**PRESS RELEASE**

**IMMEDIATE 16.7.2018**

**MULTI-OPTION VOTING**

**Justine Greening calls for multi-option referendum.**

**The de Borda Institute calls for such a ballot to be held**

**according to the rules of the Modified Borda Count, MBC.**

The world’s first multi-option referendum was in New Zealand in 1894. Since then, there have been quite a few; the best were New Zealand’s five-option referendum of 1992 and Guam’s 6/7-option plebiscite of 1982.

Most multi-option referendums are counted by a two-round system, TRS, (à la French electoral system). They could also be counted in a plurality vote, (like Britain’s first-past-the-post, FPTP) or in an alternative vote, AV, (as in Australian elections or, in its PR form, STV, in Ireland), or in a points system, the Modified Borda Count, MBC, (similar to part of Slovenia’s system).

Justine Greening calls for a limited form of AV in which voters cast just two preferences. But consider the following profile: 9 voters casting two preferences on three options, ***A, B*** and ***C***. On the face of it, option ***B*** – the 1st or 2nd preference of everybody! – should be the winner.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Preferences | Number of Voters |
| 4 | 2 | 3 |
| 1st | ***A*** | ***B*** | ***C*** |
| 2nd | ***B*** | ***C*** | ***B*** |

With plurality voting, however, the scores are ***A***-4, ***C***-3, ***B***-2, so the winner is ***A***.

In TRS, there’s a second round majority vote between ***A*** and ***C,*** which ***C*** could win, ***C***-5 to ***A***-4.

With AV, option ***B*** is eliminated, and it’s 2 votes are transferred to ***C***; so ***C*** wins again, ***C***-5 ***A***-4.

In an MBC, with 2 points for a 1st preference and 1 for a 2nd, the results are ***A***-8, ***B***-11 and ***C***-8, so the winner is now ***B.***

With this and many other profiles, plurality voting is often seen to be hopelessly inaccurate, while TRS and AV (STV) can be capricious. The MBC, however, is invariably both robust and accurate.

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PS The June 2016 referendum should also have been preferential, as per our prescient press release No 7 of February 2016: <http://www.deborda.org/press-releases/>

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