

Ranked ballots proposed for Toronto

By Bill Rea

A Liberal MPP has introduced a private member's bill at Queen's Park to have ranked ballots used in municipal elections in Toronto. Scarborough-Guildwood MPP Mitzie Hunter put forth the idea, but Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones doesn't seem too impressed.

Jones told the Citizen Friday she was aware of the bill, but had not studied it in detail.

Ranked ballots (sometimes known as preferential ballots) allow voters to pick their top three choices election day. If no candidate has a clear majority, the one in last place is dropped from the race, and the ballots cast for that person are studied to see who the second choice was, and those votes are distributed accordingly. The process continues until one candidate has at least 50 per cent of the vote.

The plan is this would not take effect in this year's election, but subsequently.

Toronto City council has asked for this, Hunter was quoted in the media as saying. As the MPP for Scarborough-Guildwood and someone who has worked on this issue in the past, I am thrilled to be bringing it to the floor of the Legislature. My goal is to see the City, the Province and the public working together to advance this issue and to get it right. I am looking forward to input from my colleagues on all sides of the House.

Jones said she was puzzled that this proposal would apply just to Toronto.

She said her suspicious side was wondering if this was aimed at dealing with a particular politician in a particular municipality, which is not good law making, she commented.

Jones added she has a philosophic problem with passing laws for one municipality and not all of them.

I don't know how you would ever justify it, she remarked. Reactionary laws are often not the best way to approach things.