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The proposed change to the way MPPs are elected in Ontario would give "unprecedented power" to backroom strategists who control political parties, says a new group urging voters to keep the current system in place. Voters should be wary when they vote in the Oct. 10 referendum that could change Ontario's first-past-the-post system - in which one MPP will be elected for each of 107 ridings - to something called mixed-member proportional representation, said Michael Ufford of the group called No MMP. Under MMP, the number of ridings would be reduced to 90, with another 39 MPPs chosen from lists of candidates appointed by political parties. If a party elects fewer local members than its share of the popular vote, candidates from its list would be elected to compensate for the difference. "This will allow political leaders to stack their caucuses with blind loyalists who have no direct responsibility to the people," Ufford said in a statement yesterday as the group launched its website at www.nommp.ca. For the referendum to pass, the proposal must be approved by a "super majority" of 60 per cent of the votes cast across Ontario and by at least 50 per cent of the voters in 64 ridings. If the mixed-member system is approved, it would be in place for the next election after 2007. Advocates say the new system would make the electoral system more fair by giving political parties seats in line with their share of the popular vote, although critics warn that it could lead to perpetual minority governments with smaller or fringe parties holding the balance of power.