

ONTARIO SUPERIOR COURT OF JUSTICE

B E T W E E N:

**FAIR VOTING BC and
SPRINGTIDE COLLECTIVE FOR DEMOCRACY SOCIETY**

Applicants

- and -

ATTORNEY GENERAL OF CANADA

Respondent

AFFIDAVIT OF IRENE HUNTER

I, Irene Hunter, of the City of Edmonton, in the Province of Alberta, MAKE OATH AND
SWEAR:

1. I have personal knowledge of the matters deposed herein. Where I have relied on the information of others, I believe it to be true.
2. I'm 69 years old. In the 15 elections since I became eligible to vote in 1972, I voted for the Liberal Party 13 times and for the Green Party twice. Only once did I vote for a winning candidate in a federal election: Anne McLellan, whom I helped elect on June 28th, 2004, and who was my MP until she was quickly defeated 19 months later on January 23rd, 2006.

3. I grew up in rural Alberta, in the small hamlet of Wildwood. In 1968, when I was 16 years old, I was lured to a political rally by my grandmother, who had moved to Ontario, to hear Pierre Trudeau speak in Welland (Ontario). My Ontario uncle cautioned Baba for dragging me along to Liberal rallies since Albertans are Conservative. “Oh, but we are not all conservatives in Alberta”, I quickly responded, “I am Liberal”; our social teacher had drawn a political spectrum on the blackboard with identifying values for every party. I was in the center.
4. Baba’s Liberal candidate won in 1968. Had she remained in Alberta, she may have never had a Liberal Member of Parliament represent her in Ottawa.
5. I moved to Edmonton when I was 18 and have lived here ever since.
6. The first federal election in which I was able to vote was in the fall of 1972. I lived in Edmonton Center and would be placing my “X” next to the Liberal candidate on the ballot. A Conservative, Steve Paproski, won.
7. I voted Liberal in the next four elections (1974, 1979, 1980, and 1984); Steve Paproski won every time. At that time, a neighbourhood school closure forced our family to move to an Edmonton Southwest riding. Elections in my new Crestwood neighborhood thrilled me. The yards were filled with red Liberal signs. In the 1988 election, I again voted Liberal; again, a Conservative (Jim Edwards) won.
8. In 1993, 1997, and 2000, I once again voted Liberal; the first two times, Reform candidate Ian McClelland won (1993 and 1997) and, in 2000, Alliance candidate James Rajotte won. These 9 consecutive elections resulting in

Conservative/Reform/Alliance MPs were very disappointing but, in Alberta, you unfortunately have to take it for granted.

9. In 2003, boundary changes returned us to Edmonton Center, just in time for the 28 June 2004 election. It was then that I cast my only winning vote in a federal election – for Liberal Anne McLellan, as an MP in Paul Martin’s Liberal minority government. To think I was so lucky to have had a Liberal in my riding! Not many have been elected in Alberta.

10. Following Anne McLellan’s election, I recall giving her campaign office a cheque; Anne McLellan came running outside to meet me. But I don’t remember much else other than the feeling that we were living in a perpetual electoral campaign: 17 months later, on 28 November 2005, Parliament was dissolved and we returned to the polls. I voted for Anne McLellan again in the January 2006 election; she was defeated by Conservative Laurie Hawn who had the help of Conservative MPs across Alberta door knocking in Edmonton Center. Laurie Hawn won again in 2008 and 2011, when I continued to vote Liberal.

11. During the 90’s, I joined a peace movement calling for a Department of Peace within the Canadian government. Our Edmonton chapter grew and we would host International Peace Day. Our group was able to attract speakers such as future Liberal cabinet minister Amarjeet Sohi and Rt. Hon. Doug Roche, a retired Conservative MP and senator. Our Peace Days attracted hundreds of Edmontonians; yet, our Reform/Alliance MPs in the 1990s never amplified our movement’s voice in Parliament. While we were asked in national executive meetings to visit our local

MPs, I found (and my other Alberta colleagues agreed) that lobbying Conservative MPs on progressive issues didn't achieve any results.

12. Lobbying the government for a Department of Peace was also impossible if your MP was an ex-fighter pilot. MP Laurie Hawn would simply say that Defense Canada spends enough money in its numerous departments fighting for peace. I became creative and wrote to all Liberal MPs seeking support on a Department for Peace. Because the Liberals had failed to win any of Alberta's 28 seats in 2006, 2008, and 2011, the letters began with "Hello from Alberta" and explained that I am without an Alberta Liberal MP; I hoped a Liberal could hear my call. Several Liberal MPs replied that they addressed only calls and letters from voters within their constituency. Some MPs also indicated this directly on their websites.

13. Because so few Liberals are elected in Alberta, all Albertans are stereotyped as Conservatives. When I attended our Peace Department's AGMs in central Canada, people were continuously shocked to hear I was a Liberal despite coming from Alberta. I recall Toronto Star journalist Linda McQuaig, our keynote speaker, sitting next to me and inquiring where I was from. When I replied Edmonton, her jaw dropped. At one Winnipeg North America Peace Studies conference, an American attendee asked how far north is Edmonton and was I conservative?

14. Scanning 50 years of voting patterns, on average 30-40% of Albertans do not vote Conservative, contrary to political maps of blue with one or two square of red or orange.¹ It is not uncommon for the Liberal Party to pull 20-25% of the vote. Yet,

¹ 2019: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Results_of_the_2019_Canadian_federal_election;

Albertans are viewed as conservatives. With a fairer voting system, the map would be more colorful and more Albertans would have political party representation in Ottawa.

15. I attended Liberal policy conventions and Liberal Biannual conferences across Canada for over two decades. I served on Michael Ignatieff's campaign team and was Alberta lead for Joyce Murray's leadership campaign. Joyce Murray, MP for Vancouver Quadra, supported my policies on women, peace, and electoral reform, even speaking out strongly on proportional representation (PR). My last role in the Liberal Party of Canada (LPC) was as Alberta Liberal Women's Policy Chair which would bring forward policies such as Violence against Women, and Off-shoring of Taxable Income. While I felt that my work in these commissions and campaigns was a good way for me to express myself and advance the policies I supported, it contrasted with my increasing perception of a pointless vote and a series of MPs who promoted in Parliament interests and ideas that weren't mine. I don't understand why an Alberta Liberal like me could not have links to an MP who meaningfully supports my initiatives and amplifies my voice in Parliament. Otherwise, why vote?

16. Over time, and for the reasons above, I came to see PR as more and more important.

At the Liberal Policy Convention in Montreal, 2014. I sat in the front rows with a pro electoral reform policy group from Kitchener and Waterloo. MP Ralph Goodale would

2015: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2015_Canadian_federal_election;

2011: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Canadian_federal_election;

2008: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2008_Canadian_federal_election;

2006: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2006_Canadian_federal_election;

2004: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2004_Canadian_federal_election;

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1997: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1997_Canadian_federal_election;

1993: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1993_Canadian_federal_election;

1988: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1988_Canadian_federal_election;

1984: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1984_Canadian_federal_election;

1980: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1980_Canadian_federal_election.

be including electoral reform on his resolution. MP Goodale opened his resolution by saying that PR proponents have been fighting for years to have their policy heard. I can't recall if there were nay speakers to the resolution but when Stephane Dion took his turn, he couldn't be heard over the cheering. The vote was unanimous for a study on electoral reform by thousands of Liberal attendees. Never had I witnessed as many tears and cheers for a resolution.

17. Justin Trudeau was not in the convention hall during the electoral reform resolution but throughout the 2015 election campaign we heard him say countless times that this was the last first-past-the-post election. Ironically, it was at that time that I broke with the Liberal Party. I was very sceptical that Justin Trudeau would in fact follow through on his promise and that his goal wasn't simply to implement a non-proportional alternative voting system such as ranked ballots, which would be useless for Alberta Liberals like myself given that most ridings are Conservative with 50% of the vote or more. (I also thought poorly of the Edmonton Center Liberal candidate, who had worked for Alberta's infamous Michael Ritter whose company created dozens of off-shoring companies.) Therefore, I voted for the Green Party, which I believed was much more sincere about its commitment to PR.

18. The aftermath of the 2015 election proved I was right. In 2019, I once again supported the Green Party.

19. My oldest grand-daughter has hinted she will vote conservative, she is fiscal and responsible and I would not wish her to change; my eldest grandson like my son supports a center position, and will in all likelihood continue to be Liberal. My

