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# We need a democratic world parliament

by Jim Stark, Founder of Vote World Parliament (VWP) and  
author of the book *World Democracy through a global referendum*

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## Proposed ballot question for the global referendum

**Do you support the creation of a directly-elected, representative, transparent and democratic world parliament that is authorized to legislate on global issues?**

**YES**                      **NO**

\* \* \*

Humanity needs a democratic world parliament because we are clever enough to resolve all of our disputes through law rather than through the use of force, and because we are civilized enough to not even *want* to beat up a person, a country or a religion just because we may disagree with him, her or it. And by “we,” I mean the overwhelming majority of ordinary people everywhere ... virtually all human adults.

There is no good reason why we can't live as comfortably under *world* law as we now live under national, provincial (“state” in the U.S.) and municipal law. This is true at least for those living in democratic countries, and virtually all people *not* living in democratic countries would, if given a choice, prefer democracy to whatever other system they were born into. In the same way that the formation of the sovereign nation state had the effect of ending wars among a region's cities, a democratic world parliament would end all war among nations by providing legal remedies for the resolution of disputes. Even terrorist groups should be less inclined to use military force if there were a new global legal order where they could get a fair hearing for their “grievances.”

## **A global regime of “collective security”**

While money isn't everything, it is important. I mention this because it would cost much less to institute a global regime of “collective security” than to maintain an armed force for each of the 194 (or so) “sovereign” nations, just as it costs much less to have a local police force protecting all of us against all local threats than it would be for each family to arm itself to the teeth just in case a neighbour across the street might decide to attack. The tax burden *for security* for your lifetime would likely be cut in half by a democratic world parliament, and the actual security that could be delivered would be much greater through a democratic world parliament than it is now in a system of 194 national armies, 194 national spy agencies, plus who knows how many local and regional police forces.

As far back as the 1940s, it was realized that an all-out nuclear war could well kill every person on planet Earth. We need to permanently remove the threat of nuclear war from the list of our possible human futures, and that will require that we ban *all* war and “criminalize” it in world law. Only a democratic world parliament would have a realistic chance of doing all that. And yes, I know—criminalizing war won't rid humanity of all war immediately, or even soon, but *not* criminalizing all war is about as idiotic an idea as decriminalizing murder ... or rape ... or theft ... or slander ... or fraud, etc.

There are many other supranational issues besides war, of course, the most dangerous of which is global warming. It is now clear that climate change is a threat to our survival, an “existential threat.” Al Gore has called our current circumstance a “true planetary emergency,” and if we expect a patchwork of national initiatives to solve this critical global problem, we are most likely dreaming.

## **Corruption-proofing democratic institutions**

We know how to use off-the-shelf technologies (audio recorders, video recorders and lie detectors) to “corruption-proof” any institution—a national parliament, for instance—by making it *totally* transparent. These technologies, used carefully and properly, can assure all people that they don't need to worry about the possibility of a “Hitler” gaining control of the democratic world parliament. If we are to construct a democratic world parliament, common sense dictates that it must have total and continuously-verified integrity by using whatever technology is required to accomplish this very high standard. It must be *literally impossible* for military force to be used inappropriately by the DWP (democratic world parliament). And, for that matter, it must be *literally impossible* for all MGPs (Members of the Global Parliament) and all world parliament staffers to tell a lie in full voice about anything work-related (see Chapter 5 of *World Democracy*, entitled “Total transparency,” for more on this item). Just as body cams will, in time, eliminate virtually all illegal blue on black (police on African Americans) violence in the USA, so these and other devices will literally change the consciousness of DWP workers, elected officials and employees alike, to the point where they accept that “the truth will out” *no matter what!* Governance without *any* lies—*ever!* What a concept! (And hence my two-volume, 1,243-page novel about an infallible, digital, voice-analyzing lie detector, entitled *The LieDeck Revolution*, available from Amazon.com.)

### **Law as one of the necessities of life**

There are enormous injustices in the world, and history surely teaches us that there is no peace without justice, no justice without law, and no law without “governance” ... in this case, *world law* and *democratic world* governance. Business needs stability to operate, and war is the epitome of *instability* (even if a few industries do profit temporarily from every war). A future where companies can operate smoothly and profitably for thousands of years is quite doable *if* we construct a verifiably fair and democratic world legal order.

According to former American senator George Mitchell (the architect of the Mitchell Plan for Peace in the Middle East): “We benefit enormously from technology ... but we also suffer from [its] consequences ... it is now easier, takes fewer people, less skill [and] fewer resources to kill large numbers of people than at any time in ... history.” (This was said on *Newsnight*, CNN, May 9, 2002.) In the future, a twelve-year-old might be able to make a purchase online and poison an entire city. To survive as a species, we must accept enforceable law as one of the necessities of life, and that must include *world law*—which is not the same thing as international law. International law applies almost exclusively to relations between and among national governments, whereas *world law* will also “reach to individuals” as the other three established levels of law do now (recently, the scope of international law has been redefined to include some relations between nation states and individuals).

### **The principle of subsidiarity**

No serious person would today be so foolish as to suggest that we tear down any or all of our democratic municipal, provincial or national governments, even accepting that they aren’t exactly perfect. In 20 or 30 years, if a democratic world parliament is in place and doing its work well and routinely, virtually no one would suggest that we might be better off without it. And as for the question of which level of government should use its good offices to resolve a particular dispute, the principle of “subsidiarity” should apply at all times, meaning that all “issues” should be resolved by the *smallest appropriate political unit*. Just as we don’t need or want our national government or our provincial government meddling in our municipality’s deliberations, we don’t need or want a *world* parliament, no matter how democratic it is, meddling in our *national* affairs. Will there be arguments about the demarcation lines between jurisdictions? Of course there will, but we will sort those out just the way we now do when the three current levels of government squabble, through negotiation, judicial mediation and public political discourse. No one would deny that democracy can be a rather messy business at times, but whatever its weaknesses, it is by far the best governance model that humanity has ever concocted, and it is a whole lot more tolerable and useful than nuclear war ... or any war, for that matter. In 100 years, people throughout the world will have to read history books to understand how it was that humanity spoke truth to power “way back” in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. “War no more,” we said, as a species ... and we *really* meant it! No war at all! War never again ... ever! We must leave war behind us in the dustbin of history as we did with cannibalism, slavery, rape, and other abominations of the past whose unlamented absences help qualify *Homo sapiens*—us—as “civilized.”

## The GlobeScan poll

We have before us the opportunity to become the founders of the world of law and justice that must exist if humanity is to survive and thrive in the near *and distant* future. This is likely the greatest opportunity we will ever have, the chance to carve a path across this last big political frontier. The task of building a democratic world parliament is really not that difficult, but it is—or it will be—a very *big* task. Let's look at some numbers.

If, say, 98% of all human adults voted in favor of the creation of a democratic world parliament, no one would dare try to stop us from building what we had all voted for. No political issue ever gets 98% support, but there is a GlobeScan poll (done in 2004 within 18 nations) on this issue, and it shows that a global referendum on building a democratic world parliament would pass strongly. The overall GlobeScan numbers were 63% “yes” and 20% “no.” The remaining 17% said they weren't sure or gave no answer. (To see the GlobeScan ballot question, country list and the numbers breakdown, go to Appendix #1 of *World Democracy*, page 156.) Canada's people were 65% in favour and 28% opposed ... and this was without any public debate of the issues! The USA, by the way, was 55% in favour and 35% opposed, and Russians were 33% in favour and 22% opposed.

## Other key numbers

If a town of 11,754 people held a referendum, and only 10 people voted, yielding 6 “yes” votes and 4 “no” votes, the mayor would be laughed out of office if he or she then said “The ballot proposal has passed by a 3-to-2 margin, so it will be added to our municipal bylaws!” While this aspect can be argued back and forth, let's agree that *at least 50% of “eligible” voters* (residents of the town who are 16 or older) must vote for the final tally to have its force and effect within that town's borders. Let us also agree that *at least 50%* of all eligible voters must cast votes in a *global* referendum for its outcome to be worthy of inclusion in *world* law. Here's the rationale:

The usual criteria for determining the winner in a “yes-no” referendum is 50% plus 1, a simple majority *of those who voted*. This basis for determining the winner is plainly not sufficient for our present purposes. Creating a democratic world parliament amounts to a profound, permanent change in the world's political/legal order, so it can't be determined by one flimsy ballot. Let us also agree that *substantially more than half* of all votes cast must be “yes” votes for the ballot proposition to pass and then be included in world law. A 2/3<sup>rds</sup> majority would do the job—although a 70% “yes” vote or even higher would be more useful in calming those who voted “no” and may still feel resentful about the “loss” they have suffered. Now let's look at some other key numbers.

One third of the 7+ billion people alive today (2017) are designated “children,” since they are under the age of 16. Therefore, the *adult* electorate in a global referendum is not 7 billion, but about 4.5 billion. If the minimum 50% of *eligible* adults cast votes (that's 2.25 billion votes) and if 2/3<sup>rds</sup> (67%+) of these 2.25 billion votes are in the “yes” column (67% of 2.25 billion votes comes to about 1.5 billion “yes” votes), such a mandate would be claimed by many or most legal scholars to be *legally binding under international law!*

As I wrote in *World Democracy* (modified here for brevity):

In 2005, I asked Dr Terence Amerasinghe, a law professor from Sri Lanka, whether a mandate from a *successful* global referendum would have the hoped-for legal effect. “*Of course* [emphasis

his] a global mandate would be legally binding,” he said. However, he added his opinions that “... it will never be possible to conduct such a global referendum or to collect such a mandate.” I must respectfully disagree with him on these two latter opinions, and VWP hopes to prove them wrong.

### **Consent of the governed**

If you believe in democracy, you already know that democracy means, most prominently, “governance *with the consent of the governed*.” In other words, to construct a democratic world parliament, we must first have a world referendum to firmly secure the uncontested and robust “consent of the governed,” effectively the “consent of the human race.” As I wrote in *World Democracy*:

It took the devastation of nineteen million deaths in WWI to compel us to establish the League of Nations. But *we got it wrong*, because that institution failed to prevent the recurrence of mega-death. It took the Second World War, with 50+ million *more* deaths, to prompt us to create the United Nations ... and *we got it wrong again!* Then the Cold War (from the late 1940s to the late 1980s) caused about 20 million *more* deaths ... [but] our worthy forebears *still* did not grow the UN into a directly-elected and democratic body, into the kind of world parliament/government we need to have and to trust if omnicide (human extinction) is to be avoided *forever*.

The best “trigger” for global political reform might well be to toss 100 (or so) Hiroshimas into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’s history books. That might smarten us up, but only a madman (or a madwoman) would consider this as a legitimate “motivator.” As Einstein famously said: “The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything *except* our modes of thinking, and thus we drift toward unparalleled catastrophe.” So, how on Earth do we get ourselves unstuck from this ghastly fate?

The best way to proceed would be for the UN General Assembly to immediately pass a resolution calling for a “formal” global referendum, to be held nation-by-nation, in the hope that the people of Earth are wiser than the leaders of our nations. However, getting a resolution proposed and passed in the General Assembly (never mind the inevitable veto in the utterly undemocratic Security Council) will be *impossible* to accomplish simply by asking politely for what we want. We must therefore start by using the Internet and by tapping the membership lists of sympathetic NGOs (non-governmental organizations) or service clubs, religions, political parties, schools etc. to collect votes in an *unsanctioned* global referendum—all while seeking a few national governments that are willing to co-sponsor our draft UN resolution (see Appendix #2 of *World Democracy* or see pp. 12-13 herein) in the General Assembly.

### **Let’s collect that bare minimum of 1.5 billion “yes” votes ourselves**

Legal issues can be argued six ways to Sunday, as you surely know, so it is important to point out that even if our assembled global mandate is not accepted in some quarters as “legally binding under international law,” it will nonetheless be judged by most citizens as being “politically compelling,” which is effectively the same as “legally binding” (see Chapters 10 and 11 of *World Democracy* for more on this aspect of things). So, let’s try to collect that “bare minimum” of 1.5 billion “yes” votes from the Internet initiative for starters ([VoteWorldParliament.org/](http://VoteWorldParliament.org/)) and through the efforts of other NGOs (see Chapter

14 of *World Democracy*), and then try later on for the series of government-run *national* referendums (the “formal” global referendum).

Why not stick with just the approaches of voting on the Internet and through NGOs? Well, those efforts will be *much* too easy to corrupt. If we get these unsanctioned efforts off the ground and establish real momentum, we expect there will be many serious efforts to undermine our first plan of action (the plan to collect 1.5 billion ballots ourselves).

We must concede that only a government-run election or referendum can be properly scrutinized, and thus produce a result that is *assuredly* valid. National governments will use official voters’ lists for their elections, but we’ll need to “borrow” those lists to apply to the *government-run* national referendums. In May, 1981, the NGO that I headed (Operation Dismantle) used exactly this piggybacking method to achieve more than 200 Canadian municipal referendums on balanced and verifiable nuclear disarmament (see Chapter 8 in *Cold War Blues*). These 194 national referendums are best held “in tandem” with national elections to keep costs down, and election/referendum organizers would use the official voters’ list to prevent everyone from voting more than once in the election *or* in the global referendum.

If we get the 1.5 billion “yes” votes needed to constitute a global mandate, I expect no one would dare to even *try* to tell the entire human race to forget it.

### **“Chain voting,” or “How long will it take us to win using only Internet balloting?”**

If everyone who votes “yes” agrees to get two new people to vote “yes” within a week of casting his or her own ballot, and gets both of his or her new voters to commit to getting two *more* new “yes” voters within a week to continue the “chain,” the overall vote count will increase exponentially (1, 2, 4, 8, 16, etc.), *doubling every week*, and we can reach or even surpass our target of 1.5 billion “yes” votes *in a mere 31 weeks, far less than a year!* Below is a chart from Chapter 13 of *World Democracy* entitled “Fast tracking the global referendum.” It provides mathematical proof of this astonishing projection.

Bear in mind that numbers cannot lie. However, people *can and do* lie, and collecting the global mandate will be far more complicated than what you see below. Some people will lie about their age—say they are 16 when they are only 15—or claim that they have not voted before when in fact they have. Also, cheating in a referendum is effectively to admit that your “side” of the issue can’t win *in the absence of the cheating*. But these are tomorrow’s problems. Today’s challenge is to get the people-powered global referendum off the ground and to generate some serious momentum.

We must also bear in mind the possibility, however remote, that a global referendum might fail ... by getting more “no” votes than “yes” votes, for instance! Public opinion polls and VWP’s online voting results to date indicate that failure is quite unlikely. As of January, 2017, we have 22,000+ votes, and 95% of these are “yes” votes. However, we must keep in mind that our success is not assured. We must hold fast to our conviction that humanity is *far* better than any war, and that democratic world governance is both necessary and possible. Today’s technology lets us act politically *on a global scale!* With the Internet, this global referendum could well go viral, and if it does, I think that we, the people, *will* win ... conceivably in a few years rather than a few decades.

On the next page you will see a visual portrayal of this best-case scenario.

## Can we really collect a global mandate in less than one year?

Sure ... if the first “yes” voter brings in 2 **more** “yes” voters the following week, and receives promises that those 2 will **each** do the same thing and bring in 2 other **new** “yes” voters the following week, etc. If you grant us the premise, we can guarantee the result.

### GRAPHIC PRESENTATION of ONE VOTING CHAIN

<u>Time</u> (after 1 <sup>st</sup> vote is cast)	<u>New “yes” votes during this period</u>	<u>Total “yes” votes so far</u>
Week #1	2	(first 1 + new 2 =) <b>3</b>
Week #2	4	(old 3 + new 4 =) <b>7</b>
Week #3	8	(old 7 + new 8 =) <b>15</b>
Week #4	16	(old 15 + new 16 =) <b>31</b>
Week #5	32	(old 31 + new 32 =) <b>63</b>
Week #6	64	<b>127</b>
Week #7	128	<b>255</b>
Week #8	256	<b>511</b>
Week #9	512	<b>1,000</b> (approx.)
Week #10	1,000 (approx.)	<b>2,000</b>
Week #11	2,000	<b>4,000</b>
Week #12	4,000	<b>8,000</b>
Week #13	8,000	<b>16,000</b>
Week #14	16,000	<b>32,000</b>
Week #15	32,000	<b>64,000</b>
Week #16	64,000	<b>128,000</b>
Week #17	128,000	<b>256,000</b>
Week #18	256,000	<b>512,000</b>
Week #19	512,000	<b>1 million</b> (approx.)
Week #20	1 million (approx.)	<b>2 million</b>
Week #21	2 million	<b>4 million</b>
Week #22	4 million	<b>8 million</b>
Week #23	8 million	<b>16 million</b>
Week #24	16 million	<b>32 million</b>
Week #25	32 million	<b>64 million</b>
Week #26	64 million	<b>128 million</b>
Week #27	128 million	<b>256 million</b>
Week #28	256 million	<b>512 million</b>
Week #29	512 million	<b>1 billion</b> (approx.)
Week #30	1 billion (approx.)	<b>2 billion; A solid win!</b>
Week #31	2 billion	<b>3+ billion; A landslide victory!</b>

This is admittedly a highly improbable scenario ... but *it could work!* Also, this is *only one chain*. A dedicated person could start 10 or even 20 chains in a year, or a month, and 1,000 such vote collectors could start 10,000+ chains! Or more! Do you see the potential?

The following page offers you a checklist to keep track of your efforts to get two or more voting chains established. Please try to recruit other vote collectors from among your friends and family members. But most of all, get your first two chains started and let us know about it. VWP’s addresses (email and street) are at the top of the first page.

## Chain voting checklist

- 1 Did I cast my own “YES” vote at [www.voteworldparliament.org](http://www.voteworldparliament.org)? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Did I tell my “recruiter” that I voted, and that I promise to start two chains? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Did I get one other person to vote and promise to continue the chain? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Did I get a second person to vote and promise to continue the chain? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Did my first recruit *confirm* that he or she got two more new recruits? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Did my second recruit *confirm* that he or she got two more new recruits? \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 Did I tell my recruiter that my 2 recruits voted *and got their 2 recruits each*? \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 Did I start a new chain if one of my recruits failed to do his or her entire job? \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 Did I confirm to my recruiter that my #1 through #6 have all done their jobs? \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 Did I consider starting some new chains even though I already did my bit? \_\_\_\_\_

Below, fill in the names of the *direct* recruits in your two chains (#1 and #2). Later, fill in the names (#3, #4, #5 and #6) of the next “generation” of yes voters on your two chains. You must confirm that your two direct recruits (#1 and #2) did their job *in full*, but it may be a good idea to confirm that their four new recruits also did *their* job IN FULL, and did it within one week of casting their own votes. Each of these new people should of course fill in their own name beside the word “Me” (on the left, below) and carry on from there.

**Please print or write clearly**

		( #3 _____
	( #1 _____	_____
		( #4 _____
Me _____		_____
	( #2 _____	_____
		( #5 _____
		_____
		( #6 _____
		_____

There is nothing stopping anyone from starting *more* than two chains, of course, and the sooner we get to our goal of 1.5 billion “yes” votes the sooner we’ll have the democratic world parliament. If possible, don’t write on this page. Make a paper copy and write on that. If you have ten checkmarks and seven names written in, you are encouraged to scan your filled-in copy of this page and keep the copy safely stored for your future family to look at and to value. If you send us a copy in an email attachment, our email address for this is [voteworldparliament@yahoo.ca](mailto:voteworldparliament@yahoo.ca). (You can rely on us to keep such all such records private ... *permanently*.)

## **A “live” referendum ballot and a UN resolution await your involvement**

If you have not voted yet, a “live” global referendum ballot awaits your first participation at [voteworldparliament.org/](http://voteworldparliament.org/). As well, a draft UN resolution for a formal, nation-by-nation vote awaits your serious attention at [voteworldparliament.org/allies-initiatives/draft-un-resolution/](http://voteworldparliament.org/allies-initiatives/draft-un-resolution/)—or awaits a day when a few national governments realize that we, the people of Earth, really *do* need a directly-elected, democratic world parliament to prevent all war and to expand and defend human rights.

Consider yourself encouraged to write the head of your national government and your nation’s foreign minister about these ideas, and consider yourself encouraged to *demand* that your national government propose the UN resolution mentioned above and establish the creation of a democratic world parliament as a goal that your government embraces. Most importantly, please don’t forget to vote in this history-making global referendum ... and get your friends and relatives to vote too, by telling them about this idea in person, by sending them the [voteworldparliament.org/](http://voteworldparliament.org/) (VWP) URL, or just by offering them the use of your smartphone for a few minutes (or you can key in the person’s details as dictated to you by the new voter—except for the “yes” or “no” response to the main proposition, of course. (On the VWP site, under the link “Vote Info” then “Public Record,” a voter’s *first name only* is presented publicly within 24 hours of the casting of the vote.)

## **A new position from our Canadian prime minister**

As reported by **THE CANADIAN PRESS** on August 25, 2016, the Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, said the following:

As a government, we need to look forty years down the road, not just four—to the next generation, not just to the next election—because when a government takes that long view, it can deliver extraordinary results for Canadians.

The fight against climate change one particularly daunting challenge that lies ahead, Mr. Trudeau noted. But if he commits to fleshing out the perspective above with concrete policies, VWP and virtually all other NGOs will offer to work with him and his brand new government and to contribute all that we can to the required plans and preparations. Looking forty years into the future is not easy, but it is also not impossible.

## **A constitution for the world**

In addition to the global referendum for a democratic world parliament, we have to come to grips with the obvious need for a constitution for the world. No democracy can operate without a constitution, and if we’re moving events towards democratic world governance, we will need a world constitution.

We will ask Canada (in cooperation with other established democracies) to prepare to host a world constitutional framing convention, composed of representatives of national, provincial and municipal governments, non-governmental organizations and religions, as well as constitutional lawyers and scholars, to prepare a draft constitution for the world. We anticipate as well the need for a World Electoral Commission to prepare for the first-

ever global general election and to prepare for the presentation of the draft world constitution to the whole human race for ratification, likely through *yet another* formal, nation-by-nation global referendum, ten or fifteen years down the road, or perhaps even forty years on ... however long it takes.

### **Your own voting booth**

Want this plan to work? Become a vote collector. Get two more people to do as you will have done in the week following your own vote. This would take little of your time, but your effort to grow the vote count is the key to making the global referendum go viral ... which is what it's going to take for this project to succeed. And for those who feel a real enthusiasm for this plan, you can install your own voting booth [using these instructions](https://voteworldparliament.org/shadowbox/getballot.html) (or click on <https://voteworldparliament.org/shadowbox/getballot.html>).

### **This could actually work!**

For the complete picture, go to Amazon.com and buy *World Democracy through a global referendum*. But whether or not you choose to do this, please realize that you have here a golden opportunity to participate in a world-altering initiative. It deserves your support, and as the late David E. Christensen (former VWP Board Member and author of *Healing the World*) wrote to us: "This (meaning our VWP game plan) could actually work!" It is time now for you to admit that this plan *could actually work*. And if we all do our bit, it *will* work.

### **A brief word from the president of VWP**

Ted Stalets, the President of Vote World Parliament, is a long-time futurist, and he wrote the following words of wisdom with the aim of having them included in this article:

In my opinion, VWP's plan for a global referendum is humankind's best chance to avert disaster and put us on the road to a sustainable peace and responsible ecology. The great 20<sup>th</sup>-Century thinker and globalist, Buckminster Fuller, once observed: "You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete." Our NGO, Vote World Parliament, and the book *World Democracy* provide the kind of new model that Fuller had in mind!

And as a final quote, this:

If leaders won't lead, let the people lead, and the leaders will surely follow. Benjamin B. Ferencz

For *hundreds* more authoritative and supportive quotes, mostly from famous people, see the last 47 pages (!!!) of *World Democracy*. There you will realize anew that we stand in truly great company.

© Jim Stark, December, 2016  
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## **Our logo, and our type of organization**

In time, we will try to popularize this logo by placing it on coffee cups, T-shirts, etc., as one ongoing stream of income for VWP. We love this logo, and we thank New Zealander Hugh Steadman for it. The logo says it all, with no need for words or translations.

VWP is not a membership organization, with fees and conferences and newsletters and other good-but-time-consuming things. We are just a political *campaign*, and anyone who wants to participate is encouraged to do so. If you, as an individual, vote and (by doing so) endorse the global referendum campaign, you are then as involved as any other participant in the world, whether you're a "yes" voter or a "no" voter.

## **If I change my mind, can I then change my vote?**

Earlier in this article, I wrote:

We must also bear in mind the possibility, however remote, that a global referendum might fail ... by getting more "no" votes than "yes" votes, for instance!

Other "for instances" have cropped up, and deserve our attention. The global referendum could fail because too few eligible (16 years old or older) voters took the time to vote. As well, it could fail because a global referendum seeking a mandate for the creation of a DWP *had* seemed a lost cause or a dangerous idea when the voter first heard of it a few years ago, but now it seems more realistic, and now this voter sees the positive aspects of the concept. This particular voter didn't take the idea seriously back then, so he checked the "no" box on his ballot "way back in 2014." Now this early voter has now changed his or her opinion, but has no way of changing his 2014 vote. What to do?

Today is November 5, 2016. It is three short days until the U.S. election, and the TV has wall-to-wall coverage of the elections events. As I watched all this unfold, I learned a new (for me) fact. Right up until election day, in many states, a U.S. citizen who already voted in an *advance* poll can go back to the polling station, ask for a new ballot, and reverse his choice for American president. If this can be done in an American election, it can be done by us, and that fact would truly augment the referendum's fairness. Since all of our formal (national) world parliament referendums will be piggybacked onto national elections, this system (above) can be implemented for referendum voters, especially since each referendum ballot has a number attached (to see the "voter ID" list, simply click on <http://voteworldparliament.org/vote-now/public-record/>). To change a vote many months or years after the ballot was first cast, this voter just gives his or her first name *and voter ID number* (which he or she has faithfully kept) to the referendum worker and instructs him or her to reverse his or her previous vote from a "no" to a "yes" ... or vice versa.

**Draft United Nations Resolution**  
for a  
**Global Referendum**  
on the creation of a  
**Democratic World Parliament**

**THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,**

**EXPRESSING** deep concern over the danger of nuclear war and the danger that other WMD (weapons of mass destruction) may be used by national governments and/or non-national groups, either of which could imperil the existence of life on Earth,

**MINDFUL** of the profound problems (climate change, HIV/AIDS, etc.) that persist and worsen for lack of resources while more than one trillion (1,000 billion) dollars are spent on armaments every year,

**BEARING IN MIND** that all nations and all people need security in this age of “overkill” weapons, and that real security is now possible only through the establishment of an effective and widely supported world legal authority,

**AFFIRMING** the interest of all individuals in expressing their preferences on a matter as fundamental as the survival of humankind, and asserting a human right on the part of all adults to participate meaningfully in such a basic choice,

**RESPECTING** the principle of subsidiarity, whereby issues are handled by the lowest appropriate level of government, thus leaving national issues to national governments, local issues to municipal governments, and so on,

**REALIZING** that people of every background would be inclined to support the creation of a directly-elected world parliament that is authorized to adopt and enforce legislation on such supranational issues as security, justice, peace, and the protection of the natural environment,

**RECALLING** that Article 21 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* provides that “The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government [and that] this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which ... shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures,”

**KNOWING** that because the will of the people is the basis of all political power and authority, a clear expression of that will in a mandate emerging from a successful global referendum must be given effect to by all national governments,

**ACCEPTING** that the above principles find strong support in the *Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States and the Protection of their Independence and Sovereignty*, whose Preamble states that: “... all peoples have an inalienable right to ... the exercise of their sovereignty ... and that, by virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status,”

**REALIZING** that a substantial mandate from the people of all nations would provide a compelling base of legal and political support for the establishment of a democratic world parliament and government to effectively address threats posed to humankind, such as weapons of mass destruction and environmental degradation,

**DETERMINED** to provide to all adult human beings (aged 16 or older) the opportunity to formally express their views on this matter,

1. **RESOLVES** to seek the unanimous agreement of all Member States to a brief and simple expression of the goals expressed above;
2. **PROPOSES** to use this ballot wording: **“Do you support the creation of a directly-elected, representative, transparent and democratic world parliament that is authorized to legislate on global issues?”** for the Global Referendum;
3. **CALLS UPON** each Member Nation to voluntarily collect its “national component” of the formal Global Referendum before January 1, 2020;
4. **ENCOURAGES** each Member Nation to seek full and open debate of all sides of the issue prior to holding the referendum vote among its national population (“yes” and “no” votes collected in the Internet-based preliminary referendum shall be destroyed if and when a *formal* national referendum using official voters’ lists is launched in a given nation);
5. **DETERMINES** that no one may cast a ballot before having attained the age of sixteen;
6. **RESOLVES** that the collection of each “national component” of the Global Referendum must be accompanied by minimum United Nations supervision to ensure the fairness of the voting procedures; and
7. **DECIDES** to form a committee to study the idea of a Global Referendum on a Democratic World Parliament, and report back to the next Session of the General Assembly.



**A curious historical note: While the GlobeScan Poll (Appendix #1 of *World Democracy*) indicates that global public opinion is about 75% in favour of a “world parliament,” and while most people expect that American public opinion will run against the *World Democracy* proposal discussed herein, more than half a century ago there was a referendum in a U.S. state, piggybacked onto the 1948 elections, and it was a *landslide* in favour of “UN parliament,” as they called it. An article by Joseph Lyford, “Vote For World Government,” from the *New Republic*, December 12, 1948 (in David Christensen’s book *Healing the World*) describes it thus:**

**On the day after the [American] election, the commentators were too busy explaining that Harry Truman was still President to pay attention to an interesting political development in the state of Connecticut. Along with the newspapers, they ignored what turned out to be the only real landslide victory in the nation. The victor in this one-sided election contest was, oddly enough, not a candidate for public office! It was a referendum proposal to change the United Nations into a limited world government, and it won by a vote of 130,548 to 11,467— an almost 12-to-1 margin.**

**The late David Christensen notes that Connecticut’s stunning news was utterly overshadowed by Harry Truman’s surprise victory over New York Governor Thomas Dewey.**

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Clarence Darrow said: **“At twenty a man is full of fight and hope. He wants to reform the world. When he is seventy he still wants to reform the world, but he knows he can’t.”** Too bad Darrow didn’t live in our astonishing digital age. If he did, he would surely change his conclusion to read: **“... and now, finally, he knows for certain that he do it.”**

**NOTE: The article above and the MPs letter associated with it are both embargoed until mid February.**