SB493

Elections – Ranked-Choice Voting in – Contest for Presidential Nomination in 2028

Position: Unfavorable

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is a bad idea whose time should never come. Maryland does not need to be playing around with this crap. Depending on the implementation of this bill, the Maryland 2028 primary election could become a uni-party presidential election primary destroying the ability of voters to select the candidate(s) of their choice in the November, 2028 presidential election.

Maryland could be in a situation like Alaska which utilized RCV in the 2022 mid-terms and the outcomes were contrary to what one would expect from a traditionally Republican state. For example, during the special Congressional representative election, Republican candidates received 110,875 votes (58.7% of those cast) to 74,817 for the Democrat candidate in the RCV first round, yet the Democrat candidate managed to win the election in multiple rounds. Bet Republican voters in Alaska weren't happy with that outcome. I know they aren't happy, because there is a high probability that Alaska will have an up-down referendum on RCV this November given the number of referendum signatures that have been collected.

A similar situation could happen in Maryland in which only Republican candidates are selected in during a 2028 uni-party Presidential primary. How would the majority of Maryland Democrat voters feel about that? Mad as hell and mad at their Democrat legislators that enacted such a process. Watch out what you ask for.

Let's look at something closer to home than Alaska--Arlington County, Virginia. In 2023, the June Democratic City Council Primary for Arlington County was conducted using RCV. It was a mess. The exit polls showed that the majority of those answering the questions did not like RCV and requested that RCV not be used in the future. There was also legal action against the Board of Supervisors (BOS) for miscounting the results. The Arlington BOS voted to not use RCV in the November 2023 general election.

On the following pages please find an article on how RCV negatively impacts minority voting.

Ranked-Choice Voting Hurts Minorities: Study

- Post author

- By [centerforelectionconfidence](#)
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Study Indicates that Ranked-Choice Voting

Weakens Electoral Influence of Minority Voters

(Arlington, Va.) – The Center for Election Confidence (CEC) announced today the release of research by Professor Nolan McCarty, with support from CEC, documenting harmful effects of ranked-choice voting (RCV) for racial and ethnic minority electorates. The study by Dr. McCarty, the Susan Dod Brown Professor of Politics at Princeton University, is entitled "Minority Electorates and Ranked Choice Voting".

The research paper explains how RCV works, explains arguments made by proponents of RCV, and analyzes election data revealing how the RCV voting system affects the franchise of minority voters. Specifically, Dr. McCarty found that RCV disproportionately decreases the representation and electoral influence of minority voters because such voters disproportionately "exhaust" their ballots thereby removing them from decisive vote tabulations.

CEC Executive Director Lisa Dixon said, "The Center for Election Confidence is proud to support this groundbreaking research on ranked-choice voting. Proponents of RCV often disregard the anecdotal evidence that it negatively affects minority and disadvantaged voters. Importantly, Dr. McCarty's research documents these negative impacts with quantitative data, demonstrating that further adoption of RCV risks undermining voter confidence in election fairness."

Dr. McCarty's paper focuses on data from two elections that utilized newly adopted RCV systems: New York City's Democratic Primary elections in 2020 and Alaska's Top Four Primary and General elections in 2020. Data from both elections indicate negative electoral effects of RCV for minority electorates. The evidence is concerning enough that it should be a critical part of discussions about RCV when jurisdictions consider adoption of RCV.

Dr. McCarty said, "In recent years, ranked choice voting has been hyped as a solution to many perceived problems in American elections. Unfortunately, the hype has often outpaced the evidence. My research raises major concerns about whether RCV may work to further reduce the electoral influence of racial and ethnic minority communities."

An Executive Summary of Dr. McCarty's study is available here:

https://electionconfidence.org/executive-summary-mccarty-rcv-paper-2024/

The full study "Minority Electorates and Ranked Choice Voting" is available here:

https://electionconfidence.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/FINAL-RCV-study-1-10-24.pdf

Center for Election Confidence is a non-profit organization with a long history of advancing the role of ethics, integrity, and legal professionalism in the electoral process, including safeguarding the right of eligible voters to vote. Until January 2024, CEC was known as Lawyers Democracy Fund. For more information, please visit www.electionconfidence.org.

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- Tags Ranked-Choice Voting

What do we all want or should we all want regarding elections? That they be free, fair, and transparent or FFT. Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) does not promote FFT elections. Here are nine reasons why:

1. Consolidates 2 party power. Any minor party candidates on the ballot wind up at the bottom of the ranking system and their votes end up going to major party candidates. This is anti-democratic.

2. One cannot vote against a candidate. One has to rank candidates that you may never, in your whole freaking life, consider voting for. By including a candidate in the ranking, you have voted for that candidate.

3. Extreme candidates can win. Large vote disparities in initial voting outcomes can be overcome and a candidate that a majority of the voters do not or will never support can win.

4. Moderates get squeezed out. Votes get divided up between the extreme factions.

5. Ballot Exhaustion. If a voter doesn't rank all candidates, because the voter never ranked all the candidates, that voter's ballot becomes exhausted and will be thrown out in later rounds. So it is as if that voter never voted at all. This is not inclusive at all as people's votes are discarded
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6. Low Voter Participation. Measurement of voter participation in RCV elections has consistently shown that it lowers turnout, precisely the opposite effect desired in a democratically elected, represented society. In Minneapolis, St. Paul, and San Fransico which have had ranked choice voting for a while, voter turnout has been consistently lower than in earlier elections.

7. Confusing to voters. RCV is complicated and hard to explain, thus it decreases election Transparency, precisely against the principles of FFT elections referred to in my introduction. Confusion leads to lower turnout. Arlington County, VA recently utilized RCV in a local municipal Democrat primary and exit polling indicated a large degree of voter dissatisfaction with the process.

8. More chance for fraud. Because of the complexity it is more difficult to track the election. RCV requires more handling of ballots, more transportation of ballots, more chain of custody issues, more adjudication which opens up the system to potential fraud.

9. Reporting delays. An RCV election is practically not auditable because of ballot exhaustion. The multiple rounds with ballot exhaustion required results in delays in determining the winner. In AK, where RCV voting was used in a special Congressional election in 2022, it took three weeks to declare a winner.

In summary RCV increases election complexity, decreases transparency, and lowers voter participation.

Please kill consideration of this bill now.