

TO: MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

THE CORPORATION OF HAMILTON'S PRESENTATION TO MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT CONCERNING THE PROPOSED MUNICIPALITIES REFORM ACT 2010

Brief History of the Corporation

1. Parliament by the Hamilton Act 1793 created the Corporation of Hamilton much in the same way that self governing towns and cities in other democratic countries came into existence.
2. The Corporation is an elected body and its powers are governed by the Municipalities Act 1923. The Corporation has no power to determine, extend or amend voting rights. Those powers have always vested with Parliament, but those powers have been exercised sparingly over the centuries.
3. The City of Hamilton was established to develop trade in the centre of the Islands and to service the needs of the inhabitants of the area. Parliament gave voting rights to merchants to elect a Mayor and Council Members.
4. In expectation of the creation of the Hamilton Act 1793, the original land that comprised the City was purchased and then sold to interested locals by several public auctions under the instructions of a commission appointed by the Governor. Once founded the Corporation continued to purchase properties needed to develop the City infrastructure and services. The purchased property has always been used for the benefit of people that live in, work in or visit the City. It would be wrong and a revision of history to suggest that the property owned by the Corporation was a gift from Parliament.
5. In 1923, Parliament extended voting rights to one resident per household within the boundaries of the City. Although the predominant character of the City was that of a business centre in 1923, people were starting to live within the boundaries of the City and Parliament considered it appropriate to extend the vote to them.

The Unexpected Cabinet Plan to Take Over ALL City Operations and Services

6. The PLP have historically encouraged democratization and fair public participation through voter reform in Island wide elections, Parish Councils and in the Corporations.
7. In 2009, Cabinet proposed abolishing elected City government and transferring all city operations and functions to the Bermuda Government. This was Cabinet's definition of voter reform and democratization.
8. On 26 June 2009, under the leadership of Premier Brown, the Bermuda Government formally announced that it intended to repeal the Municipalities Act 1923 and transfer all operations of the municipalities of Bermuda into relevant Government departments, and thereafter in January 2010 the Government appointed a group of foreign led Consultants for the express purpose of overseeing, managing and implementing the integration of the municipalities of Bermuda into the Government within a year. The foreign consultants' expertise is focused on using public assets for the benefit of private business people with the theory that the public will eventually benefit.
9. Cabinet unfortunately confused the public early on by describing their plan as reform and democratization of City Government even though in truth their plan called for the abolishment of City elections and City government. When the Corporation asked Cabinet to make it clear what their true intentions were, Minister Roban refused to provide clarification.
10. Cabinet authorized the expenditure of \$800,000 to retain foreign led consultants to create a step by step plan for taking control of City functions and to end City elected government, but the public were led to believe that Cabinet was attempting to make the City more democratic.
11. The Corporation met briefly with Cabinet's foreign consultants on two occasions. The first meeting which lasted for half an hour occurred on 19 January 2010 and was to give the Consultants an opportunity to

introduce themselves. The second meeting was on 9 February 2010 and was in lieu of an informal lunch that the Consultants had suggested. The meeting lasted for just over an hour with a substantial amount of time being taken up trying unsuccessfully to determine exactly what the Consultants' mandate was. On both occasions the Consultants made confusing representations about what they were actually hired to do because Minister Roban had himself clouded the issue by characterizing the takeover plan as a reform effort. Cabinet thought that the Corporation should have shown the Consultants more respect, but it was plain to the Corporation that the Consultants were not hired to talk about true voter reform or democratization of cities, but were hired to end City government in Bermuda.

Imagine if in the USA, the Massachusetts State Government sought to take over the City of Boston and brought in foreign consultants to help with the takeover. When faced with those inconceivable circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the Corporation was compelled to fight for true voter reform and the reaffirmation of the fundamental principle that City and town government provides a vital platform for community participation. Participation fosters commitment and without commitment (the sense that your efforts matter and that you have a voice) a town, a city, a country is doomed.

The Corporation's Proposal would have encouraged far greater community involvement

12. In 2009, the Corporation presented comprehensive recommendations to Cabinet including the recommendation that voting be extended to all Bermudian residents (18 years and older) who live in the City. The Corporation also recommended the retention of the business vote given the strong commercial nature of the City and the desirability of encouraging participation in the affairs of the City from all stakeholders. The philosophy was simple and fair: if you pay City taxes you should have the right to vote, and participation in a small community should be encouraged at every level. This concept is not unique or antiquated and operates in much bigger cities. The City of London, after a recent country wide Labour Government review, maintains a similar franchise model. Conversely, jurisdictions that have experimented with eliminating the business vote have unintentionally created an environment that discourages investment

generally and particularly discourages the development and viability of small businesses in cities and towns (see: the April 2010 Submissions by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business to British Columbia's Local Government Elections Task Force - www.Cfib.ca). The Corporation is and always has been open to endorsing any better concept of voting provided that it encourages community involvement by all stakeholders, but to date Cabinet has not indicated that it wishes to discuss or explore options. The Corporation's proposal would have greatly expanded the franchise with the weight of any future vote being in the hands of residents. Encouraging greater participation in the affairs of the City by the community is considered a universally desirable goal.

13. Cabinet has never provided the Corporation with any substantive response to the recommendations. The Corporation has no reason to believe that Cabinet or its consultants carried out any study on how voting rights are addressed in other jurisdictions; how those cities in terms of residential and business bases compare to the City of Hamilton; and the extent to which the residential population of the City of Hamilton and other cities encompass those persons who own and operate businesses in the city so as to ensure that such commercial interests are capable of being represented in City government. If such studies were done then the public should be provided with this information so that they can satisfy themselves that the various interests that make up a vibrant City will have a voice in City government.
14. In 2010 the Corporation commenced a public awareness campaign to ensure that the public was aware that Cabinet's true intention was to dismantle the City government and use the City's assets and revenues for risky ventures which Bermudian tax payers could ill afford with a Government deficit approaching a billion dollars and climbing. The Corporation also highlighted its strong financial position and the need to ensure that a successful, self-governing City is not dismantled or harmed by Cabinet's ambition to control every aspect of life in Bermuda.
15. The Corporation calls upon Cabinet to release the secret Consultants' report to the public and let the public see for itself the background behind this Bill. Any vote on the Bill ought to be done in the full light

of day with all Members of Parliament, the Senate and the Public knowing what transpired between Cabinet and the foreign consultants and what is inside the \$800,000 Report.

16. Since 2009, the Corporation has invited Cabinet to endorse a cooperative, joint effort approach in regard to reforming the Municipalities Act, but this has been rejected. On 1 June 2010, the Corporation asked Cabinet again to consider a cooperative approach on reform with the aim of introducing legislation that would have wide public support. The Corporation's approach was met with silence.
17. Throughout 2010, various organizations have carried out independent polls using Bermudian Professional polling companies. All polls report that the Public is strongly against Cabinet's takeover bid. In the most recent Poll conducted in June 2010, 82% of **Bermudians** were against the takeover bid. Press polls put the figure even higher.

The Bill Does Not Strengthen the City But Weakens the City

18. In the face of overwhelming public opposition to Cabinet's plan, Cabinet nonetheless produces a Bill that:
 - (i) Discourages community participation by taking away voting rights from Bermudian business owners, but nonetheless requires them to pay the lion's share of City taxes. Taxation without representation is fundamentally wrong. Minister DeSilva's Bill results in approximately a 50% reduction in who can participate in City government. By contrast, the Corporation's *reform plan* expands the franchise to allow *more* people to vote and participate. The Minister's plan sets the City up for failure because his view of voter reform utterly fails to give a voice to all the stakeholders.
 - (ii) Creates an unfair and awkward voting structure where the vote is limited to City residents but anyone in Bermuda can run for City government even if they have no interest or real connection to the City. Ironically, you can run for election and live outside the City but you cannot cast a vote. Apparently, this is Minister DeSilva's answer to eliminating the business vote. The right to vote in the election process

should be a prerequisite to the right to run for office. If it is the political will of the people that business representatives should be denied the vote (we seriously doubt that it is), then at the very least, the voting structure should allow any Bermudian (18 years or older) to vote and run in City elections provided that they either live or work in the City. That ensures that all people that have a real connection to the City have a say in how the City runs. It encourages community participation.

- (iii) Sets the City up for financial failure, job losses at the Corporation and reduction in services by significantly reducing the City's revenue base. If the Bill passes, the Corporation's power to charge a fee for anyone tying up their ship to the Corporation's dock facilities is taken away **even though the Corporation owns the docks**. This alone results in a 32% reduction in City revenues and of course raises serious concerns that the Bill breaches Bermuda's Constitution. Is the Corporation simply supposed to let cruise ships and cargo ships use its property for free? It is apparent that the secret Consultants' Report advised Cabinet that one way to start taking over the City is to take away the Corporation's revenue base on the docks and create a Port Authority who could then grab and funnel that revenue to the Government. The rationale used is that Port Authorities are common place in other jurisdictions. But what Minister DeSilva does not tell the Public is that those Port Authorities actually **own the docks** they administer and with ownership comes the right (constitutionally protected) to charge ships for usage. This explains why the Bill allows WEDCO to continue charging cruise ships for use of the new docks in Dockyard but no serious argument is advanced by the Minister which explains why both Corporations are now being discriminated against and denied this same right. Minister DeSilva does not tell the public that it is common place for Municipal governments such as the Corporation to operate their own docks and charge ships for the use of those docks. The City of New York owns the Manhattan Passenger Cruise Ship Terminal and charges cruise ships for the use. The City of Fort Lauderdale owns and charges

for the use of its port as does Richmond City, the City of Long Beach and Philadelphia. These are but a few of countless examples. One only has to spend half an hour on the internet to appreciate that Minister DeSilva's modernization argument for taking away revenue from the Corporation is without any substance. His unconstitutional plan is about strangling the City financially, grabbing its assets and taking it over.

- (iv) Discourages participation in City government as no one devotes time and energy to any venture if the fruits of their labour are arbitrarily taken. The Corporation's assets and revenue base is an easy target for a Cabinet that has emptied the public accounts and run up a billion dollar debt. Robbing Peter to pay Paul is, however, not a wise Government policy for Bermuda and will only lead to further instability and worry. The Corporation works and it works well. Every Member of Parliament must ask why on earth would anyone take a thriving public institution and remove its revenue basis. To what end?
- (v) Erodes the Corporation's revenue base by shrinking the existing boundaries of the City without any explanation whatsoever. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that Cabinet wants to take for itself the tax revenues and opportunities that previously would have gone towards providing city services. The Bill is silent on who is going to provide services to the carved out pieces of the city and at what cost. The Corporation is not going to provide these services to the many businesses in the area for free. The Bill will create tremendous uncertainty for these businesses as they now have to wonder who will collect their garbage and at what cost, who is going to keep their streets clean, and will they be allowed to maintain their connection to the Corporation's sewage infrastructure and at what cost? In an unprecedented economic downturn it is difficult to understand why Cabinet has decided to create such uncertainty and why it is tampering with a City that works well.

- (vi) Significantly increases City expenses by requiring the City to now pay Government land tax. Public institutions are not generally taxed because such institutions are providing public services. Government does not pay any city taxes to the Corporation on any of the many Government buildings located within the City.
 - (vii) Erodes the historical political independence of the City (a common if not universal feature of all great cities) and seeks to give the newly created Minister responsible for Municipalities extraordinary powers over the Municipalities. In substance, Cabinet appears to be empire building and seeking to gain control over the Municipalities in a way that is inconsistent with all other democracies. The extraordinary powers that are being given to this Minister also highlights how many unexplained gaps there are in the legislation that either have not been disclosed to the public or surprisingly have not been worked out. It is hard to believe that \$800k of the tax payers' money has resulted in a Bill that leaves more questions unanswered than answered.
19. Minister Roban told the public that the Bill would give effect to the Consultants' Report. The Consultants were specifically hired at considerable cost to advise Cabinet on how to takeover City operations and services. Cabinet wants to keep this Report secret. Minister DeSilva, on Friday 16 July 2010, suggested that the Bill is not a take over Bill, but is simply intended to modernize City and Town government. If that is true, then there cannot be anything controversial or secret about the Report. We urge Members of Parliament to call for the immediate release of the Report so that the intent of this Bill can be properly and openly evaluated by all Bermudians.

Considerations

20. The Corporation respectfully asks each Member of Parliament to have regard to the following considerations before exercising your vote:

- (i) Give consideration to the importance of self governing cities and towns in a democracy;
- (ii) Give consideration to the value of encouraging community participation by anyone who has a real interest in their town or city;
- (iii) Give consideration to the fact that in poll after poll, the Bermudian people overwhelmingly oppose this government takeover - by a margin of 82% in the most recent poll;
- (iv) Will this Bill bring Bermudians together, push them apart, encourage them to take an interest in the City or disengage;
- (v) Does the voting component of the Bill fairly capture everyone who has a real stake in the well-being of the City;
- (vi) Having regard to the subject matter, namely the future of Bermuda's only City, was the public adequately consulted before the introduction of the Bill;
- (vii) Were any reports or studies carried out and, if so, was the public given access to this information or was the information kept from them;
- (viii) Consider whether what is being proposed to be done to the City would be done in any other democracy;
- (ix) Should a Bill that will profoundly determine the fate of a City be the subject of greater debate or has sufficient time been allotted, and is the subject matter the type where the party whip should be applied or should this be a vote of conscience;
- (x) Does the Bill weaken or strengthen the financial integrity of the City and the City's ability to provide dependable services;
- (xi) Is the Bill likely to increase or decrease the national debt;

- (xii) Does the language of the Bill clearly inform the public what goal or objective is being pursued or does the Bill raise more questions than it answers.

The Corporation respectfully asks Parliament to vote against this Bill or defer it for further public consultation and consideration. The Bill is presented without sufficient or any public input and no input from the two Corporations. The Corporation believes that the best way forward is for the Corporation and Government representatives to work together, with ample opportunity for public input, and do their best over the Summer recess to reach a consensus on true voter reform and any other issues of mutual interest. Clearly, there is the need for real dialogue on the serious ramifications of what is currently being proposed.

Thank you for considering this presentation. Copies of all previous Government announcements, correspondence between Cabinet and the Corporation and press reports can be found on the Corporation's Save Our City Website at www.SaveOurCityBermuda.org.

**CORPORATION OF HAMILTON
19 July 2010**

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The voting system for City of London Ward elections

Unlike elsewhere in the UK, businesses, as well as residents, can register to vote in local elections. Residents can register to vote (as long as they are eligible), sole traders and equity partners can register, and other businesses and organisations can nominate electors based on the size of their workforce.

The City of London ensured that the residential predominance of the four residential Wards of Aldersgate, Cripplegate, Portsoken and Queenhithe was maintained.

Who are people voting for in ward elections? | Why does the City have a different voting system to other areas? | What is the City of London? | What do elected Common Councillors do? | What is an Alderman? | What about the position of residents? | When are the next ward elections? | How do people vote? – Voting in person How do people vote? – Postal voting | What happens if the election in a ward is uncontested? | Appointing voters | Eligibility criteria

Who are people voting for in ward elections?

They are voting for candidates to represent them, or the organisation for which they work, in the Court of Common Council – the decision making body of the City of London.

The City is made up of 25 wards, or areas, and each elects one Alderman and a number of Common Councillors (the number depending on the size of the ward) to represent it. However, in ward elections they only vote for Common Councillors – there are separate elections for Aldermen.

Maps of the City's wards can be viewed here

Why does the City have a different voting system to other areas?

The City comprises just over one square mile but within that area the City of London Corporation serves around 9,000 residents and 340,000 workers. The City is the only area in the country in which the number of workers significantly outnumbers the residents and therefore, to be truly representative of its population, offers a vote to City organisations so they can have their say on the way the City is run.

What is the City of London?

The City of London provides local government and other services for the 'Square Mile'. These include economic development, education, environmental health, highways management, housing, libraries, the Barbican Arts Centre, policing, social services, street cleaning and waste collection and town planning. Although in many ways it is like an ordinary local council, the City of London is unique because of its vigorous promotion of the business City in the UK and abroad. In addition it provides many services from its own investments, at no cost to the public, such as the Central Criminal Court, Guildhall School of Music & Drama, wholesale markets, the five City bridges and open spaces like Epping Forest and Hampstead Heath.

What do elected Common Councillors do?

They sit on the different committees that discuss and make decisions on the day-to-day activities and projects of the City of London. The crucial issues that arise from these committees go on to be debated in the Court of Common Council – a monthly meeting of all Common Councillors and Aldermen chaired by the Lord Mayor. Common Councillors cover a wide range of professions and City interests but do not represent any political party.

If you are interested in standing for the office of Common Councillor, you can view a job description, for a Common Councillor, and other associated roles, at our Corporate Governance page.

Common Councillor guidance to qualification (23k)

What is an Alderman?

The Alderman is the senior Member of a ward and also sits in the Court of Aldermen which has historic functions such as approving people for Freedom of the City and approving the formation of new livery companies. The Lord Mayor is drawn from the ranks of the Aldermen. There are separate arrangements for Aldermen whereby they face re-election every six years.

If you are interested in standing for the office of Alderman, you can view a job description at our [Corporate Governance](#) page.

[Aldermanic guidance to qualification \(40k\)](#)

What about the position of residents?

The position of residents has been secured following a review of the City's ward boundaries. This ensured that the resident population is concentrated in four wards so that their influence is not diminished by business votes in those wards.

When are the next ward elections?

For Common Councilmen, elections are held every four years. The next are due in March 2013. Aldermanic elections are held as required, as Aldermen serve a term of six years. These are elections for Aldermen and Common Councilmen only – not for the Greater London Authority, UK or European Parliaments.

How do people vote? – Voting in person

They will be sent a poll card shortly before the election. This will contain their name, address, elector number, the date and time of the election and also the location of the polling station where they can vote.

How do people vote? – Postal voting

[View further information](#) including a copy of the application form.

How do people vote? - Proxy voting

[View further information](#) including a copy of the application form.

What happens if the election in a ward is uncontested?

If the number of candidates nominated equals the number of places vacant those candidates are returned. However, irrespective of whether or not there is a contest in an individual ward, a meeting known as a 'wardmote' is held. At this meeting the voters in the ward have the opportunity to meet and question the candidates and raise issues with them. All registered voters will be written to individually to inform them of the time and date of the wardmote, and poll, if required.

Appointing voters

How organisations can take part in ward elections

- **Partnerships or sole traders**
People who are equity partners of firms (without limited liability) or sole traders in the City will have the right to vote provided they are at least 18 years old and a citizen of the UK or other Commonwealth or European Union country on 1 September in the year prior to the elections. They must actually work at the premises for at least some of the time.
- **Incorporated or unincorporated bodies**
Any incorporated or unincorporated body can appoint voters to take part in the City of London ward elections as long as they physically occupy premises in the City on the qualifying date of 1 September in the year prior to the ward elections. This includes banks, insurance companies, stock brokers and other financial institutions, limited liability partnerships, charities, trade associations, livery companies, churches and other religious bodies, and hospital trusts. The number of voters they can appoint depends on the size of their workforce on 1 September as follows.

Size of workforce	Entitlement
1 to 9	1
10	2

25	5
50	10
100	11
200	13
500	19
1,000	29
2,000	49
3,500	79

Eligibility criteria

To vote in City elections, voters must first be registered on the Ward Lists. Registered voters must be over the age of 16 (but can only vote once they are 18) and a citizen of the UK or other Commonwealth or European Union country on 1 September in the year prior to the publication of the Ward Lists.

They must also be a member of staff since 1 September and whose main place of work is the City premises of the organisation which is appointing them

- or be a member of the Board of Directors or equivalent since 1 September
- or have worked exclusively for the organisation for a total of 5 years or more, at some time during their working career, and either still work in the City or have done so within the last 5 years
- or have worked mainly in the City for 10 years or more, regardless of the organisation, at some time during their working career and still do so or have done within the last 5 years.

People are eligible to vote in the City's elections even if they are also registered to vote at their home address as long as they do not live in the City. Voters appointed must, as far as is reasonable, reflect the composition of the organisation's workforce and the appointment process should be open and clear.

- Can you vote in the City as well as at home?
Yes - provided you do not live in the City.
- If you live in the City can you vote twice in City elections?
No.
- Can one person have all the nominated votes?
No.
- Can staff at all levels vote?
Yes – as long as each meet the criteria.
- Does this mean they become a Member of the City of London?
No – they are simply voting to elect Members of the Corporation. If they wish to stand as a candidate for election, they should contact the Electoral Registration Office.
- Are voters appointed by a qualifying body free to exercise their vote as they wish?
Yes – the vote is a secret ballot just like all other elections.

For further details please call the helpline on 0800 587 5537 or email electoralservices@cityoflondon.gov.uk .

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The Case for Returning the Business Vote in Local Government Elections

Submission to the Local Government Elections Task Force

Brian Bonney, Director of Provincial Affairs

Due to the elimination of the business vote in 1993, an overwhelming majority of businesses in BC now say that local government taxation and regulation are their biggest headaches. Businesses in BC have become increasingly disenfranchised by their local government, whose foremost concern is residential votes. Small business' concerns are often an afterthought in the local decision making processes. A good way to start to restore accountability to businesses is by returning the business vote.

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission to the Local Government Elections Task Force. As you may know, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) is a non-profit, non-partisan business association that seeks to give independent business a greater voice in determining the laws that govern business and the country. With 105,000 members across Canada, 10,000 of which are located in BC, we are the largest organization exclusively representing the interests of small- and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) to all levels of government.

What you may not know is that most business in BC is small business. Ninety-eight per cent of BC businesses have fewer than 50 employees and over 80 per cent employ fewer than five staff. SMEs now account for 34 per

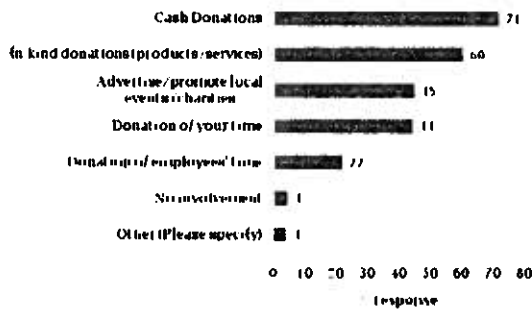
cent of gross domestic product and 56 per cent of private sector employment in BC.¹

During the recent recession, small- and medium-sized businesses did a remarkable job of keeping people employed. Big businesses reduced employee levels by 8.8 per cent during the recession, small businesses reduced by only 0.5 per cent.

Despite the economic challenges businesses have faced over the last year, their commitment to charitable giving has remained remarkably resilient. CFIB's 2009 report on charitable giving shows the overwhelming majority of small- and medium-sized businesses, 71 per cent, continued to give back to their communities through cash donations and more than half provided in-kind donations of products and services (see Figure 1).

¹ *BC Small Business Profile 2009*

Figure 1:
How does your small business contribute to charitable and community causes?



Source: CFIB, *Point of View on British Columbia, 2009*

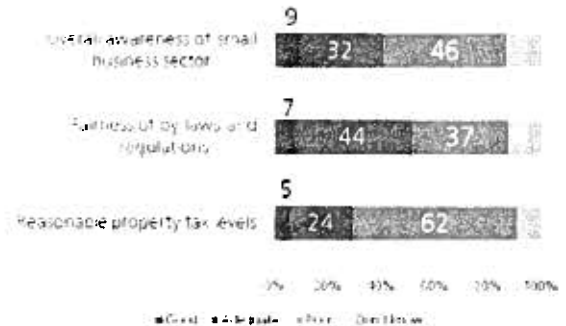
On soccer fields, baseball diamonds and lacrosse boxes around the province, it is small, community-based businesses that likely donated the children's uniforms. And in many cases, the team's coach is either a small business owner or a small business employee let off work early to help teach our children.

Small- and medium-sized businesses are unquestionably the backbone of BC's economy. Despite the significant contribution SMEs make to the economy and the many benefits they bring to our communities, they are being taxed to the breaking point by municipal governments.

On average, BC municipalities tax small business almost three times more than residents on same value property. This disproportionate and profit insensitive tax burden is a result of the lack of local government accountability to businesses, in part through the elimination of the business vote.

Although CFIB hears more from our members about the municipal tax burden than practically any other issue, businesses are increasingly disenfranchised on a wide variety of local government issues including, bylaws, user fees, permits, licensing and land use. Small businesses are frustrated that they are not being heard at the local government level.

Figure 2:
How do you rate the local government where your business is situated on the following business issues?



Source: CFIB, *Mandate Survey 236, October 2009*

To restore accountability to small businesses in our communities, CFIB members are calling for the restoration of a business vote for each business taxed at a higher business class tax rate. In a recent CFIB small business mandate vote, 80 per cent of our members indicated they support the return of the business vote in municipal elections.

In this submission we examine unfair municipal business property taxation and show how returning accountability is not just about taxes. We argue why we need to return local government representation for businesses in BC. We have also included details of a workable process on how the business vote should be structured to address effectiveness and potential for abuse, as well as information that counters popular objections to the business vote from the perspective of SMEs. Finally, we have added an appendix answering the specific questions posed to us by the Task Force.

The Task Force should not consider this submission as a single voice but rather as the collective voice of small business from across British Columbia.

Our submission includes 6,039 individual signed petitions requesting the return of the business vote in local government elections from CFIB's small- and medium-sized business members.

Small Business and Local Government

A thriving small business sector is essential for creating jobs, training workers, providing essential goods and services, and supporting local charities. Running a small- or medium-sized business is difficult; competition is fierce and SMEs don't have the buying power to get supplies as cheap as multinationals. As a result, their margins are normally thin and they have to watch every penny. Excessive property taxes make this difficult.

Evidence that BC's businesses face excessive municipal taxes is irrefutable. When comparing provinces, it appears that BC has the most extreme difference between local government residential and business tax rates in Canada.²

The average property tax gap in BC between business (class six) and residential (class one), on a property of the same value, has grown substantially over the past two decades. In 1990, the average municipal property tax gap was 1.8 meaning businesses were paying 1.8 times more than residents on the same value property. By 2003, the property tax gap in BC had grown to an average of 2.42 times. In 2008, the average gap had risen to 2.97 times. In some municipalities, businesses pay five, six and even seven times more than residents.

For example, businesses in North Saanich pay over 7.27 times the municipal taxes that a resident does on the same value property. In Vancouver, businesses pay 5.08 times more, in Coquitlam they pay 4.99 times more, and in Burnaby they pay 3.98 times more, despite considerable evidence that businesses use fewer services than residents.

The disproportionate tax burden being placed on BC's small- and medium-sized businesses in

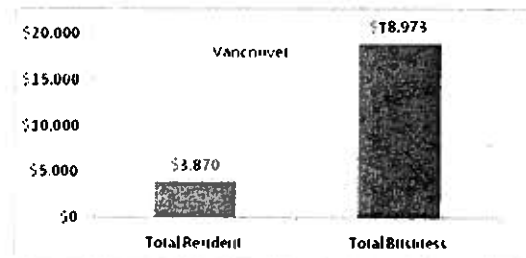
part correlates to the elimination of the business vote in 1993. This decision made it easier for BC's local governments to increase their income dependence on businesses to meet their revenue needs.

What does the property tax gap mean in terms of actual tax dollars paid?

Figure 3 (below) shows that in 2008 on an average residential property worth \$941,999 Vancouver residents paid \$3,870 in residential property taxes. A business paid \$18,973 on the same value property, over five times more. Businesses pay this disproportionately higher level of tax even if they do not own property. It is embedded in their rent, triple net lease and strata taxes. Adding insult to injury, in many cases businesses have to pay other fees for services like their garbage collection.

Figure 3:

Vancouver: Total Business vs. Residential Property Tax on a representative \$941,999 property in 2008



Source: BC Ministry of Community Development, 2008.

Some municipalities like Vancouver have implemented policies to address these inequities. How effective have they been? Not very. Consider Deanna Geisheimer, President of Art Works Gallery in Vancouver, who reported that her municipal property taxes went from \$28,158 in 2002 to \$96,805 in 2009, despite tax load shifts from business class to residential class being implemented by the City of Vancouver. As Geisheimer says, "Businesses are falling woefully behind anything close to fair and equitable," and "anyone who suggests the tax shift is a tax

²In *Search of Tax Excellence*, Danielle Smith, April 2009, ISBN 978-0-9781773-6-2, Page 24, Difference between municipal mill rates compares the CMAs in each province.

break for business owners is being irresponsible.”

Highlighting this unfair level of taxation, businesses, especially small ones, actually use fewer services than homeowners. A January 2007 independent study by MMK consulting for the City of Vancouver showed that non-residential taxpayers paid 55 per cent of property-based taxes but consumed 24 per cent of local tax-supported services³. While residential properties pay \$0.56 in property taxes for every dollar of tax-supported services consumed, non-residential properties pay approximately \$2.42 in taxes for each dollar of service consumed.

It should be pointed out that, in 1984, the province granted BC municipalities more discretion in property tax matters than in any other province in Canada. Until then the provincial government had carefully regulated the ratio between municipal property tax rates paid on residential properties and other property classes.

This increased discretion to set tax rates, coupled with the elimination of the business vote in 1993, has resulted in an ever increasing dependence on businesses to meet increasing local government revenue needs.

In 2008 there were only three municipalities in BC that levied the same municipal tax rate on businesses as they do on residents. All of the 157 other BC municipalities taxed a businesses at a significantly higher rate. Since 2003, only a handful of municipalities have decreased their financial dependence on businesses in their community.

The budgeting process

To understand how reliant we have become on business class property taxes it is useful to look at how municipal governments develop their budgets and the political factors that affect the process.

Local government staff usually presents their budget funding plan in an in-camera meeting to their municipal council for consideration. Elected officials look at the bottom line to see how much residential property tax will have to rise in order to fund the budget. If the residential tax increase is deemed to be reasonable, there is a collective sigh of relief.

But if the residential tax increase is deemed to be unacceptable—with the potential for a backlash at the polls—the budget is quickly sent back to the finance department with instructions to bring the residential tax increase in line with what they believe the voters may accept.

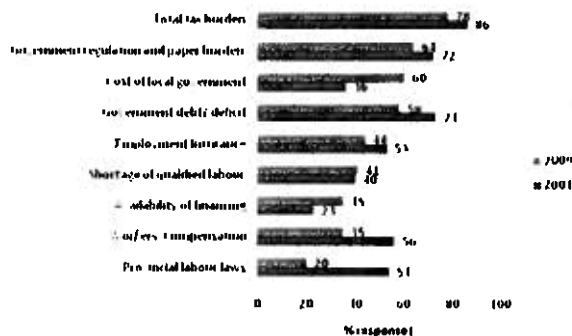
Although it would be nice to think that the elected officials would instruct municipal staff to take prudent steps to reduce spending and the overall size of the municipal budget, or cut items from the wish list, the political reality is that, in many local governments, elected officials want to be seen to be delivering goods and services to the citizens who elected them. Cutting back on spending and wish list items is therefore an unpopular choice. The last thing politicians want to see are special interest groups from the community lining up at council meetings, or in front of the press, asking why funding for the new items they asked for, or even beautification, dog parks, sidewalks and street lights, has all been cut back.

In the absence of any meaningful business representation in local governments, residential taxes have been kept artificially low through incremental increases in business property taxes.

In 2001, 36 per cent of BC small- and medium-sized businesses indicated concern that the cost of local government was a priority for them. In 2009 that figure had risen to 60 per cent and the cost of local government is now the third highest priority noted by BC businesses after total tax burden (which includes property taxes) and government regulation and paper burden (which includes municipal regulations), as shown in Figure 4..

³ MMK Consulting, *Consumption of Tax-Supported Municipal Services*, January 2007.

Figure 4:
BC Small business priorities: 2009
vs 2001



Source: CFIB, *Our Members' Opinions*, September 2009, 2001

If businesses did have a vote, during that in-camera budget meeting, when the politicians are looking at the bottom line, they would have a stronger incentive to look at the tax increases for all property tax payers to see if they are reasonable.

Where are we headed if nothing changes?

Unchecked growth in the property tax burden being shouldered by BC's businesses will have a negative impact on our communities.

If the property tax gap in BC continues to grow over the next decade or two, as it has in the previous two decades, outcomes could include the following:

- ▶ Businesses with fixed costs and low margins may have little choice but to reduce staff hours, lay off staff and consider the prospect of closing down.
- ▶ Businesses may be forced to scale back or even cancel expansion plans.
- ▶ Businesses may have to cancel plans to upgrade and buy new equipment, which affects productivity.
- ▶ Businesses may opt to cut back on purchases or even reduce the amount of space they rent. Some could choose to become home based and take advantage of the much lower residential tax rate.

- ▶ Businesses might look for opportunities to move to a municipality with lower property tax rates.
- ▶ Businesses might eventually be forced to increase their prices to keep up with property tax increases. If the business is lucky, and the economy is good, consumers may be willing to pay. But, if times are poor, consumers may not be willing to pay, and businesses could then face sales and income reductions.
- ▶ Businesses may be forced to cut back on or even cancel their charitable giving and donations in-kind. As business owners find themselves forced to take on increased workloads to keep their businesses afloat, they will likely be forced to scale back or cancel the non-profit activities and roles that they and their staff play in the community.

Clearly, if property tax rates for businesses continue to rise unchecked, it will have adverse consequences on the BC economy. The BC advantage we have now, the fact BC enjoys more entrepreneurs per capita than anywhere else in Canada, would start to disappear as fewer entrepreneurs decide to take on the risk of starting a business.

As one small business owner who received an unexpectedly large property tax increase told CFIB:

"We will be paying for the increase by laying off a first year apprentice, but just so you know, another 45 per cent increase next year, will probably mean the end of this business. We cannot generate enough money to continue paying these ridiculously high property taxes."

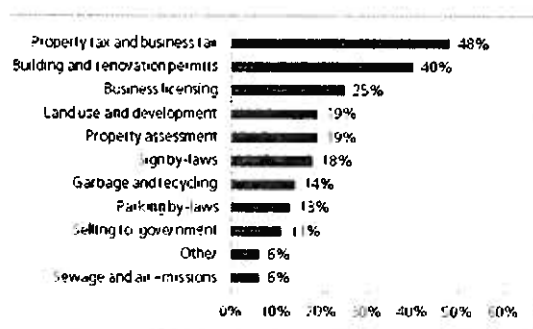
The need for municipal accountability extends beyond taxes

It is important to note that small businesses concerns with local government are not limited to taxation, as illustrated in Figure 5.

Businesses are also subjected to a considerable array of municipal regulations, user fees, bylaws, licensing and a host of other rules around development, renovations and land use, not to mention the time it takes to process permits and applications.

Figure 5:

Which municipal government regulations are most burdensome to your business in terms of time and money spent on compliance? (Select as many as apply)



Source: *Regulation and Paperburden Survey: Mandate 233, December 2008*

In Canada, the cost of regulations pertaining to small businesses with fewer than 5 employees is \$5,825 per employee. Furthermore, 26 per cent of business owners say that if they had known the true cost burden of government regulations they may not have gone into business in the first place. Who is listening to the concerns of businesses and representing their views in local governments? Who is speaking out for businesses at council meetings to say this is a concern that needs to be considered?

Many of the local government staff that businesses must deal with have never been involved in a small-or medium-sized business, let alone run one. As such, they simply do not understand nor do they relate to the needs and concerns of a business. In many cases, business owners feel they are just not being heard about basic customer service.

More than just taxation, then, restoring the business vote is also about creating a stronger incentive to listen to the concerns of business, which are different from residents at the municipal level.

Suggested process for the business vote in BC

The previous process for business voting in BC was not without flaws. The process was cumbersome and very few businesses took the time to register a proxy to vote. Proving eligibility meant that businesses wishing to vote had to go back and forth repeatedly with the municipal clerk's office in their municipality which resulted in very few businesses actually exercising their right to vote.

It is therefore crucial that the process for registering a proxy be made as simple as possible to ensure that businesses have the maximum opportunity to participate in the electoral process.

Ideally, businesses in BC would automatically appear on a list similar to the list of eligible voters compiled and updated by Elections BC. Businesses could then register a designated proxy who would be authorized to cast a ballot on behalf of the business.

The registration process could easily be facilitated using the existing, provincially maintained, Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) Business Number (BN) list cross-referenced against the BC Assessment Authority database to ensure that a business class property designation is maintained in relation to the business vote.

For the purposes of the business vote, these conditions should be followed:

1. The business must have a government issued Business Number (BN)
2. The business must have a municipal property address.
3. The business must be paying any one of the business class municipal property taxes and cannot be a home based business paying lower residential property taxes at their BN registered address.

4. The business must appoint a designated proxy to vote on its behalf.
5. A registered business vote proxy may only be registered to vote on behalf of one business in any given municipality.
6. A registered business vote proxy may be registered and be able to vote once in any number of different municipalities.
7. A business with a single BN but with multiple locations in multiple municipalities may be registered to vote in each municipality as long as they pay a business class property tax rate in each municipality..

In most cases, the CRA assigned BN would show that a business is generating over \$30,000 a year in revenue⁴ and is therefore not simply a rented storage locker or parking space (a concern raised in 1993 when the business vote was eliminated by the provincial government).

The business address itself could be a rental or lease address within a building or strata unit or a property address owned by the business. In the case of a business that owns a shopping mall or office building, the business would get a single vote provided they have a business suite at the address where business class property taxes are being paid.

As with the municipal voters list, the name of the registered proxy for any given business would remain on the list until such time as a different proxy was designated and registered through the online One Stop Business Registry. A process such as this would allow the designated proxy for a business to go directly to the business vote table at any municipal polling station, show identification, and cast

⁴ While most businesses obtain a BN to register for GST/HST, the BN also allows a business to open a payroll, import/export, and corporate income tax account.

the proxy ballot like any other voter in the municipality.

This process would dramatically increase the effectiveness of the business vote as well as eliminate potential for abuse. In the appendix we provide more detailed answers to the list of eligibility and administrative questions asked by the Task Force.

Objections to the return of the business vote

This section considers the main objections to the business vote and counters them from the perspective of small- and medium-sized businesses.

1. Objection: Businesses will control municipal elections

Some argue that restoring the municipal business vote would allow businesses to take over municipal elections and negate the influence that residents have over municipal affairs.

There are 2,993,420 eligible voters in BC. BC's current population is 4.5 million people. The 390,000 businesses in BC represent just one potential business vote for every 7.7 citizens. In fact, a strong argument could be made the business vote will not go nearly far enough to create accountability to businesses. However, it does create a bigger incentive for municipal staff and elected officials to pay attention to their concerns.

2. Objection: The business vote will give some individuals more than one vote in a local government election.

As a business cannot literally vote, a proxy must be designated. This means that in some cases, one person may vote twice in a municipal election. For example, a business owner who operates a business in Richmond and lives in Richmond could vote twice in the Richmond election, once AS the proxy vote for the business and once as a resident. Some find

this idea offensive as they believe strongly in the idea of one vote per person. However, the business is really the "person" with the voting rights in this case. The business gets the right to vote as it is taxed. Thus, the principle of no taxation without representation is respected.

There is much precedent for proxy voting. Many people currently cast two ballots in local government elections in BC. Blind people, those that cannot speak English well and those that can't read all currently have the ability to designate proxies who may reside in the same municipality. Many proxy voters then vote twice in the same election.

It is also worth noting that BC law recognises a business as a person with all of the responsibilities of a person. Governments require businesses to abide by the same laws and regulations as a person and subject to the same liabilities. Shouldn't some of the rights attached to the responsibilities of personhood also apply to businesses, especially in light of the onerous tax burden they are being forced to endure?

3. Objection: The right to vote is not based on taxation but rather residency

It is interesting to note that the *Local Government Act* allows residential property owners to vote as non-resident electors, in multiple municipalities, wherever they own a residential property even if they are not residents of the municipality.

The right to vote as a non-resident elector recognizes the inherent right to representation relative to the taxes a property owner pays in each municipality. It points to a fundamental connection between taxation and representation.

It is this fundamental right to have a vote in relation to property taxation that BC's businesses are seeking through restoration of the business vote; a right that non-resident residential property owners already enjoy.

The non-residential elector who owns five residential properties, in five different municipalities, gets to vote five times in

relation to the taxes they pay in each. How is this fair in relation to business owners in these communities that do not even get one vote to represent their business taxes?

4. Objection: If business owners get a municipal vote, they will want a provincial and federal vote.

Some people have suggested that if businesses get a vote in municipal elections surely they would want a vote in provincial and federal elections too.

Federal and provincial income taxes are profit sensitive, meaning that they pay income taxes when they are making a profit. This simple fact makes federal and provincial politicians accountable to business and provides a strong incentive to pay attention to their concerns. Municipal business property taxes, in contrast, are profit insensitive and must be paid regardless of whether a business is making money or not. Not surprisingly, CFIB has never heard from members calling for a provincial or federal vote.

Conclusion

The 1993 decision to eliminate the right of businesses to vote in municipal elections in BC reflected a general lack of awareness about BC's small- and medium-sized businesses, the challenges they face and the economic and social benefits they provide to our communities.

BC businesses do not feel municipalities are accountable to them on any of their major concerns, including taxation and regulation.

This lack of accountability has resulted in BC's local governments incrementally increasing the property taxes of businesses to where they are now, on average, almost three times more than residents on the same value property and as high as seven times more in some municipalities. BC municipalities are some of the least business-friendly jurisdictions in Canada. Sixty per cent of BC business owners now cite municipal property taxes as the most harmful tax to their business.

Left unchecked, the lack of accountability to BC small businesses could have dire consequences for the BC economy and the involvement of businesses, their owners and their employees in our communities.

Restoring the municipal business vote would bring a measure of local government accountability to BC's businesses. It will also recognize the vital contributions that small- and medium-sized businesses make to where we all live, work and play.

The business vote will likely inspire business owners, their staff and their families to take more interest in local government elections and become more involved. This increased public interest and voter involvement in the political process is a good outcome for all of us as it would strengthen our democracy as it allows the businesses that are integral to our communities to be heard.

A critical ingredient to the successful return of the business vote is the process CFIB has recommended. This would dramatically increase the effectiveness of the business vote as well as eliminate potential for abuse.

Therefore, CFIB and our 10,000 business members in BC are urging the Task Force to recommend that the province restore businesses representation and local government accountability through the return of the business vote in local government elections.

Appendix

A number of eligibility and administrative questions have been raised by the Task Force that we provide responses to below.

Eligibility issues

1. What types of businesses should be eligible?

Any business with a BN paying one of the business class municipal property tax rates at their address should get one vote.

2. Should publicly traded businesses be eligible?

Yes, if they have a BN, and pay one of the business class municipal property tax rates, they should get one vote.

3. Should all corporations registered in BC be able to vote? Should corporations/businesses from outside of BC be excluded from voting?

Yes, if they have a BN, and are paying one of the business class municipal property tax rates, all businesses and corporations should get one vote, including those from outside BC. If a business is paying BC municipal business property tax they should have representation.

4. Should businesses—not just corporations—be eligible? If so, what types of businesses should be eligible (sole proprietorships, partnerships, co-operatives)? Are there any types of business that should not be eligible?

If they have a BN, a sole proprietorship, corporation, partnership, co-operative society and a union should all have one vote as long as they are also paying a one of the business class taxes to a municipality. The key is that they would need to rent, lease or own property where they are taxed a business class of municipal property taxes. Thus, a home based business would not get a vote in the municipal election. We are suggesting that a cross reference be done with the BC assessment authority to determine whether the business is

paying a rate from one of the business class tax brackets. If so, they would clearly not be home based, and would not be paying lower residential taxes, and should then receive a vote.

5. Should the right extend to some or all incorporated societies?

Yes, if they have a BN, and are paying one of the business class municipal property tax rates through their rent, lease or own property, they should get one vote. If they are paying residential or non profit property tax rates they should not get a vote.

6. Businesses that have a municipal business licence do not necessarily pay property tax in each municipality in which they operate (e.g. mobile construction contractors). Should only businesses that actually pay property tax be eligible?

Yes. The business should get a single vote in each municipality where they pay one of the business class municipal property tax rates. A mobile business would get a vote in each municipality where they pay a business class property tax. However, in practice they would likely have only one "home base" municipality where they rent, lease or own a non residential taxed property. If a business operates from a residential property, as in the case of a home based business, the business would not get a business vote because the business is not paying property taxes at a business class property tax rate.

7. Should a person with businesses in multiple municipalities get to vote in each place?

A business with a single BN should get a vote in every municipality where their business address reflects they are paying one of the business class property tax rates to that municipality. However, the person that the business registers and assigns to vote for the business could only vote on behalf of one business in any given municipality.

8. *Should corporations that own or hold property—but do not necessarily conduct business—be eligible?*

Yes, as long as they have a BN and pay one of the business class municipal property tax rates. The determination of eligibility is based on the BN and paying one of the business class municipal taxes. If you pay the higher tax, you should have representation.

9. *Resident electors can only vote once, even if they own multiple properties. Non-resident property electors may only vote once, and only in relation to one property. If a person owns a business in the same municipality that he or she resides in, is it fair for that person get two votes (i.e. one as a resident and one on behalf of the business) in the municipality?*

It is important to make the distinction that it is the business that gets the right to vote, not the individual proxy casting the ballot. Businesses pay nearly three times more tax than residents on same value properties. It is this high level of business municipal taxation that needs to be addressed, and fairness requires that businesses get a single vote in municipal elections. The person voting is merely the designate charged with exercising the proxy for the business the same as someone who is blind, can't read, an ESL citizen or anyone unable to mark a ballot for any reason may designate a proxy to vote for them at the ballot box. The business would have to ensure that they are reasonably comfortable with the voter casting a ballot and that they will represent the interests of the business and not those of a resident, just as a residential voter designating someone to vote for them must do.

The right to vote as a non-resident elector recognizes the inherent right to representation relative to the taxes a property owner pays in each municipality. It points to a fundamental connection between taxation and representation. It is this fundamental right to have a vote in relation to property taxation that BC's businesses are seeking through restoration of the business vote; a right that

non-resident residential property owners already enjoy.

10. *In the case of a business vote, should businesses that lease property be eligible, or should property ownership be required as in the rules for non-resident property electors?*

Property ownership should not be a requirement for voting just as a residential voter who rents or leases has a right to vote. It is presumed that a resident who rents or leases is paying toward the property taxes through their rent or lease. The same argument can be made for businesses.

11. *Should a business vote be established for all local elections (e.g. boards of education), or just local government (i.e. municipal & regional district) elections?*

The business vote should just be for local government elections. School boards do not have the ability to increase or decrease the provincial school portion of property taxes that a business has to pay.

Administrative issues raised by the Task Force

1. *How would a business prove its eligibility to vote? What kind of criteria could be used to determine who is eligible?*

To be eligible a business owner must have a BN number assigned by CRA and must be paying a business class rate of municipal property taxes in each municipality they register to vote in. Then they would be required to register a designate to cast their proxy and that designate would be required to show eligibility as any other voter would.

2. *If businesses that aren't corporations are eligible, how would the business prove it is eligible? What kind of proof (e.g. documentation) might be required?*

They would first have to have a Business Number (BN) that is issued by CRA. The

business has to have this number if they have sales over \$30,000 a year. This list is then maintained by the province. The BN is then cross referenced to one of the business class property taxes paid to show that they are not a home based business, paying lower residential rates. The business would then have to assign a proxy voter. The BN list including assigned voters would be sent to the municipalities in advance of the election.

3. *How would businesses actually exercise the vote? Via a representative (like an agent, as was the case in the past), or in some other way?*

Yes, they would assign an agent or representative to vote for the business. This person would have to be registered a certain amount of time prior to an election. And each designated business voter would be required to show proof of eligibility at the poll. A cost effective online registration process through BC One Stop should also be implemented to make the registration process easier.

4. *Should there be citizenship/residency requirements on the representative?*

Yes, the same BC election act rules, regulations and voting requirements would apply to a business vote voter as would apply to a residential voter.

5. *If lessees are eligible, how would lessees prove their eligibility?*

Renter's and lessee's addresses would have to appear on the property assessment roles as an address paying business class property taxes. This would ensure that whether they rent or lease they are paying the higher business class taxes.

6. *How much property should a lessee have to lease in order to qualify?*

Qualification should be based on a business with a BN paying a business class property tax rate in the municipality no matter how much. This means that a small baker will get one vote just the same as a large company like Alcan gets only one vote.

7. *What kind of property? Land, improvements, real property, or any of the above?*

Any of the above as long as the stated criteria are met.

8. *What might happen if multiple owners owned a business or corporation? Should each owner get a vote in relation to that business?*

No, the business would be able to assign one person to cast one ballot in each municipality where they are paying a business class municipal property tax rate.



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British Columbia » News Releases

CFIB commends mayors and councillors for supporting the return of the business vote

Vancouver, May 26th, 2010 – Today, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) join four BC mayors and four Councillors from across BC as they announce their personal support for small businesses in their communities by endorsing the return of the business vote in local government elections. "I have to commend these municipal representatives that have made a very personal commitment to restore representation to their local business community," said Brian Bonney, CFIB Director of Provincial Affairs, BC.

Restoring the business vote is about creating a stronger incentive to listen to the concerns of business, concerns that are different from residents at the municipal level. "As representatives of our communities, we are committed to a thriving small business sector that is essential for creating jobs, training workers, providing essential goods and services, and supponing local charities," said Mayor Susan Rotine, Merritt, BC.

A critical ingredient to the successful return of the business vote is the process CFIB has recommended. This would dramatically increase the effectiveness of the business vote as well as eliminate potential for abuse. "Eliminating businesses' right to vote because the process allowed someone to rent a storage locker and obtain a business license to gain an extra vote amounted to throwing the baby out with the bathwater," said Bonney.

"The 1993 decision to eliminate the right of businesses to vote in municipal elections in BC reflected a general lack of awareness about BC's small- and medium-sized businesses, the challenges they face and the economic and social benefits they provide to our communities," said Mayor Greg Phelps, Courtenay, BC.

With just one potential business vote for every 7.7 citizen's votes, the business vote will not be the silver bullet that restores representation over night. However, as mayors and Councillors, it is our duty to support all taxpayers in our communities. The right to vote given to non-resident property owners in local government elections recognizes the inherent right to representation relative to the taxes non-resident property owners pay in our municipalities. It points to a fundamental connection between taxation and representation. "We support this fundamental right to have a vote in relation to property taxation that our local community businesses are seeking through restoration of the business vote," said Councillor Kevin Flynn, Salmon Arm, BC.

"Restoring the municipal business vote will recognize the vital contributions that small- and medium-sized businesses make to where we all live, work and play," said Mayor Rick Green, Langley Township, BC.

"Business owners take tremendous personal risks, drive our economy, donate to non-profits and employ our citizens even during recessions," said Councillor Linda Reimer, Coquitlam, BC.

"The business vote will likely inspire business owners, their staff and their families to take more interest in local government elections and become more involved. This increased interest and involvement in the political process is a good outcome for all of us as it would strengthen our democracy as it allows the businesses that are integral to our communities to be heard," said Councillor John Trainor, Armstrong, BC.

Despite the significant contribution small- and medium-sized enterprises make to the economy and the many benefits they bring to our communities, irrefutable evidence shows many BC businesses face excessive municipal taxes compared to residents on same value property. When comparing provinces, BC municipalities have the most extreme differential between residential and business property tax rates in Canada. The undersigned local government representatives recognise this fact and feel more needs to be done to reduce businesses property tax burden compared to residents. However, they stress that this should be done over time as the growing number of residential properties will not increase the tax burden on residential taxpayers in their communities.

However, returning representation is not just about taxes. Businesses are disenfranchised on a wide variety of local government issues including bylaws, user fees, permits, licensing, land use and old fashioned customer service

BC's small- and medium-sized businesses account for a majority of all businesses in BC and more than one third of BC's gross domestic product. The vast majority have fewer than five employees, but collectively employ over 50 per cent of BC's private-sector workforce.

List of mayors and Councillors names, town/city and contact number

Do something
positive for your
business!

JOIN CFIB TODAY

Mayor Greg Phelps, Courtenay, BC 1-250-334-4441

Mayor Rick Green, Langley Township, BC 1-604 533 8065

Mayor Catherine Ferguson, White Rock, BC 1-604-541 2124

Mayor Susan Roline, Merritt, BC 1-250-378-4224

Councillor Linda Reimer, Coquitlam, BC 604-617-1490

Councillor & Director North Okanagan Regional Board, John Trainor, Armstrong, BC 1-250-548-8083

Councillor Dave Ferosa, Powell River, BC 1-804-485-8080

Councillor Kevin Flynn, Salmon Arm, BC 1-250-832-1086

CFIB's submission to the Local Government Elections Task Force is available here. For further information or to arrange an interview with Brian Bonney please contact Mr. Bonney's cell before 9:00 AM @ 778-839-0440 or Moira Ramley after 9:00 AM @ at 604-864-5325.