

Electoral (Reduction in Number of Members of Parliament) Amendment Bill

Member's Bill

Explanatory note

The purpose of this Bill is to amend the Electoral Act 1993 to reduce the number of members of Parliament from 120 to 100. Prior to the introduction of the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) voting system in 1996, the number of members had reached 99. In 1999, a Citizen's Initiated Referendum on the size of Parliament was held in conjunction with the general election of that year. Voters were asked the question "Should the size of the House of Representatives be reduced from 120 members to 99 members?". Of those who voted, an 81.5 percent majority voted in favour of a reduction.

The MMP Review Committee established under section 264 of the Electoral Act reported on this issue in 2001 following its inquiry into aspects of the electoral system, but could reach no agreement on that issue or on various other issues. The overwhelming wish of New Zealand voters is clear, however, from the outcome of the referendum. It is now proposed to give effect to the outcome by reducing the number of members to a round 100. This will be done by reducing the number of list members by 20. There will be no change to the number of constituency seats or Maori seats. The change will take effect at the next general election.

Clause 4 gives effect to the change by making two simple amendments to section 191 of the Electoral Act 1993, concerning election of list members, to replace the reference to the number "120" where it occurs with a reference to the number "100".

Barbara Stewart

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The Parliament of New Zealand enacts as follows:

1 Title

- (1) This Act is the Electoral (Reduction in Number of Members of Parliament) Amendment Act **2006**.
- (2) In this Act, the Electoral Act 1993 is called “the principal Act”.

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2 Commencement

This Act comes into force on the day on which the Chief Electoral Officer, in the case of the first general election conducted after the date on which this Act receives the Royal assent, determines party eligibility for list seats under section 192 of the principal Act.

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3 Purpose

The purpose of this Act is to amend the principal Act to reduce the number of members of Parliament to 100.

4 Election of other members

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- (1) Section 191(7) of the principal Act is amended by omitting the expression “120”, and substituting the expression “100”.
- (2) Section 191(8) of the principal Act is amended by omitting the expression “120”, and substituting the expression “100”.