

MOTION

6. Election Readiness and Engagement

At the Regular Council meeting on November 13, 2018, Vancouver City Council referred the following Motion to the Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities meeting on November 14, 2018, to hear from speakers.

MOVED by Councillor Kirby-Yung
SECONDED by

WHEREAS

1. Barriers in the electoral system can contribute to reduced participation;
2. In April 2018, Vancouver City Council voted to list mayoral, councillor and Park Board commissioner candidates in random order instead of alphabetical order on Vancouver's municipal election ballots. This was purported to create a more even playing field for candidates. A by-law was subsequently enacted by Council per the provisions of Section 79 of the Vancouver Charter;
3. 60% of the 2018 Councillors-Elect appeared in the first one-third of the one-version random ballot, further the Vancouver Charter did not permit multiple versions of a random ballot thereby potentially creating an order bias or effect;
4. The April 2018 Taking the ABCD Bias off the Ballot Motion suggested that alphabetical bias in the ballot has a particularly negative impact on people who have last names that are Chinese, South Asian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese or Latino - among others; however, cultural diversity on Council actually decreased from 2014 to 2018;
5. The October 2018 Vancouver municipal election was also characterized by a number of other factors including an unprecedented number of candidates, as well as reliance on use of electronic ballot processing and counting machines;
6. Voters cited confusion and inertia at the overwhelming ballot length and random form;
7. Long delays at voting locations across the city caused voter frustration and may have contributed to limiting voter turnout. Voter turnout in 2018 is estimated at 39% vs 43.4% in 2014 despite continued utilization of increased advance voting days as in 2011 and 2014, and implementation of a vote anywhere model in 2014.
8. Despite the city's plan to have more staff and more voting booths available at voting locations wherever possible, there appeared to be insufficient machines available to process ballots which was a key factor in delays and in perception of the integrity of the voting process;
9. The threshold for pre-qualification for people to submit their candidacy to run may be considered low requiring signatures of 25 nominators and a \$100 deposit refunded after the election;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to prepare a 2018 Municipal Election Review report to Council by May 2019 including but not limited to such factors as the efficacy of the random ballot, pre-qualification requirements and sufficiency of electoral resources including ballot counting machines, with the goal of supporting strong voter turnout and confidence in the electoral process.

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