

# Rebutting the No Campaign's untruths and exaggerations

Liberal  
Democrats  
**YES!**

## The defenders of the status quo don't want you to know what the change to AV really means.

They will say anything to stop giving voters more of a say, and defending the old 'jobs for life' culture at Westminster. They will say anything to defend a system that means:

- MPs can win seats with only 1 in 3 voters voting for them;
- MPs can have safe seats for life even though the majority of their constituents haven't voted for them;
- MPs don't have to reach out to secure over 50% of the vote in their constituencies.

But the truth is that the AV system is a small change that will make a big difference – making MPs work harder to get and stay elected, and giving you more of a say. No wonder the old political establishment will say anything to stop it happening. Do let's separate the fact from the fiction....

### Myth 1) AV will cost us £250 million

**The only piece of equipment you need to vote with AV is a pencil.**

The No camp's sums, like their arguments, simply don't add up. Electronic counting machines aren't an issue in this referendum. This has been confirmed by the Electoral Commission.

Australia has hand counted its elections for 8 decades. The £130 million of make-believe machines don't exist in Australia and won't exist in the UK.

AV will keep what is best about our current system – the link between an MP serving their local constituency – but strengthens it by making MPs work harder to get elected and giving voters more of a say. **Short on arguments the No campaign are trying to claim we can't afford change. After the expenses crisis we can't afford not to.**

### Myth 2) AV is too confusing

**Few people would be confused by this.** Voters put a '1' by their first choice, a '2' by their second choice, a '3' by their third choice and so on. The logic's familiar enough to anyone who's ever asked a friend to pop down to the shops for a coke and said, "If they're out of that I'll have a lemonade."

Some people have a very low estimation of the British public.

### Myth 3) AV helps the BNP

**The BNP have already called on their supporters to back a 'No' vote.** Currently because MPs can get elected with support from less than 1 in 3 voters, there is always a risk that extremist parties can get in.

The BNP have learnt this lesson, and have used it to scrape wins in town halls across Britain. With AV, no-one can get elected unless most people back them. Therefore the risk of extremist parties getting in by the back door is eliminated.

### Myth 4) No one uses AV

**AV is a tried and tested system.** In Britain millions of people in businesses, charities, and trade unions already use it. Political parties use it to elect their leaders. MPs themselves use it to elect their Speaker and their officials.

When politicians are the voters – when they are electing their own leaders – AV is the system they choose. When you need a real winner who needs to speak for the majority AV is the go-to system.

### Myth 5) AV means some people get two votes

**No. With AV everyone gets one vote.** The difference is that AV gives you a vote that really counts and more of a say on who your local MP is. If your first choice gets knocked out your vote is transferred to your

Continues over

second preference. Whether you just vote 1 for your favourite candidate or list a preference for every candidate on the ballot only one vote will be counted.

If you go to the chip shop, and order cod and chips but they are out of cod, and you choose pie and chips instead, you have still only had one meal.

#### **Myth 6) AV means more hung parliaments**

**No. Hung parliaments are no more likely with AV.** And as you might have noticed First Past the Post has not given Britain any special immunity to hung parliaments.

Britain has experienced hung parliaments in the 1920s, 1970s and in 2010, and had periods in the 1950s, 1960s and 1990s where a single party was unable to effectively govern alone. Canada, which uses First Past the Post, has permanent hung parliaments. Australia uses AV, and has returned its first hung parliament in 38 elections.

Hung parliaments occur if enough voters support a third party. AV gives voters a greater say over candidates in their constituency. How they vote is up to them.

#### **Myth 7) AV means more tactical voting**

**No. AV simply eliminates the need for it.** Why should we have to abandon the party we actually support, to prevent the party we least support getting in? The dilemma facing millions of voters is often characterised as the choice between “voting with your head or your heart”. AV allows people to do both.

AV offers an honest vote. It gives everyone a chance to vote sincerely for the candidates they really want knowing their vote can go further.

#### **Myth 8) AV weakens the constituency link**

**No. AV keeps the link and makes it stronger.** Politicians like to talk about their constituency link. And a lot of them seem to enjoy it a lot more than the voters.

Many of our MPs currently have a pretty dodgy link to their constituents. Barely a third of MPs can speak for the majority of their voters. AV strengthens the link by giving people the MPs they actually voted for. AV forces complacent MPs to take heed of the interests of their constituents because their jobs depend on it.

#### **Myth 9) AV forces you to give a second preference**

**No. You can vote for as few or as many candidates as you like.** AV gives you the freedom to vote sincerely for any number of candidates you feel are up to the job.

You aren't forced to vote for any candidate you don't want. If you only want to support one candidate you can. Just mark an 'X' as you did before.

#### **Myth 10) AV means you end up with the least worst candidate**

**No. First Past the Post just lets in winners that most of voters didn't want.** AV ensures a winning candidate has to work harder and go further to secure support from a majority. That's what's needed to be 'best', and may explain why politicians are so keen on AV when electing their own...

When Hollywood recently dumped First Past the Post for AV, they didn't change the wording on the statuette to Academy Award for Least Worst Picture. They wanted a 'Best Picture' winner that could deliver on that promise.

#### **Myth 11) But First Past the Post is a British tradition...**

Our parliament is not a museum. There has always been evolution in our politics, and today AV is the logical next step - an 'upgrade' to First Past the Post.

The secret ballot, votes for women, and votes for working people were all innovations once, and met with opposition. These changes didn't rip up the rule book, but they were necessary to improve the way we do politics.

Voters aren't looking for a revolution. They're looking for a simple change that preserves and improves on what's come before.