



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Craig Scott
Member of Parliament / Député
Toronto—Danforth

April 17, 2014

Hon. Pierre Poilievre
Minister of State (Democratic Reform)
La Promenade Building, Suite 680
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Poilievre,

As the Official Opposition spokesperson for Democratic Reform, and as your colleague in the House of Commons, I write to you today with a proposal I hope you will consider in the constructive spirit in which it is made.

Given the many concerns being raised, I am asking you to reconsider your approach with respect to your proposed changes to the *Elections Act*, Bill C-23. Every single non-partisan witness who appeared before the Procedure and House Affairs Committee rejected a wide range of the changes you are proposing. Between the concerns Canadians – who have been mostly kept out of the consultation process – and the testimony of non-partisan witnesses, these self-serving changes are causing people to lose faith in our democratic system.

It is your responsibility, as Minister of State for Democratic Reform, to take the necessary steps to restore Canadians' faith in our democratic system. I urge you to withdraw Bill C-23 in order for us to start fresh and work together on a more consensus-based approach to improving the *Canada Elections Act*.

I would like to emphasize that while we would be starting fresh, we would not be starting from scratch. A new process would benefit greatly from the efforts made by both you and your predecessor, Minister Uppal, towards drafting this bill. We would also be able to make use of the many hours of constructive testimony we heard at Committee and the extensive debate that has taken place in Canadian society – including expert analysis from numerous academics as well as from the elections officials who run our elections across this country.

Taking a collective step back and starting fresh would be welcomed by Canadians.

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As Members of Parliament, we have an obligation to serve the public interest and our constituents, regardless of their political views or background. In carrying out these responsibilities, in particular with respect to changing the rules that govern our democracy, we must work together and do our very best, in good faith, to seek consensus.


I am sure you recognize that currently no such cooperation exists. With a new start, I am hopeful that much could be achieved that would help restore Canadians faith in the fairness of our elections and in Parliament as an institution. If, on the other hand, we do not start fresh, I believe the damage to public trust will be long-lasting and close to irreparable.

Should you be willing to withdraw the bill and start fresh, I can assure you will have the good faith collaboration of the NDP. As the Official Opposition, New Democrats will be willing to work through the spring and into the summer in order to come up with a bill that would strengthen our democracy and show Canadians that the House of Commons can work for the greater good.

I believe that if you are willing, critics from the other parties and independent MPs would be prepared to meet and discuss with you what a new process would look like, one that would be satisfactory to all parties as well as to Canadians at large.

I look forward to your timely, positive response to my proposal so we can get started as soon as possible on a more positive approach – an approach Canadians can be proud of.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig Scott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Craig Scott, M.P
Toronto-Danforth