

100 Percent FDA Score for Electoral Fairness



THE FOUNDATION FOR
DEMOCRATIC ADVANCEMENT

Completed May 18, 2011

About the Foundation for Democratic Advancement:

The Foundation for Democratic Advancement ("FDA")'s mission is to advance fair and transparent democratic processes wherever elections occur. The FDA believes that fairer electoral systems and a more informed public will help ensure the election of candidates who truly represent the will of the people. The FDA fulfills its mission by performing detailed electoral audits on political candidates and parties to inform the public, objectively and impartially, about their electoral choices. Also, the FDA audits electoral legislation in terms of fairness and equity, and conducts ground level assessments of democratic processes. (For more information on the FDA visit: www.democracychange.com)

Document completed by Mr. Stephen Garvey, FDA founder and executive director (BA, MA), and in consultation with FDA staff.

© 2011, Foundation for Democratic Advancement
All rights reserved.
Foundation for Democratic Advancement
728 Northmount Drive NW
PO Box 94
Calgary, Alberta
Canada, T2K 1P0
info@democracychange.org

100% Score for Electoral Fairness

1. Laws and regulations on the political content of media including newspapers, broadcasters, online media, before, during, and after elections.

Hypothetical Laws and Regulations:

The Broadcaster Act, or relevant legislation, states that 3 months prior to an election, during an election period, and 1 month after an election the political content of broadcasters must be non-partisan and equal, in terms of frequency, duration, depth, and time, for all registered political parties and candidates. Failure to abide by this political content law will result in a financial fine of \$5000.00 USD or equivalent currency, and repeat offences will result in more significant fines (of \$10,000.00 and \$15,000.00 USD) and loss of broadcast license.

In the months outside of the 3 months prior to an election, election period, and 1 month after an election, the political content of media and broadcasters must be non-partisan, in terms of relying fact and reason, and well-reasoned. Also, the political content must be complete and balanced in terms of registered political parties.

The Media Act states that the political content of media must be non-partisan and equal, in terms of frequency, duration and time, for all registered political parties and candidates. Failure to abide by this law will result in a financial fine of \$5000.00 USD or equivalent, and repeat offences will result in more significant fines (of \$10,000.00 and \$15,000.00 USD) and loss of media license. Also, the political content must be complete and balanced in terms of registered political parties.

In the period outside of the 3 months before an election, election period, and 1 month after an election, the political content of media and broadcasters must be non-partisan, in terms of relying fact and reason, and be well-reasoned.

Article 2 of the Constitution states that political equality and electoral fairness are guaranteed in a free and democratic society.

Score: 10/10

Rational:

The media and broadcast laws and regulations support fully equal political content of media and broadcasters before, during, and after an election.

2. Laws and regulations on the equality of federal candidates and parties influence before, during and after elections.

Hypothetical Laws and Regulations:

The Election Act states that political candidates and parties have equal campaign monies, through public funding (public taxes). There is no private funding of political candidates and parties (due to the redundancy and conflict with public funding and the emphasis on political equality and electoral fairness).

In an election year, the Election Commission will allocate \$10 million to each registered party, and \$500,000.00 USD to independent candidates. In non-election years, the Election Commission will allocate \$1 million to each registered party.

Also, the Election Act states that media and broadcaster times for candidates and parties will be divided up equally in terms of frequency, duration, depth, and time. During the election period, each registered party is entitled to a maximum of 50 minutes of airtime. Independent candidates are entitled to a maximum of 5 minutes of airtime.

The Electoral Commission will enforce media and broadcaster times by monitoring public and private media and broadcasters.

Further, the Election Act states that all registered political parties and their leaders are permitted to participate in national debates and other related activities on an equal footing with any political party and its leader.

The Media and Broadcaster Acts state that political candidates and parties have equal access to media and broadcasters, and equal opportunity to be in media and on broadcasters. Also, the cost of airtime and media advertisement for candidates and parties will be at the same rates.

The Political Party Act states that the registration for federal political parties is based on having signed member support equivalent to at least .5% of the corresponding voter population, and having a broad, national platform rather than a special interest(s) or issue(s) platform.

The Election Act states that political candidates and parties are disallowed from campaigning during non-election periods. (The election period is defined as 3 months prior to the Election Day and 1 month after.)

Score: 10/10

Rational:

Candidates and parties have fully equal exposure in the media, equal campaign monies, and fully equal participation in public debates and related activities.

3. Laws and regulations on the equality of federal electoral finance

Hypothetical Laws and Regulations:

The Election Act states that all registered political parties have equal campaign monies, through public funding. Also, the Election Act states that all registered candidates have equal campaign monies, through public funding.

There is no private funding of political candidates and parties (due to the redundancy and conflict with public funding and the emphasis on equality and fairness).

Candidates who use private funds will face a fine of \$2000.00 USD or equivalent for candidates, and parties which use private funds will face a fine of \$10,000 USD or equivalent. Both candidates and parties caught using private funds will face also removal of candidate and party registration.

Score: 10/10

Rational:

Campaign finances for political parties are fully equal, and campaign finances for candidates are fully equal.

4. Laws and regulations on the equality of voter say before, during, and after a federal election.

Hypothetical Laws and Regulations:

Article 2 of the Constitution states that freedom of expression is guaranteed within political equality.

The Election Act states that third-party electoral spending will be equal. Third-party spending will be set at \$2500 USD for each electoral constituencies and \$75,000 USD for national. A lottery will take place to determine which third-parties can spend electorally. Moreover, public funding would be available for selected third-parties on a financial need basis, and there is no obligation on third-parties to send electorally.

Third-parties who spend electorally must document proof of the spending.

The equality of third-party spending will occur 3 months prior to an election, during an election period, and 1 month after an election.

In all remaining months, third-party spending must be non-partisan in terms of relying fact and reason, and be well-reasoned, complete, and balanced. During this off-election period, there is no limit on third-party spending and no available public funds.

Third-party spending only applies to individuals. Unions and corporations are not permitted to spend electorally.

Votes are counted equally. Every registered voter is entitled to only one vote.

Score: 10/10

Rational:

Voter say is fully equal through equal third-party electoral spending, equal candidate and party campaign finance, and constitutional guarantee for political equality and freedom expression within that guarantee.

The FDA believes that electoral fairness is at the heart of pure democracy. The more fair electorally a country is, the more democratic the country will be.

Therefore, the FDA believes that by improving electoral fairness, pure democracy in a country will be advanced which in turn will improve the status of the people as a whole.

Any comments on this document or questions about it, please send to the FDA at :
info@democracychange.org