

March 4th, 2008  
For immediate release  
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**Media advisory:**  
**433,543 Albertan voters—so little say**  
**46% of ballots did not count towards any candidate's election**

Almost half of the ballots cast in yesterday's provincial election did not help any candidate get elected. According to the unofficial count, 433,543 citizens cast ballots that had no effect on the final outcome.

"We could count all the votes, as many other democracies do, if we want elections to be fairer for all voters," said J.D. Crookshanks, spokesperson for Fair Vote Alberta's "So Many Voters--So Little Say" campaign.

Crookshanks said our current voting system leaves far too many Albertans on the sidelines. "The right to representation belongs to every citizen, not just the half that voted for the right candidate in the right constituency."

"We are talking about citizens who support politicians of all stripes and who live in all parts of the province," said Crookshanks. "We should have a voting system that treats every vote the same, no matter whom it is cast for or where in the province it is cast."

Because so many votes had no effect on the final outcome, the Progressive Conservatives only needed 53 per cent of the votes to win 88 per cent of the seats.

The gap between what people vote for and what they get is not only unfair, it also limits citizens' ability to hold politicians accountable.

Citizens' assemblies on electoral reform held in British Columbia and Ontario showed that when you get a group of randomly selected voters to examine our voting system and alternatives to it, they'll overwhelmingly pick an alternative.

British Columbia will hold a second referendum on electoral reform in May 2009.

"Alberta has experimented with alternative voting systems before," said Crookshanks. "But those decisions were always made by elected officials. We feel its time citizens took direct control of the voting system."

Fair Vote Alberta is a non-partisan, citizen-based campaign working for electoral reform. It is the provincial wing of Fair Vote Canada.

Contact (Edmonton):  
J.D. Crookshanks  
info@fairvotealberta.ca  
780-634-0069