

October 5, 2016

Sent by email: erre@parl.gc.ca and maryam.monsef@parl.gc.ca

Special Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reform and
Maryam Monsef, Minister of Democratic Institutions
Parliament Hill
111 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Special Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reform and Minister of Democratic Institutions
Maryam Monsef,

Re: Submission to Parliamentary Committee (ERRE)

On behalf of Unifor's 312,000 members, I want to emphasize to you the high priority we place on implementing your government's pledge to reform our electoral system before the next election.

In August, our national convention affirmed that electoral reform is an important issue to be addressed in Canadian democracy. Our members unanimously endorsed a proportional representation system for Canada.

Unifor members want elections that make every vote count and make extreme false majorities very unlikely or impossible. We want more cooperation in parliament and less partisanship. We want fewer reasons to vote strategically and more opportunity to vote for a hopeful, progressive future. We want more reasons for young people and all those who have been alienated from politics to engage and participate in the democratic process.

Unifor has deliberately avoided the debate on a detailed model to replace "First Past The Post." We have instead come to the principled conclusion and recommendation that we need a proportional system that allocates seats in our Parliament in a way that gives weight to every vote.

We believe that the all-party committee on electoral reform has the capacity, the mandate and the information on voting systems that is needed to fulfill these aspirations. It is your government's responsibility, and the responsibility of the NDP and Green Party representatives who also stood for electoral reform in the last election, to reach a consensus or a majority recommendation that is understandable and explainable to our members and our communities.

Members of the Committee, we expect you to find a solution and not to allow partisan concerns block to the majority.

The people of Canada spoke decisively in the federal election by electing a large majority of MPs who stated clearly they are committed to electoral reform. The outcome of that election which produced distorted results with almost exclusive one-party representation in several provinces, regions and cities bears out the need and the urgency for electoral reform. Unifor emphasizes strongly that the time for electoral reform is now.

If the majority for electoral reform fail to take this opportunity, it will be a long time before these conditions come around again. Unifor members are ready for change now and we are expecting you to lead that change to ensure that a new proportional voting system is in place for the next federal election in 2019.

For any additional information please contact Patty Barrera, National Representative at 416-768-5858 or by email at patty.barrera@unifor.org.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerry Dias". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

Jerry Dias
National President

cc: Patty Barrera, Roland Kiehne, Jenny Ahn

JD/pb/kw:cope.343