

MOTION

2. Increasing Fairness and Citizen Involvement in Municipal Elections

On January 31, 2012, Vancouver City Council, referred the following motion to the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting later that day, in order to hear from speakers.

MOVED by Councillor Reimer

WHEREAS

1. On March 25, 2010 Council, on the advice of an all-party subcommittee, unanimously passed recommendations to the Local Government Elections Task Force in regards to Campaign Finance Reform and other changes to improve fairness and citizen involvement in Vancouver municipal elections (attached as Appendix A).
2. The Local Government Elections Task Force failed to accept these recommendations and the City of Vancouver requires approval by the Provincial Government in order to make changes to campaign finance rules or voting procedures.
3. The Chief Election Officer implemented enhancements, such as increasing advanced voting opportunities, with an aim to increase voter turnout and citizen involvement in the 2011 municipal election, as well as ensure fairness for all candidates.
4. The Vancouver Charter currently prohibits the release of raw vote data, which is data that is not traceable to individual voters but provides information on the contents of each ballot.
5. The Chief Election Officer and members of Council have received requests from voting policy analysts to access raw vote data for the purpose of conducting academic research and providing policy recommendations on elections.
6. The analysis of raw vote data provided in jurisdictions such as New Zealand, Scotland, and Minneapolis has been invaluable in better informing important policy issues related to electoral systems and the relationship between demographics and voter turn out;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT the City Council write to the Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development and reiterate the request to have the ability under the Vancouver Charter for Council to make campaign finance rules and consider alternate voting systems, as outlined in Appendix A, and make a new request for the ability to release raw vote data.
  
- B. THAT City Council requests recommendations from the 2011 Chief Elections Officer for measures to increase voter turnout, citizen involvement and fairness for all candidates in the 2014 civic election.

(APPENDIX A - from minutes of March 25, 2010 Planning and Environment Committee Meeting  
<http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20100325/documents/penv20100325min.pdf>)

1. Set limits on the annual amount of contributions that can be given by an individual to an elector organization, campaign organizer, or an individual seeking elected office.
2. Ban union and corporate donations.
3. Limit the amount of money that may be spent annually by an elector organization, campaign organizer, or an individual seeking elected office during a general local election campaign.
4. These limits on contributions and expenditures would be based upon a per-electoral/capita, per-candidate formula (with individual candidate resources allowed to be pooled for use by elector organizations) and would be no higher than provincial and federal spending limits.
5. Disallow contributions to an elector organization, campaign organizer, or an individual seeking elected office, from sources outside of Canada.
6. Require that all donations and expenses for candidates, elected officials and elector organizations be disclosed on a continuous basis at six month intervals.
8. Change the definition of "candidate" to include anyone seeking nomination within an elector organization for candidacy to a local government office.
9. Appoint the Provincial Chief Election Officer to oversee municipal elections in BC, and establish penalties and mechanisms for enforcement of offences under the amended local government elections legislation.
12. Provide local governments with the authority to use any method of elections they wish to use, and repeal the requirement for Lieutenant Governor in Council approval to adopt such a change.
13. Amend the definition of election offenses and related penalties to include individuals acting as an intermediary in third-party campaign contribution schemes.

NOTE: items 7, 10 and 11 were removed as they do not directly relate to increasing municipal authority for campaign or electoral reform and were specific to questions posed by the Local Government Elections Task Force. They are provided below for reference.

7. Implement a system of tax credits for municipal donations, similar to those for provincial and federal elections.
10. Extend municipal terms of office to four years.
11. Oppose allowing corporations the right to vote in local elections.