

MOTION ON NOTICE

8. Permanent Resident Voting

MOVER: Councillor Reimer

SECONDER: Mayor Robertson

WHEREAS

1. A "Permanent Resident" is someone who has been given permanent resident status by immigrating to Canada as a skilled worker, refugee, caregiver, sponsored family member, but is not a Canadian citizen;
2. Permanent residency is a first step to Canadian citizenship. Allowing Permanent Residents to vote in municipal elections is important for the confidence and trust in our democracy;
3. Because citizenship is not solely defined by an oath or a test but through a daily practice and many Permanent Residents are active members of Vancouver's communities: contributing to the financial viability of the city as property taxpayers, have children who attend schools, and are contributors to municipal programs and services with user fees and have the same responsibilities as citizens but not the same opportunity to affect decisions directly at a municipal level;
4. In 2011 there were 60,000 permanent residents living in Vancouver equivalent to 33% of voters that voted in the 2014 municipal election;
5. City Council endorsed the 2014 Engaged City Task Force recommendations to seek Permanent Resident voting rights in municipal elections as a powerful way of creating an inclusive, equitable, and caring community in Vancouver;
6. A 2017 motion from City Council asking city staff to investigate this matter determined that the Provincial government is the appropriate authority to undertake this work;
7. The Province of British Columbia has the governing authority to implement electoral legislative changes including allowing for permanent residents to vote in municipal elections;
8. More than 45 countries have granted Permanent Residents some form of voting rights — including seven jurisdictions in the U.S. and 25 European Union countries. In Canada, 11 municipalities are working toward extending local election voting rights to Permanent Residents.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Vancouver advocate to the Province of British Columbia to make the necessary changes to allow Permanent Residents to vote in municipal elections in Vancouver.

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