# Policy
### Canadian Politics and Public Policy

## Electoral Reform

*Welcome to our special issue on Electoral Reform, timed to reflect the ongoing debate in Canada over whether and how to change the way in which Canadians choose their elected leaders, including the work of the Special Committee on Electoral Reform (#ERRE). This issue of* Policy *is aligned to our Electoral Reform Symposium on November 2-3 presented by* Policy *and iPolitics, hosted by the Public Law Group at University of Ottawa and broadcast by CPAC*

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## In this Issue:

- We begin with a Q&A with Democratic Institutions Minister Maryam Monsef. Having just concluded a cross-Canada listening tour, Monsef shares her sense of the mood of the country on democratic reform beyond "here in the Ottawa bubble", as she put it. She made it clear the Liberal government would not unilaterally impose electoral reform in the absence of a parliamentary consensus, saying, "We will not move forward with any reforms without the broad support of Canadians." She also discussed her personal evolution from arriving in Canada as an Afghan refugee with her mother and two sisters to being, at 31, the minister responsible for reforming the way Canada votes. Of the recent revelation that she was actually born in Iran rather than Afghanistan, Monsef spoke of the kindness of strangers, saying her mailboxes of every kind were overflowing with supportive messages from Canadians.

- Pollster Frank Graves of EKOS Research was in the field in mid-October and reports where Canadians are on electoral reform.

- Contributing Writer Tom Axworthy writes that there's much more to democratic reform than just electoral reform and notes that "each type of electoral system—majoritarian, mixed or proportional representation—has a different set of incentives for our parties."

- Contributing Writer David Mitchell sorts through the alphabet soup of electoral options.

- David Moscrop, a doctoral candidate in poli-sci at the University of British Columbia, makes the case for proportional representation. NDP MP Nathan Cullen, the party's democratic reform critic, also makes an eloquent case for PR. He asks, "why is it, in the 21st century, Canada is still using a winner-takes-all" system?

- Green Party Leader Elizabeth May reports from the #ERRE Special Committee's cross-Canada public consultations. "On the road, we are not sparring for partisan points," May writes. "We hang out together, look out for each other and are all becoming good friends. I know that we hope to reach a decision by consensus."

- On the key question of whether changes to our electoral system will require a constitutional amendment, University of Ottawa law professor Sébastien Grammond concludes that's a "no."

- In an article adapted from their recent paper on Senate reform for the Public Policy Forum, former Senators Michael Kirby and Hugh Segal suggest that newly appointed independent senators caucus along regional lines—the Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario and the West—"originally contemplated by the founders of Confederation".

- Michael Pal, Director of UofO's Public Law Group, examines the issues around mandatory voting and writes that there "is no conclusive data that being obliged to vote" makes for better informed choices. On electronic voting, Nicole Goodman of the Munk Centre notes that "voting accessibility is becoming increasingly important for Canadians."

- Finally in our electoral reform package, columnist Don Newman looks at referendums and concludes they "are bad public policy."

- In *Canada and the World*, our Robin Sears looks at a new chapter in Canada-China relations following Justin Trudeau's week-long September visit to China, and the reciprocal visit to Canada of Premier Li Keqiang.

- BMO Vice Chair Kevin Lynch considers the rebalancing of China's economy in a world in which "China alone accounts for over 25 per cent of global growth."

- Graham Fraser looks back on his decade as Commissioner of Official Languages and finds that Canada has moved from ambivalence to embrace of bilingualism—with the poll numbers to prove it.

- Finally, John Hallward, chair of the GIV3 Foundation, makes a strong case for boosting charitable donations, not only through the tax system, but as a cultural mindset among Canadians.

*Enjoy the issue!*