



# How To Talk ProRep At Thanksgiving

Politics can lead to lively discussions at family gatherings like Thanksgiving.

You can use this conversation guide to talk ProRep with family members, even your First-Past-the-Post Uncle who has fallen victim to the “fear, uncertainty and doubt” (FUD) tactics of big money organizations and lobbyists!

Your goal should be to make sure your friends and family are informed with the facts about ProRep. That can be tricky if you have a FPTP Uncle who won't change his mind! Just remember that your goal probably isn't to convert him, but to show others at the table a more respectful, factual and positive way to improve BC's democracy.

## Ground rules for respectful conversation



- **DON'T ARGUE** - TRY TO LISTEN AND REASSURE.
- **AGREE** - WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND VALIDATE CONCERNS.
- **BE CURIOUS** – ASK QUESTIONS TO LEARN HOW OTHERS HAVE FORMED THEIR OPINIONS.
- **KEEP IT SIMPLE** – THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING.

## Step 1 – Kick off the conversation with a simple question

Have you decided how you'll vote in the referendum on electoral reform?

## Step 2 – Listen and offer background information if asked

This Fall we have the chance to vote in a referendum to choose what voting system we use in BC. We can choose the one we have now (First Past the Post), which is kind of broken, or update to Proportional Representation. You'll get a ballot in the mail after October 22. Then you have until November 30 to mail it back, or vote in person at a voting station.

The ballot has 2 questions, and the first one is the most important.

- The first question asks whether you want to keep First Past the Post or change to Proportional Representation.
- The second question asks which kind of ProRep system you prefer. You can leave that blank if you like, and can answer it no matter what your answer to question 1.

## Step 3 – Explain why you are voting for ProRep

You can personalize your explanation, but keep it simple! Most people seem to agree with the basic principle of ProRep:

***I'm voting for Proportional Representation because I believe if a party gets 30% of the vote they should get 30% of the power, not 100% of it like they often do under First Past the Post.***

If you need to offer other reasons, you can start here:

1. **ProRep protects our democracy.** The power of each political party is limited to the votes it receives.
2. **ProRep gives everyone a voice.** Our politicians will represent British Columbia's rich diversity.
3. **ProRep produces better laws.** Political parties work together on laws, so government policy is more stable after elections.

## Step 4 – Get firm commitments

Take note of friends and family who support ProRep, and follow up with them individually to confirm their voting plans:

- Are you registered to vote? <https://elections.bc.ca/referendum>
- Have you pledged your support at: <http://bcgreens.ca/pledge>
- Do you plan to talk to others about ProRep?

# Fight Fear With Facts

If you have a First-Past-the-Post Uncle at the dinner table, he may try to throw you off by repeating some of the fear tactics from big money organizations and lobbyists:

### **But I won't have an MLA anymore:**

*Where did you hear that? It isn't actually true. In fact, one of the reasons I like ProRep is that we'd get even more representation than we have now. In some systems, we might even get 2 MLAs – double the representation!*

### **But I don't want Vancouver to make decisions for the whole province:**

*Yeah, me neither. That wouldn't be fair. ProRep systems are designed to make sure all parts of the province are represented fairly. Right now, rural ridings have very few MLAs in government. So they get very little if any representation at all!*

### **But we'd always have unstable minority governments, and they wouldn't get anything done:**

*I totally agree that stability is important. But the first thing a majority government does when it gets into power is undoes all the hard work of the previous government! ProRep would give us more minority governments, and in my opinion that gives us more stability, not less. When parties work together they make better laws that don't get undone after the next election.*

### **But extremists would get into power:**

*I've heard that concern raised a lot by lobbyists on the radio, but ProRep has excellent safeguards in place. For example, under ProRep a party has to get more than 5% of the popular vote to get any seats. If the Nazi Party or some extremist group gets more than 5% of the vote we don't really have a democracy problem. We have a Nazi problem!*

### **But voting shouldn't be complicated. People won't understand the ballots:**

*I agree, voting should be easy. The ballots might change slightly under ProRep but it wouldn't make things more complicated. You'll still be able to vote for the candidate or party you want to represent you. Even if it takes a little time to get used to, I think we're all going to like it. That's what happened in New Zealand. It took time for people to adjust to the change, but once they did they voted to keep the ProRep system.*

### **But why should we change? BC is doing just fine without it:**

*We're so lucky to live here, but our voting system needs an update. First Past the Post is used in the United States and Britain, and those countries have serious political problems right now. Meanwhile, countries with ProRep like New Zealand, Germany and Sweden are thriving under their new systems. They have more diverse politicians, more stable laws, and their politics are less polarized. I'm worried that if we keep First-Past-the-Post, our politics will look more and more polarized until we end up like the United States. It's already happened in Ontario, with Doug Ford getting elected with 40% of the vote!*

## Resources and links

### BASIC INFO ON THE VOTING SYSTEMS

- **Dual Member Proportional (DMP):** You vote for 2 MLAs in your riding, 1 is elected by FPTP, 1 is elected to achieve ProRep
- **Mixed Member Proportional (MMP):** You vote for 2 MLAs: a local one and a regional one. The local MLA is elected by FPTP, the regional MLA is elected to achieve ProRep.
- **Rural Urban Proportional (RUP):** Rural areas use MMP, urban ridings use a ranked ballot system called Single Transferable Vote (STV)

### LINKS:

- **Full, unbiased info on the voting systems:** <https://elections.bc.ca/referendum/voting-systems/>
- **Take a ProRep quiz:** [https://www.bcgreens.ca/prorep\\_quiz](https://www.bcgreens.ca/prorep_quiz)
- **Pledge your vote:** <http://bcgreens.ca/pledge>
- **Volunteer:** [http://bcgreens.ca/prorep\\_volunteer](http://bcgreens.ca/prorep_volunteer)
- **Donate:** [http://bcgreens.ca/prorep\\_donate](http://bcgreens.ca/prorep_donate)

The logo for ProRep BC4 features the words "Pro" and "Rep" in white, stacked vertically, with "BC4" in blue below them. The "4" is significantly larger and has a green-to-blue gradient.

ANDREW  
**WEAVER** greens  
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA