



Mandate of the Citizens' Assembly

What the regulation says:

The regulation that created the Citizens' Assembly says the Assembly:

- shall assess Ontario's current electoral system and different electoral systems;
- shall recommend whether Ontario should retain its current electoral system or adopt a different one.

If the Assembly recommends a different system, it must describe it clearly and in detail, and it must be consistent with the Constitution of Canada. The Constitution outlines Canada's system of government and the civil rights of all Canadian citizens.

Apart from the exact wording of the regulation, it's not always clear what's included in the Assembly's mandate. There can be grey areas. What follows below are examples only. There may be other items that are in the Assembly's mandate or outside of it. If you have something in mind and are not sure whether it's in or out, please talk to George Thomson or Jonathan Rose.

What's in the Assembly's mandate:

The Assembly's focus on the electoral system includes:

- How our votes are counted at election time
- The number of representatives per electoral district (riding)
- The geographic size of electoral districts
- The size of the legislature
- The type of ballot (for example, do voters mark one X or rank candidates according to preferences)

What's outside the Assembly's mandate:

No doubt, many other issues related to our political system are important to Assembly members and to the general public and will come up in Assembly discussions and in public consultation. Some of these may be influenced by the electoral system. While the Assembly may decide to mention these issues in its final report, they are likely outside the Assembly's mandate and there isn't time to address them. These issues include:

- Changing the nature of our parliamentary system (for example, electing the Premier directly in a province-wide vote)
- The threshold for the referendum to be held if the Assembly recommends change
- Referendums in general
- Who should be allowed to vote
- The quality of political leadership
- Which candidates parties choose to nominate
- Party financing rules
- Party discipline and the role of backbenchers in the legislature
- Frequency of elections
- The role of the media in elections