott from the Secretariat reported on input Assembly members had given on the draft consultation plan and guide. The consultation plan will include three prongs: written comments from the public; public meetings; and additional community outreach. The Assembly also recommended additional changes to the consultation plan and guide before approval at the next meeting.
7. Representatives from The Students' Assembly on Electoral Reform² described plans to engage high school students in the Citizens' Assembly process. They will hold a four-day students' assembly, provide curriculum for high school civics classes, and communicate the student perspective to the Citizens' Assembly for its deliberations.

Follow-up Items

Members

8. Members will:
 - Continue reading materials on electoral systems and principles
 - Send any additional comments on the draft consultation plan or guide to Dahlia Klinger

¹ Prepared by the Citizens' Assembly Secretariat, 2006

² www.studentsassembly.ca

- “Get the word out” about the Assembly in their communities, to the extent they wish to do so
- Let the Chair know if they have questions for politicians who have worked in other electoral systems

Secretariat

9. The Secretariat will:

- Revise the consultation plan and guide for approval on Weekend 3, incorporating the Assembly’s input and direction
- Prepare a shorter, simpler document to supplement the consultation guide
- Prepare a draft distribution plan for the consultation guide. This will include strategies for central distribution by the Secretariat and local distribution by members
- Prepare a draft letter and e-mail to agencies for the Outreach Tool-Kit
- Post working group materials in the Members’ Room so that all Assembly members can have access to them
- Prepare a video featuring politicians who have worked in other electoral systems
- Create a section in the Members’ Room in which Jonathan Rose will answer questions members have placed in the ‘Question Box’
- Incorporate ‘stretch breaks’ in the plenary sessions

--Prepared by Karen Cohl, Executive Director and Recording Secretary