

To: Senator Kagan

Re: SB 0493

Position: Opposed

<https://electionconfidence.org/2024/01/11/ranked-choice-voting-hurts-minorities-study/>

Ranked-Choice Voting Hurts Minorities: Study

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- Categories
 - In [Press Releases](#)

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](#)