2024 Breaking Barriers For Black Women Candidates

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Breaking Barriers for Black Women Candidates

A Discussion of Systemic Challenges and Opportunities

RepresentWomen is a 501c3 nonpartisan nonprofit committed to researching, understanding, and championing evidence-based solutions that support a healthy democracy with gender-balanced representation in elected and appointed positions at every level of government. We advocate for systemic reforms to the recruitment process and voting systems and collect, analyze, and disseminate data that specifically focuses on understanding disparities in political participation among women at the federal, state, and local levels of government.

Breaking Barriers for Black Women Candidates: A Discussion of Systemic Challenges and Opportunities is the first installment in a new series that outlines the systems-level and candidate-level factors impacting Black women's political participation and representation in U.S. politics. The following brief explores the influence of party recruitment, campaign funding, and voting systems in shaping opportunities for Black women to run successful campaigns and win elections. By identifying the systemic barriers Black women political candidates face, we can create a future where more women can RUN and WIN. Stay tuned for future installments in this series that will explore barriers and opportunities for ensuring Black women can SERVE and LEAD.

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Notes & Acknowledgements:
(1) Data on women in national, state, and local offices – past and present – is courtesy of the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) at Rutgers University.

(2) Data on campaign finance contributions is courtesy of OpenSecrets.

(3) U.S. population data is courtesy of the U.S. Census Bureau.

(4) The release of this brief does not signify the end of our research on Black women in U.S. politics. We are still collecting information about the barriers that they face and plan to examine further many of the themes discussed in this brief with upcoming research projects. We appreciate feedback from our partners, political researchers, and anyone with a vested interest in the work of RepresentWomen.

Opening Letter

Being the second Black woman in Portland, Maine's history that has been elected to the city council is double-sided. On the one hand, it's one of the greatest achievements of my life, and on the other, it's one of the most mentally and emotionally challenging experiences I've ever had. I regularly think about all the sacrifices Black women have made and the violence they have endured so I could be awarded this opportunity. I often think of the first Black woman elected to the council in our city, who said, "It's important to be the first, just make sure you're not the last," about Black women in office.

I am so grateful for this opportunity to be a leader of my city, especially because the institution of government has never been designed for people who look like me. It's an honor to be an elected official who has broken many historical barriers, and I'll never take it for granted. I also recognize what a privilege it is that Maine is the first state in our nation to use ranked choice voting.

During my tenure, there has been racism, sexism, and ageism. There have been death threats and hate mail sent to my personal address. I've had my photo and personal information put on a website specifically for threats of violence. I've had photos of my family put on a website specifically for threats of violence. I've endured a multitude of racial slurs being shouted during public comment, a time that is meant for our community to make their voice heard on policy items.

There have been times I've made a comment inside council chambers, only to have a male colleague say the exact same thing and receive praise for it. There's a lack of a living wage for elected officials, making effective policy creation extremely difficult based on limited capacity due to our full-time jobs. We also don't have term limits. One of the previous councilors served *24 years* in the same seat. So, while I feel extremely lucky to be in this space, it's still contingent on which councilors decide to run, or not to run, for re-election.

The reality is we won't make it very far if the framework we serve in is still inherently biased, racist, sexist, and filled with significant barriers. I want to enthusiastically look at another Black woman and tell her she should run for office - and I can't do that if we don't address not only the things that stop us from running for office in the first place but also the barriers that stop us from remaining in office after our term is up.

There are steps we can take to ensure that Black women not only hold public office but feel supported while serving. We must focus on continued and intentional systems change that dismantles the barriers that have harmed so many of us. We don't have a democracy without Black women, and I look forward to creating an environment where more of us have a chance to run, win, serve, and lead. I refuse to be the last.

Sincerely,

Victoria Pelletier
Portland City Council Member and
RepresentWomen National Partnerships Manager

Executive Summary

Black women have historically been, and continue to be, underrepresented at every level of government in the United States for cultural and structural reasons. Among these are biases, misogynoir, and flawed political practices. Increasing Black women's political power and representation requires equitable access to political and financial resources and reform to our antiquated voting system.

This brief surveys three key barriers Black women face when running for office: the current criteria of political party recruitment, exclusionary funding practices, and plurality voting. We then propose actionable avenues for change to expand opportunities for Black women in politics and ameliorate our democracy.

Our key takeaways are as follows:

1. **Early investment by political parties advances Black women in politics.** This involves setting candidate recruitment targets and quotas along with implementing networking and mentorship initiatives in partnership with candidate organizations.
2. **Donors should adopt gender and race-balanced funding measures** to fund Black women's campaigns. PACs and donors can model these initiatives after those already existing in other industries.
3. **Public financing programs (PFPs) empower Black women candidates to run competitive campaigns** by amplifying small-dollar donations and limiting the impact of big money.
4. **Ranked choice voting (RCV) creates opportunities for Black women candidates** by eliminating split votes and enabling non-status quo candidates to lead viable campaigns.
   a. **Proportional ranked choice voting (PRCV) enhances these opportunities** by allowing communities to elect candidates in proportion to their percentage of the population.

Introduction

Shirley Chisolm, the first Black woman elected to the United States Congress and to seek a major party's nomination in a presidential election, believed that the government must represent the country's diversity.[1] Chisholm contended that Black women are granted fewer opportunities to run for office because they are viewed as non-traditional candidates.[2] She remarked that "In the end, anti-Black, anti-female, and all forms of discrimination are equivalent to the same thing: anti-humanism."[3]

Black women face obstacles to fair representation that stem from ethno-racial discrimination and gender-based prejudice. These forms of misogynoir occur societally and within political spaces. Their impact is heightened by the fact that the U.S. political system has built its foundations on white patriarchy, which inherently fails to account for the challenges faced by Black women who want to participate in politics.[4] Although a record-breaking number of Black women ran and won in recent elections, they remain underrepresented at all levels of government, showing a need to understand the specific barriers that they face.[5]

"**Breaking Barriers for Black Women Candidates: A Discussion of Systemic Challenges and Opportunities**" is the first installment in a new series where we aim to identify the candidate-level and systems-level factors impacting Black women's political participation and representation in the U.S. This brief explores the influence of party recruitment, campaign funding, and voting systems in shaping opportunities for Black women to run successful campaigns. Our research involved interviewing Black women in politics and political advocacy about the themes discussed throughout this brief, such as party biases, inequitable funding, and racial inequality. By identifying the systemic barriers Black women candidates face, we can work towards creating a future where more women can RUN and WIN. Stay tuned for future installments in this series that will explore barriers and opportunities for ensuring Black women can SERVE and LEAD.

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[1] Barbara Winslow. "Shirley Chisholm: Catalyst for Change" The Journal of African American History (July 2004).

[2] Zing Tsjeng and Zhi Ying Tsjeng. "Forgotten Women: The Leaders" Cassell Illustrated, Octopus Publishing Group (March 2018).

[3] Rajini Vaidyanathan. "Before Hillary Clinton, there was Shirley Chisholm." BBC News, Washington (January 2016).

[4] Nadia E. Brown. "Political Participation of Women of Color: An Intersectional Analysis" *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy* (October 2014); Also discussed during her interview.

[5] Lisa Garciá Bedolla, Katherine Tate, and Janelle Wong. "14 Indelible Effects: The Impact of Women of Color in the U.S. Congress" in Sue Thomas and Clyde Wilcox (eds), *Women and Elective Office: Past, Present, and Future, 3rd edition*, Oxford University Press (January 2014).

The State of Black Women in U.S. Politics in 2024

According to the U.S. Census, Black women make up 8% of the population and are on track to grow in the coming years.[6] Women who self-identify as Black represent a disproportionately low percentage of appointed and elected officials. Racially equitable changes must be implemented to have a representative democracy.

Office	Number of Black Women	Total Number of Women
Federal Executive	1	1
Congress (voting members only)	29	151
Statewide Executive	11	99
State Legislature	383	2,420
Mayors (100 most populated cities)	8	34

Figure 1 shows the current number of Black women electeds serving at each level of the U.S. government. Source: Center for American Women and Politics (January 2024).

Vice President Kamala Harris is the only Black and South Asian-American woman elected to the federal executive branch.[7] There are 29 Black women in Congress, 28 of whom serve in the U.S. House.[8] Recently appointed Laphonza Butler (D-CA) is only the third Black woman to serve as a U.S. Senator and currently the only Black woman in the U.S. Senate.[9] There are two Black women U.S Delegates.[10] Only 5% of the 118th Congress are Black women and, historically, only 0.4% of all members of Congress have been Black women since the legislative body's formation in 1789.[11]

Black women's prospects for political representation are greatest at the state level.[12] There are 11 (4%) Black women serving in statewide elective executive positions out of 97 total positions (10D, 1R).[13] A Black woman has never been governor of any state.[14]

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[6] United States Census Bureau. "National Population by Characteristics: 2020-2022" (Accessed September 2023).
[7] Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP). "Black Women in Elective Office" (Accessed September 2023).
[8] All 28 are Democrats. Ibid.
[9] Maeve Reston and Annabelle Timsit. "Laphonza Butler sworn in as the third Black female senator in history" *The Washington Post* (October 2023).
[10] District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands; CAWP. "Black Women in Elective Office" (Accessed September 2023).
[11] Ibid.
[12] Jazmine Ulloa. "More Black Women Run for Office, but Prospects Fade the Higher They Go" *The New York Times* (March 2023).
[13] CAWP. "History of Women Governors" (Accessed October 2023).
[14] CAWP. "Black Women in Elective Office" (Accessed September 2023).

Barriers and Solutions to Black Women's Political Participation

Several viable strategies can be implemented to address the gender and race-based barriers that impact Black women's ability to run for office and win elections. Our research shows that candidate-level and systems-level solutions are required to increase women's political participation at all levels of government. This brief explores political party recruitment, inequitable funding, and voting system design.

Barrier: Political Party Recruitment

Party recruitment of Black women is crucial because political party endorsements are advantageous to candidates who receive support and detrimental to those they do not select. Parties recruit and select candidates based on factors like party loyalty, popularity, and preparedness.[15] The Republican Party rarely recruits Black women; this may be because the majority of women who support the party are non-Black.[16] In 2022, one hundred thirty-six Republican women nominees were seeking federal and state office; only 10 were Black women.[17]

The Democratic Party has a better track record of nominating diverse candidates but has still routinely supported white men and women over Black women candidates. In Maryland's 2015 Senate race, Democratic Party leaders endorsed Rep. Chris Van Hollen over Rep. Donna Edwards despite their almost identical voting records and support from progressive groups.[18] Van Hollen ran reductive campaign advertisements depicting Edwards as an angry Black woman, questioning her integrity, and attacking her appearance.[19] Following the loss, Edwards drew attention to party leaders calling Van Hollen a "strong white man" and "born to do the job."[20]

To fill the gap left by parties, PACs and political organizations have stepped up to endorse Democratic candidates who are seen as too out of the ordinary or unlikely to win races. Organizations such as Justice Democrats have endorsed promising Black women like Rep. Ayanna Pressley (D-MA). In 2018, Pressley joined the growing list of Black women candidates to win their races and become influential in U.S. politics.[21]

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[15] Alex Furlin. "How Are Candidates Recruited to Run for Office?" Good Party (September 2023).

[16] Rachael Bade. "GOP women's record-breaking success reflects party's major shift on recruiting and supporting female candidates" *The Washington Post* (December 2020); Pew Research Center. "Trends in Party Affiliation Among Demographic Groups" (March 2018).

[17] National Federation of Republican Women. "Candidates - 2022" (Accessed January 2024).

[18] Arelis R. Hernández. "Reid endorses Van Hollen in Md. Senate race" *The Washington Post* (March 2015).

[19] Rachel Weiner. "Chris Van Hollen Attacks Donna Edwards In Ad" *The Washington Post* (April 2016).

[20] Donna Edwards. "The Problem Keeping America From Being The Democracy It Should Be" Cosmopolitan (May 2016).

[21] Alex Samuels and Nathaniel Rakich. "What 'The Squad' Tells Us About Progressives' Ability To Win Voters Of Color" FiveThirtyEight (November 2021).

Solution: Gender and Race-Balanced Recruitment Targets and Quotas

Political parties play a key role in elevating and advancing candidates throughout the election process.[22] To allow voters to select from a representative and diverse pool, parties must address the biases in candidate selection processes and introduce gender and race-balanced recruitment targets and quotas. Parties must also serve as connectors by creating opportunities for Black women candidates to network with influential donors, recruit volunteers, and promote their campaigns.

In 2017, Black women in politics wrote an open letter to then-Democratic National Committee (DNC) Chair Tom Perez, bringing the party's neglect of Black women to light and requesting a meeting to get the party to invest more actively in Black women as political leaders.[23] Strategist Donna Brazile and political entities like the Maryland Black Caucus Foundation have similarly highlighted the need to recruit more Black women to run for elected office.[24]

Steps Political Parties Can Take

Early investment by parties is critical to building a strong pipeline of viable Black women candidates. By recruiting Black women to run for entry-level county and precinct positions, parties would create opportunities for Black women to run for higher levels of office with party support. However, this does not diminish that Black women have shown their ability to lead at all levels of government, with women such as Mayor Cherelle Parker (D-Philadelphia, PA), Rep. Lucy McBath (D-GA), and Rep. Lauren Underwood (D-IL) having become effective and respected elected leaders.

Candidate organizations such as The Black Women's Roundtable, Emerge, EMILY's List, Higher Heights for America PAC, and IGNITE create a blueprint for the actions parties can take to level the playing field for candidates. Initiatives that allow Black women candidates and electeds to connect, such as mentorship programs and networking forums, provide support systems for Black women that span beyond one election cycle.

Political parties should build broad and representative coalitions by meeting with and learning from candidate organizations. Uplifting Black women in the political sphere will strengthen parties, allowing them to expand their base and create policy platforms derived from lived rather than assumed experiences.

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[22] RepresentWomen. "Women Running: Gender balanced funding and recruitment targets" (Accessed January 2024).

[23] NBC News. "Open Letter to DNC Chair" (May 2017).

[24] Civic Innovation Center, University of Maryland School of Public Policy. "Donna Brazile Discusses Black Political Empowerment Following the 2020 Election" (February 2021).

Barrier: Racially Inequitable Funding

Individual donors, PACs, and political parties generally fund Black women's campaigns less than those of white women.[25] CAWP's 2019-2022 data indicates that as many as 39% of incumbent Black women state house candidates and 44% of state senate candidates faced an opponent who was "monetarily competitive."[26] Research by RepresentWomen and OpenSecrets found it takes more money for women to win elections, particularly for women running as challengers or for an open seat.[27]

Race and Gender Group	Amount Raised by PACs	Amount Raised by Large Individual Donors	Amount Raised by Small Individual Donors	Average Total Amount Raised
Black Women	$18,285	$161,104	$121,116	$309,665
White Women	$18,224	$527,408	$184,687	$829,092

Figure 2 shows the average amounts raised by Black and White women challengers and open-seat candidates In the 2020 Congressional primaries. Source: OpenSecrets.

In 2022, Stacey Abrams and Val Demings lost highly competitive races despite independently raising over $100 million and $70 million, respectively.[28] This proved their viability, but the party still saw them as non-traditional. The Democratic Party failed to supply both women with additional funding at critical junctures in their campaigns despite raising $1.4 billion for the election cycle, leading to both candidates' electoral defeats and showing that party funding is crucial to winning.[29]

Even further, Black women rely more on small-dollar donations than their white counterparts.[30] In 2023, Angela Alsobrooks raised more money from individual donations than her opponent, David Trone, in Maryland's U.S. Senate Democratic primary.[31] Trone, who reported earning an annual salary of up to $14 million, pulled 98% of the $10 million he raised from his personal accounts.[32] Most Black women cannot pull millions of dollars from their accounts like wealthy candidates such as Trone and must have access to equitable funding.

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[25] Grace Haley and Sarah Bryner. "Which Women Can Run? The Fundraising Gap in the 2020 Elections' Competitive Primaries" OpenSecrets (June 2021).

[26] Kira Sanbonmatsu. "The Donor Gap: Raising Women's Political Voices" CAWP (October 2023).

[27] Cynthia Richie Terrell and Maura Reilly, with Courtney Lamendola, Corinne Bennett, Jordan Westendorf, Mckenna Donegan, and Marilyn Harbert. "PACs and Donors: Agents of Change for Women's Representation" RepresentWomen (June 2020).

[28] Mini Racker. "Two Black Women Are Making Strong Bids for Senate. Some Say the Democratic Party Has Failed Them" *Time Magazine* (November 2022).

[29] Ibid; OpenSecrets. "Democratic Party Fundraising Overview" (Accessed January 2024).

[30] Grace Haley and Sarah Bryner. "Which Women Can Run?" OpenSecrets (June 2021).

[31] Shifra Dayak. "Trone leads fundraising in US Senate race in Maryland, but trails in individual donations" Capital News Service, Herald-Mail Media (December 2023).

[32] Bill Turque. "In a field of rich congressional candidates, this wine magnate is the richest" *The Washington Post* (March 2016).

Solution 1: Gender and Race-Balanced Funding

To remedy these systemic inequities, donors and PACs must actively commit to allocating funds to Black women's campaigns.[33] National parties should incentivize state and local parties to fund more Black women candidates. Gender-balanced funding initiatives are not uncommon and are already used across industries.[34] The African Women Impact Fund started a gender-inclusive initiative after discovering that women-run businesses are given only 7% of all investment funding.[35]

Filling the gap left by large dollar donors are groups such as chapters of the Black sorority Delta Sigma Theta, which helps Black women fundraise through soliciting donations from alumni networks, and launched D4Women in Action: DST for African American Women for Political Power to build a pipeline of Black women to public service.[36] The group has endorsed Black women candidates like Angela Alsobrooks (D-MD), Barbara Lee (D-CA), and Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE).

Solution 2: Public Financing Programs (PFPs)

Public financing programs (PFPs), where small-dollar donations are amplified by government dollars, allow non-traditional candidates to lead competitive campaigns. PFPs improve candidate-donor engagement by incentivizing candidates to rely on voters rather than big money and special interest groups.[37] Higher Heights Co-Founder Kimberly Peeler-Allen confirmed this, stating that candidates must spend more time courting high-dollar donors rather than with their constituents so that they can secure re-election and continue to serve those same constituents.

Individual, small-donor public financing programs (PFPs) may also help to resolve gendered and racial disparities in financing Black women's campaigns, particularly at the local levels of government.[38] PFPs provide matches as high as 9:1 in Denver, CO, and 8:1 in New York, NY, where candidates who opt in receive nine or eight dollars for every one dollar that qualifies for campaign contributions.[39]

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[33] Federal Election Commission. "Making Disbursements as a PAC" (Accessed January 2024); OpenSecrets. "Contribution Limits: 2024" (Accessed January 2024).
[34] International Finance Corporation, Oliver Wyman, and Rock Creek. "Report: Moving Toward Gender Balance in Private Equity and Venture Capital" (March 2019); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. "Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality" (Accessed January 2024).
[35] PR Newswire. "African Women Impact Fund launches with USD$60 million commitment to drive an inclusive investment environment" (September 2022).
[36] PR Newswire. "Delta For Women in Action (D4 Women in Action) Announces Full Slate of Endorsed Candidates for the 2020 Election" (October 2020).
[37] Courtney Lamendola, Steph Scaglia, and Paige Chan. "Why Women Won in 2021" RepresentWomen (September 2022).
[38] Chisun Lee, Gregory Clark, and Nirali Vyas. "Small Donor Public Financing Could Advance Race and Gender Equity in Congress" Brennan Center for Justice (October 2020).
[39] Office of the Clerk and Recorder. "The Fair Elections Fund," Denver (Accessed February 2024); NYC Campaign Finance Board "Matching Funds Program" (Accessed February 2024).

Barrier: Plurality Voting

Plurality voting systems declare the candidate who receives the most votes as the winner, even if they fail to secure majority support.[40] This disadvantages Black women, who are often stereotyped as less electable and lacking leadership skills that are attributed to white candidates.[41] Plurality voting compounds these negative effects because political parties and voters are incentivized to vote strategically and support safe, status-quo candidates to increase their chances of winning.

Another concern is vote splitting, which can result in a political minority win. Black women have frequently reported being told to wait their turn by party leaders worried about candidates they consider to be less competitive spoiling the election.[42] City of Glenarden Mayor Cashenna Cross told us, "Black women [candidates] have developed a 'hospitality mentality' because we have been told to wait our turn for so long. They think we have got to wait for somebody to invite us to the table."[43]

Solution 1: Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)

Implementing ranked choice voting (RCV) would mitigate these issues by leveling the playing field, allowing more candidates to run and more non-traditional candidates to win.[44] Under RCV, voters rank candidates based on preference, meaning that multiple Black women can be on the ballot without splitting the vote.[45] RCV boosts voter turnout, fosters greater interaction between candidates and voters, and eradicates the need for expensive runoff elections.[46]

Throughout the U.S., 50 jurisdictions use RCV.[47] Among them is San Francisco, CA, which elected London Breed as its first Black woman mayor in 2018.[48] Although RCV is just one step in removing the multitude of barriers Black women face when running for office, dismantling our antiquated, plurality voting system is a critical step in creating more opportunities for Black women to run and win.

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[40] Rachel Hutchinson. "Fewest Votes Wins: Plurality Victories in 2022 Primaries" FairVote (October 2022).

[41] Marlette Jackson and Paria Rajai. "Does Your Definition of Leadership Exclude Women of Color?" Harvard Business Review (January 2021).

[42] Julianne Malveaux. "No More 'Wait Your Turn' Politics" *Richmond Free Press* (July 2018).

[43] Cross represents a city where Black women hold 4 out of 7 seats on the City Council.

[44] Alexandra Copper and Ruth Greenwood. "The Civic Benefits of Ranked Choice Voting: Eight Ways Adopting Ranked Choice Voting Can Improve Voting and Elections." Campaign Legal Center (August 2018).

[45] Deb Otis and Nora Dell. "Ranked Choice Voting Elections Benefit Candidates and Voters of Color" FairVote (May 2021).

[46] FairVote. "Research and Data on RCV in Practice" (Accessed January 2024).

[47] FairVote. "Ranked Choice Voting Information" (Accessed January 2024).

[48] Daniella Cheslow. "San Francisco Elects City's First African-American Female Mayor" NPR (June 2018).

Highlight: Black Women's Representation in RCV Cities

Berkeley, Oakland, San Francisco, and San Leandro, CA, adopted RCV in the early 2000s, becoming early adopters of the system.[49] RCV remains in place today, and Black women representing these cities include eight-term Berkeley Councilmember and former Vice Mayor Maudelle Shirek, Oakland Councilmember Treva Reid, and San Leandro's first African American councilmember, Surlene Grant. In Oakland, Black voters have been more likely to rank candidates than white voters, showing positive engagement with RCV.[50]

New York City held its first RCV elections in 2021, resulting in its most diverse city council ever, including 10 Black women, four Afro-Latinas, and a Black woman speaker.[51] RepresentWomen evaluated the impact of NYC's first woman and woman of color majority council in our **Impact Analysis of NYC's Woman Majority Council**.[52]

Solution 2: Proportional Ranked Choice Voting (PRCV)

Proportional ranked choice voting (PRCV) is a multi-winner voting system that permits voters to rank candidates by preference.[53] PRCV is advantageous to Black women candidates because this multi-winner system means more seats are available and, thus, more opportunities for Black women to win. The use of PRCV in Cambridge, MA, has resulted in a more representative city council.[54]

Majority-Black districts have been shown to elect Black candidates in proportion to their percentage of the population.[55] PRCV has yielded representative outcomes in cities like Arden, DE, and Minneapolis, MN.[56] To increase the number of Black women in local offices, cities with high Black populations should be the primary targets of electoral reformers looking to implement PRCV. As voting rights expert Lani Guinier asserted, "51% of the people should not get 100% of the power."[57]

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[49] Sarah John. "The Impact of Ranked Choice Voting on Representation: How Ranked Choice Voting Affects Women and People of Color in California" RepresentWomen (August 2016).
[50] Deb Otis and Sabrina Laverty. "Ranked Choice Voting Elections Benefit Candidates and Voters of Color: 2024 Update" FairVote (January 2024).
[51] Courtney Lamendola, Steph Scaglia, and Paige Chan. "Why Women Won in 2021" RepresentWomen (September 2022).
[52] Steph Scaglia. "Women in Power: Impact Analysis of NYC's Woman Majority Council" RepresentWomen (July 2023).
[53] Steph Scaglia and Courtney Lamendola. "Proportional Ranked Choice Voting: Promoting Fair Elections and Removing Barriers for Women in U.S. Politics" RepresentWomen (October 2023).
[54] Deb Otis. "Proportional RCV in Cambridge, Massachusetts" FairVote (October 2022).
[55] Ibid.
[56] RepresentWomen collects and maintains data on outcomes for women in RCV and PRCV elections. For more information, please contact info@representwomen.org.
[57] Lani Guinier. *The Tyranny of the Majority: Fundamental Fairness in Representative Democracy*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe (June 1994).

Conclusion

For Black women to run and win equitably, we must dismantle the candidate-level and systems-level obstacles they face. Political parties play key roles in candidate recruitment and should invest early in Black women. PACs, donors, and public financing programs can decrease the impact of large-dollar donations and put power back in the hands of voters. RCV or PRCV should also be implemented to create fairer elections and more representative outcomes.

A representative government fosters trust between voters and elected officials. Having more Black women elected increases the likelihood that challenges faced by Black communities are addressed by representatives who can relate to their lived experiences and have a vested interest in implementing effective policy solutions. For Black women, seeing themselves in government combats misogynoir and reinforces the fact that they are capable and worthy decision-makers.

Our research on Black women in politics is part of a broader dialogue on equity and race in U.S. politics. Our elected officials should reflect the diversity of all 50 states, but Black women remain underrepresented at every level of government. Reforming our current system and implementing actionable changes is critical to increasing Black women's role in U.S. governance.

Takeaways

1. **Early investment by political parties advances Black women in politics.** This involves setting candidate recruitment targets and quotas and implementing networking and mentorship initiatives in partnership with candidate organizations.
2. **Donors should adopt gender and race-balanced funding measures** to fund Black women's campaigns. PACs and donors can model these initiatives after those already existing in other industries.
3. **Public financing programs (PFPs) empower Black women candidates to run competitive campaigns** by amplifying small-dollar donations and limiting the impact of big money.
4. **Ranked choice voting (RCV) creates opportunities for Black women candidates** by eliminating split votes and enabling non-status quo candidates to lead viable campaigns.
    a. **PRCV enhances these opportunities** by allowing communities to elect candidates in proportion to their percentage of the population.

Parity for Women in Politics

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Uploaded by: Alissa Bombardier Shaw

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Ranked Choice Voting and Women's Representation

REPRESENT WOMEN — *Parity for Women in Politics*

Local Level Data

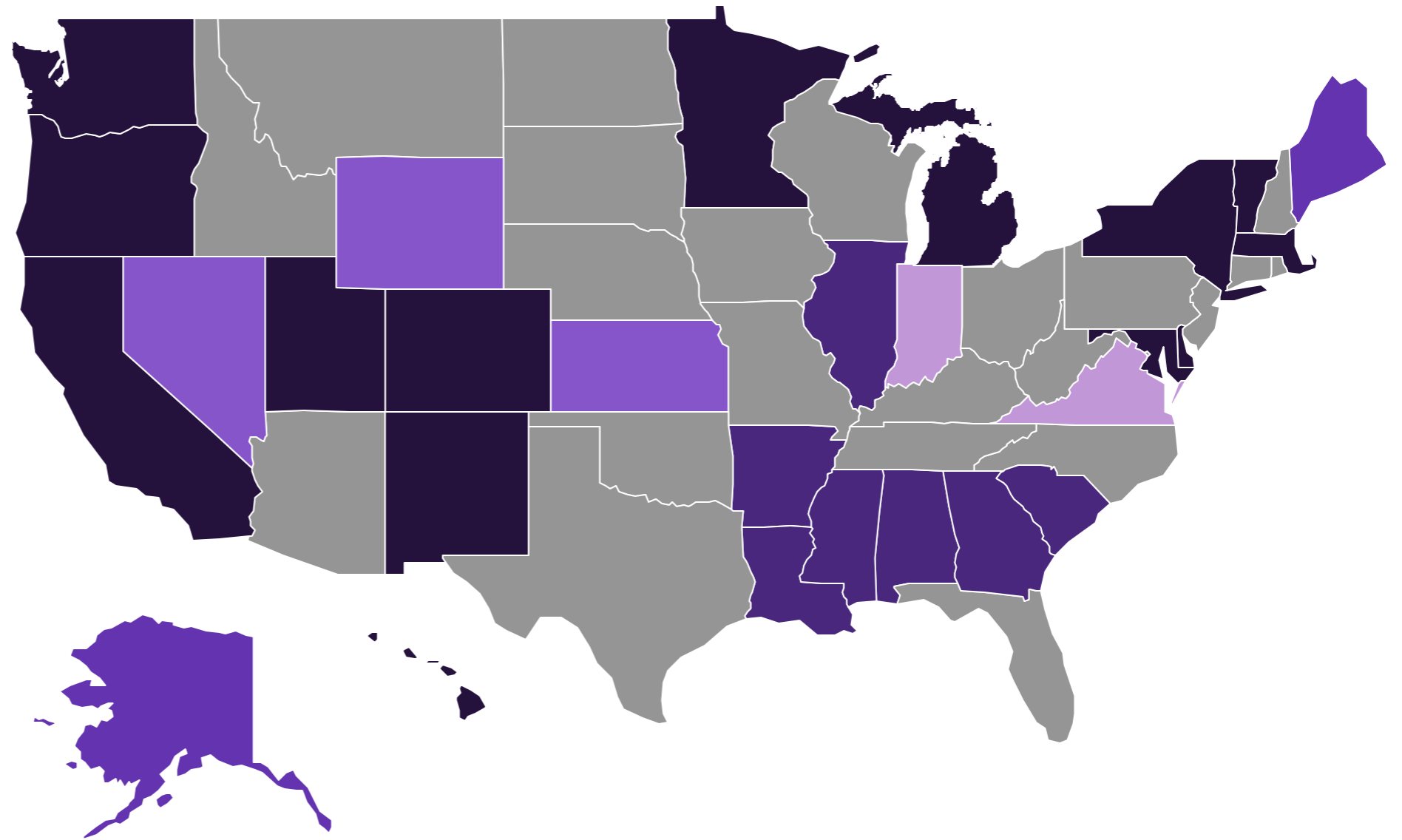Women make up 53% of seats on city councils in RCV cities

Men 47%

Women 53%
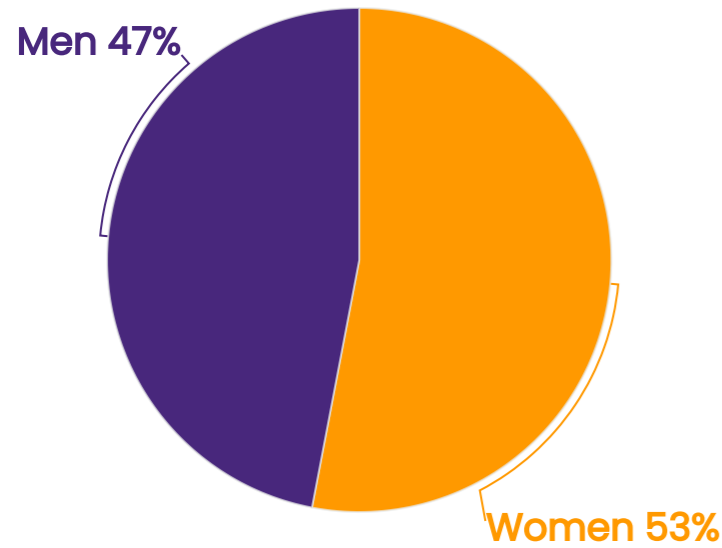
Women represent 12 of the 32 sitting mayors elected in RCV cities

● Women ● Men
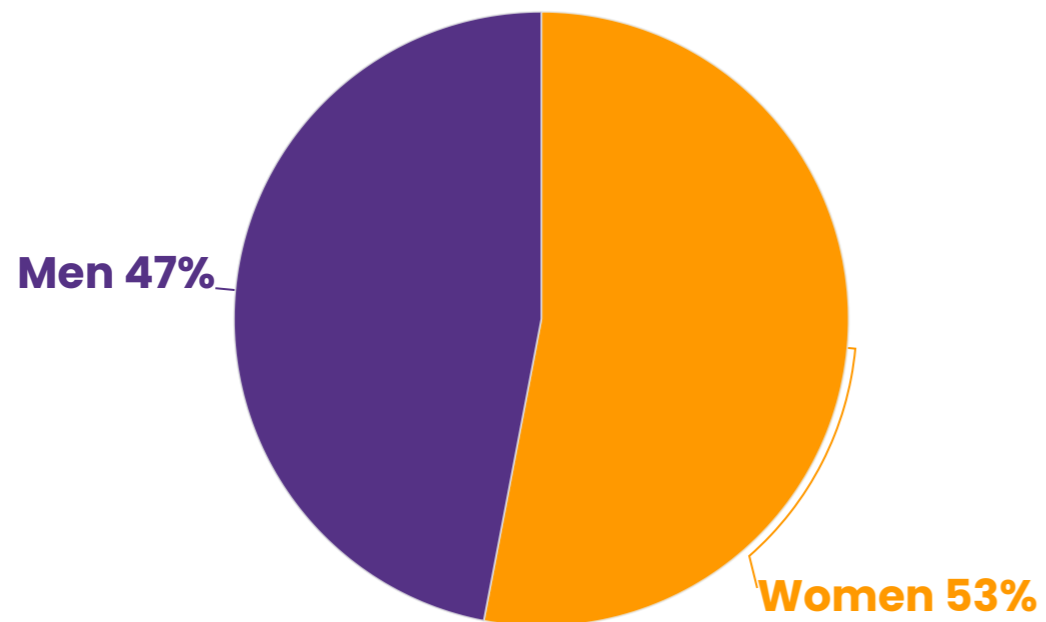
Where Ranked Choice Voting is Used/Enacted in the U.S

● Used For Military & Overseas Voting ● Used For Statewide & Federal Elections ● Not in Use
● Used For Local Elections ● Used for Party Elections ● Used For 2020 Presidential Primaries

REPRESENT WOMEN

Ranked Choice Voting - City Councils

RCV Elected City Councils

Men 47%

Women 53%

Updated January 2024

City Councils of 100 Largest Cities

Women 33%

Men 66%
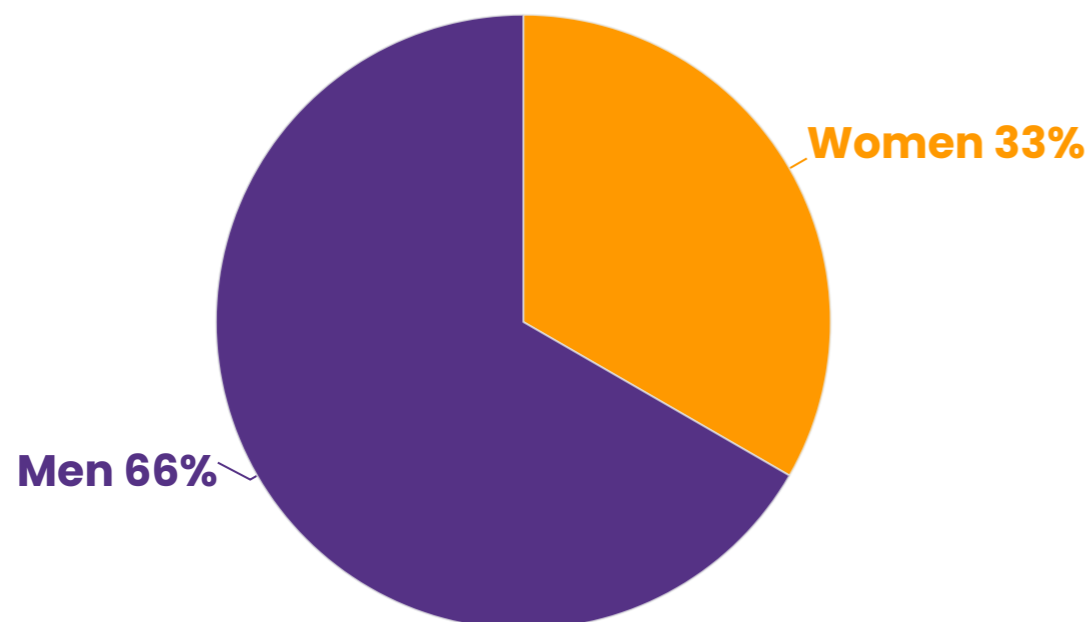
Updated January 2023

As of January 2024, 41 cities have used ranked choice elections to elect their sitting city councils. Of the seats, 53% are filled by women while women hold just 33% of all city council seats in the 100 largest cities.

*Note, 45 cities have RCV in place but not all have had 3+ candidate races.

Below is a chart that lists all city councils elected by ranked choice voting.

City	State	% Women	Election Type	Last RCV Election
Albany	CA	25%	General	2022
Berkeley	CA	38%	General	2022
Oakland	CA	63%	General	2022
San Francisco	CA	36%	General	2022
San Leandro	CA	33%	General	2022
Arden	DE	71%	General	2023
Cambridge	MA	56%	General	2023
Easthampton	MA	22%	General	2023
Takoma Park	MD	50%	General	2022
Portland	ME	75%	General	2023
Eastpointe	MI	25%	General	2021
Bloomington	MN	33%	General	2023
Minneapolis	MN	62%	General	2023
Minnetonka	MN	100%	General	2023
St. Louis Park	MN	67%	Primary	2023
St. Paul	MN	100%	General	2023
Las Cruces	NM	83%	General	2023
Santa Fe	NM	75%	General	2023
New York City	NY	61%	General	2023
Corvallis	OR	67%	General	2022
Bluffdale	UT	40%	General	2023

Race/ethnicity breakdowns are unavailable for certain jurisdictions. For more information about race/ethnicity, please contact us : info@representwomen.org
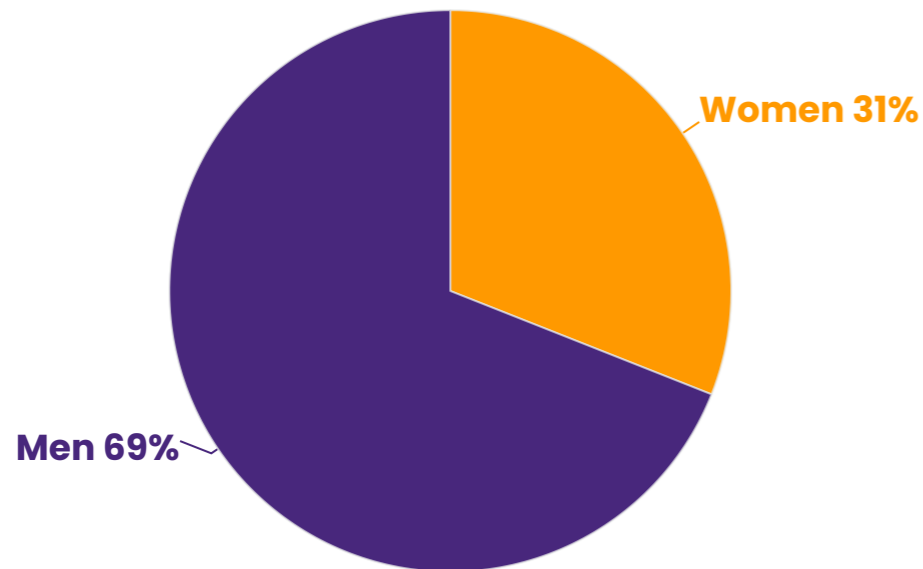
Ranked Choice Voting - Mayors

RCV Elected Mayors

Women 38%

Men 61%
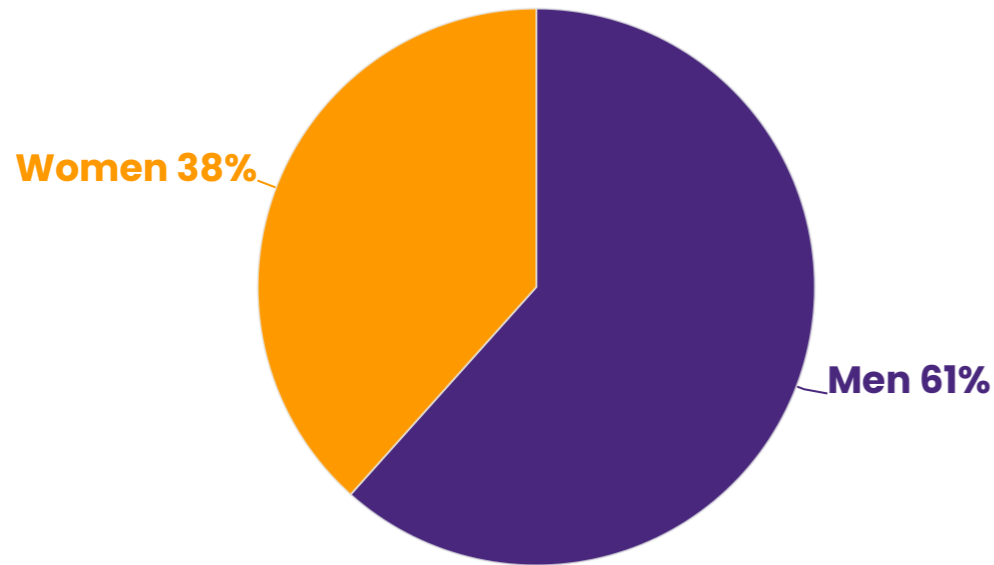
Updated January 2024

Mayors of 100 Largest Cities

Women 31%

Men 69%

Updated January 2023

As of November 2023, 32 cities have used ranked choice elections to elect their sitting mayors. 38% percent of these mayors are women while only 31% of the 100 most populous cities in the U.S. have women mayors.

Below is a chart that lists all mayors elected by ranked choice voting as of January 2024.

| Mayor	City	State	Woman Mayor?	Person of Color?	Last RCV Election
Jesse Arreguín	Berkeley	CA	No	Yes	2022
Sheng Thao	Oakland	CA	Yes	Yes	2022
London Breed	San Francisco	CA	Yes	Yes	2022
Juan Gonzalez III	San Leandro	CA	No	Yes	2022
Bill Kane	Basalt	CO	No	No	2020
Aaron Brockett	Boulder	CO	No	No	2023
Sumbul Siddiqui	Cambridge	MA	Yes	Yes	2021
Nicole LaChapelle	Easthampton	MA	Yes	No	2021
Talisha Searcy	Takoma Park	MD	Yes	Yes	2022
Mark Dion	Portland	ME	No	No	2023
Tim Busse	Bloomington	MN	No	No	2021
Jacob Frey	Minneapolis	MN	No	No	2021
Brad Wiersum	Minnetonka	MN	No	No	2021
Nadia Mohamed	St. Louis Park	MN	Yes	Yes	2023
Melvin Carter III	St. Paul	MN	No	Yes	2021
Eric Enriquez	Las Cruces	NM	No	Yes	2023
Alan Webber	Santa Fe	NM	No	No	2021
Eric Adams	New York City	NY	No	Yes	2021
Charles	Corvallis	OR	No	No	2022

Demographic information for the mayors of the largest cities is courtesy of the Center of American Women and Politics.

2021 Case Study - Cambridge, MA

Number of Seats Won by Women 2010-2021

0   90

● Number of Seats Won by Women
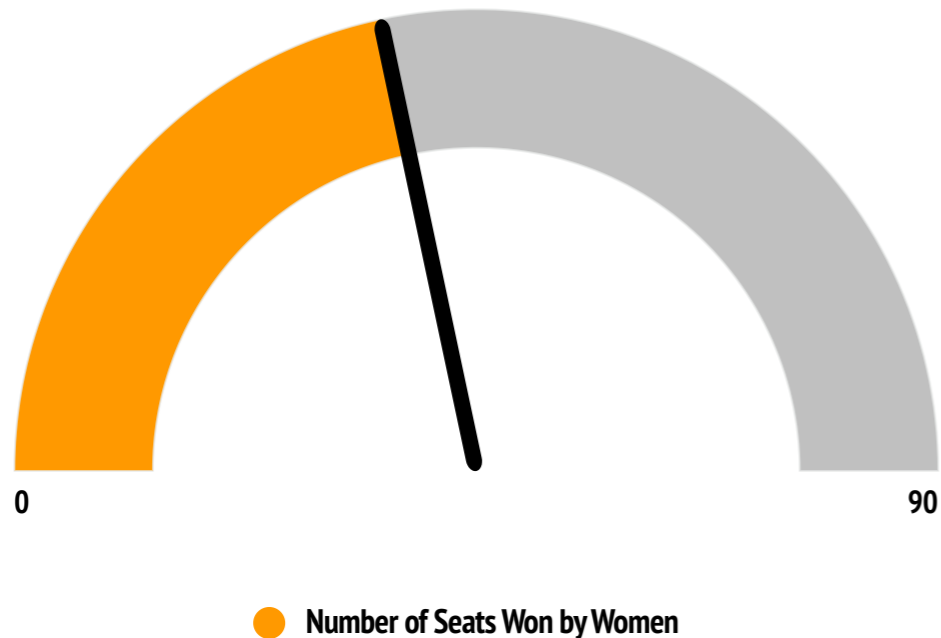
Gender and Race Breakdown of 2024 City Council

Women of Color 33%

White Men 33%

Men of Color 11%

White Women 22%
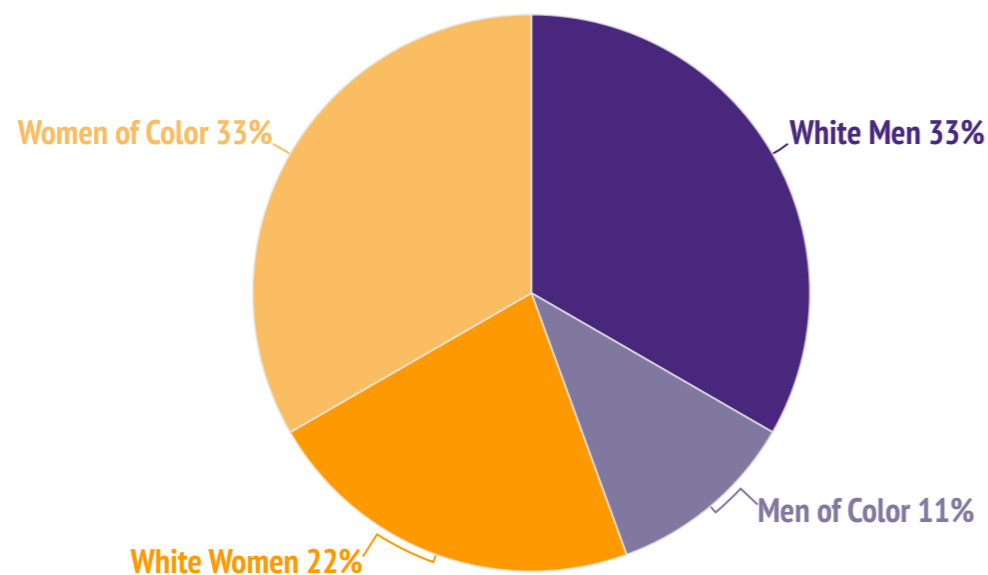
Data true as of January 2024

2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	2021
Election	Number of Candidates	Women Candidates	Percent Women	Winners	Woman
School Committee	11	4	36%	Alfred B. Fantini	No
				Patricia M. Nolan	Yes
				Alice L. Turkel	Yes
				Mervan Osborne	No
				Richard Harding Jr.	No
				Marc C. McGovern	No
City Council	18	4	22%	Leland Cheung	No
				Timothy	No

## History of Ranked Choice Voting in Cambridge, MA

Voters in Cambridge, MA adopted RCV to elect the School Committee and City Council in 1940; and, first used RCV in the 1941 municipal elections.

Cambridge uses ranked choice voting in at-large districts, where candidates must reach a threshold of votes and additional votes are redistributed to the voter's second choice. The threshold is determined by the number of ballots cast divided by the number of seats open + 1.

From 2010-2020, women won 35% of the 74 seats up for election. Women of color won 38% of the seats won by women, and 16% of seats overall.

2021 Case Study - New York City, NY

## Average and Peak Number of NYC Council Seats Held by Women Since 1939
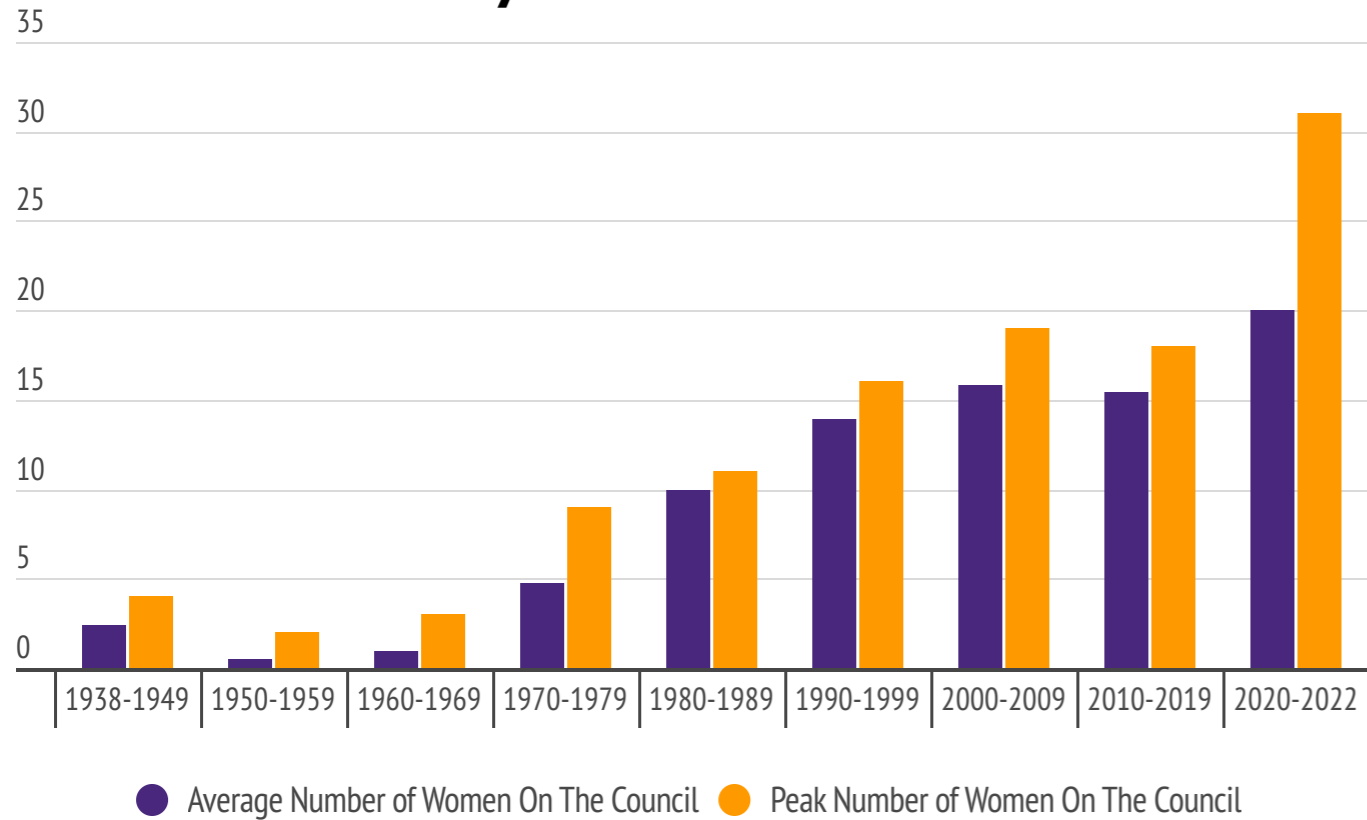
- ● Average Number of Women On The Council
- ● Peak Number of Women On The Council

NYC Council Gender Balance as of January 2022

- ● Women
- ● Men

In 2021, history was made when 31 women were elected to the New York City Council - the first time ever the council would have a women majority. Of those women, 25 are women of color. Twenty-six of those women won ranked choice election primaries.

Data true as of December 2022

NYC Women Mayoral Candidates From 1989-2021
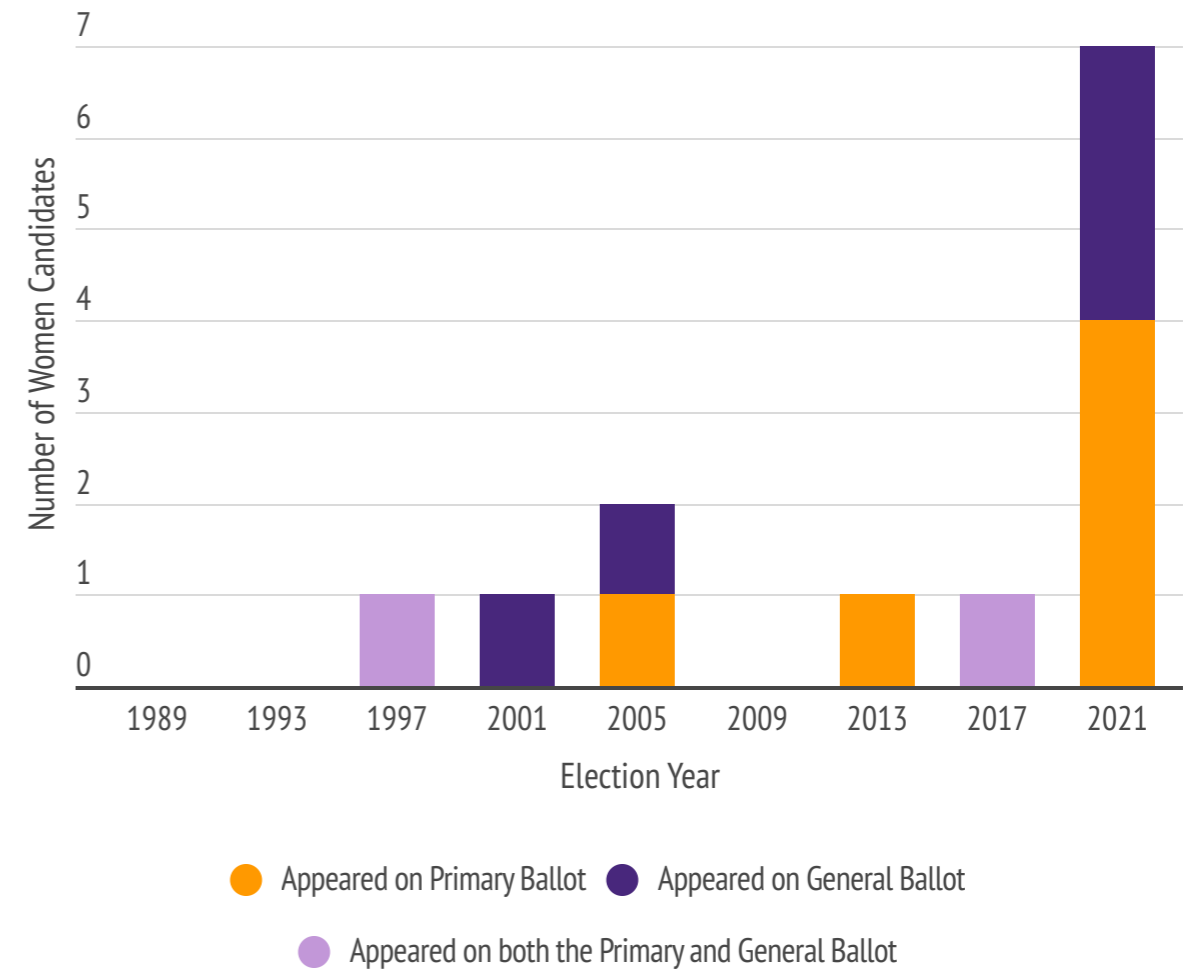
- ● Appeared on Primary Ballot
- ● Appeared on General Ballot
- ● Appeared on both the Primary and General Ballot

Since 1989, only 13 women have ever appeared on either a primary ballot or on the general ballot in NYC mayoral elections. Seven of those women (54%) ran in 2021. Two women - Kathryn Garcia and Maya Wiley - came within inches of winning the Democratic nomination and likely becoming the first ever woman mayor of NYC.

Post election, Maya Wiley published an opinion piece in The Washington Post titled, "Opinion: Maya Wiley: I lost the NYC mayoral race, but women and minorities win with ranked-choice voting"

2016 Case Study - Bay Area

Percentage of Women Winning Office, before and after RCV (up to 2016)
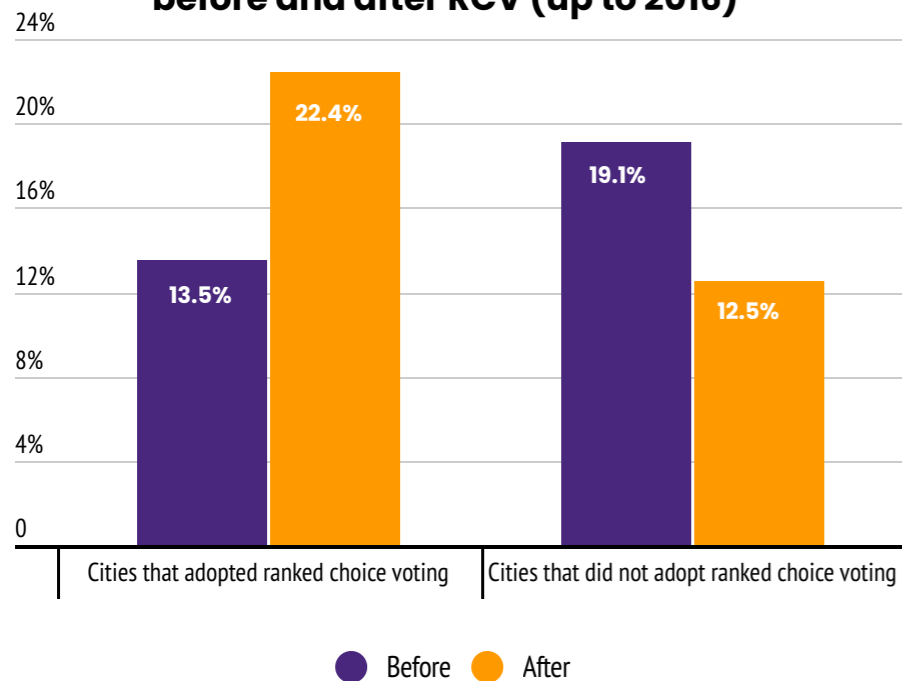

Before • After •

Percentage of Women of Color Winning Office, before and after RCV (up to 2016)

Before • After •
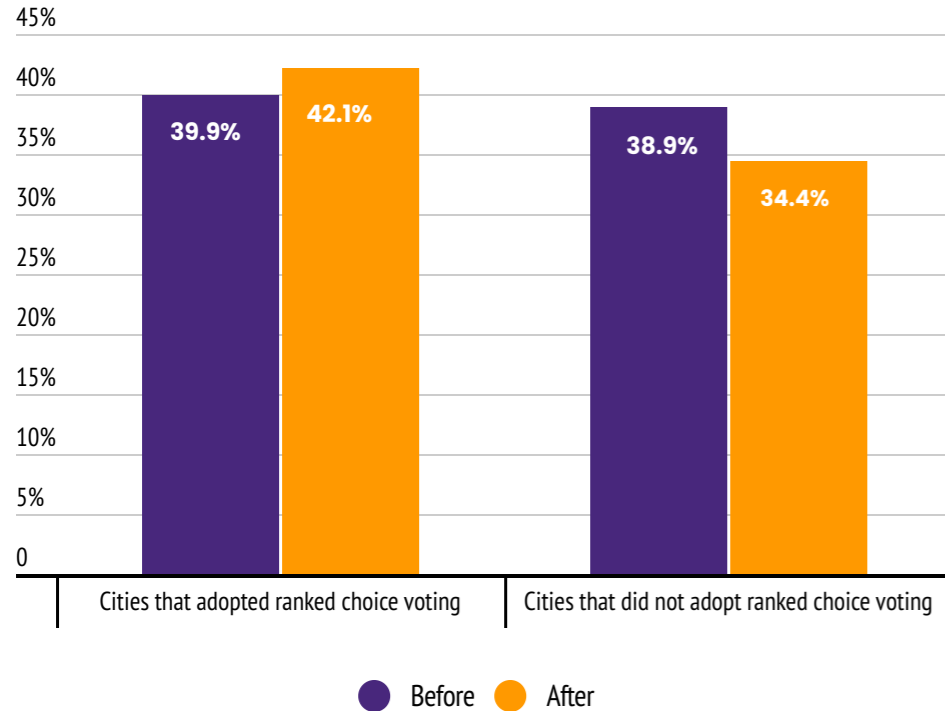
In 2016, RepresentWomen published a report on the use of ranked choice voting in four cities in the Bay Area - Berkeley, Oakland, San Francisco, and San Leandro. RCV was implemented in San Francisco in 2004 and 2010 for the other three cities.

As part of the report, they tested the impact of RCV by studying the percentage of women and women of color that won in those four cities compared to seven control cities in California. The time span of the elections the report studied was from 1995-2014.

Results from that report are reflected in the graphs to the left. As a key:

"Before" references the statistics for elections in the time span before RCV was implemented in the four test cities.

"After" references the statics for elections in the time span after RCV was implemented.

Percentage of Women and Women of Color In Office as of January 2022 (RCV vs Control Cities)

RCV Cities • Control Cities •
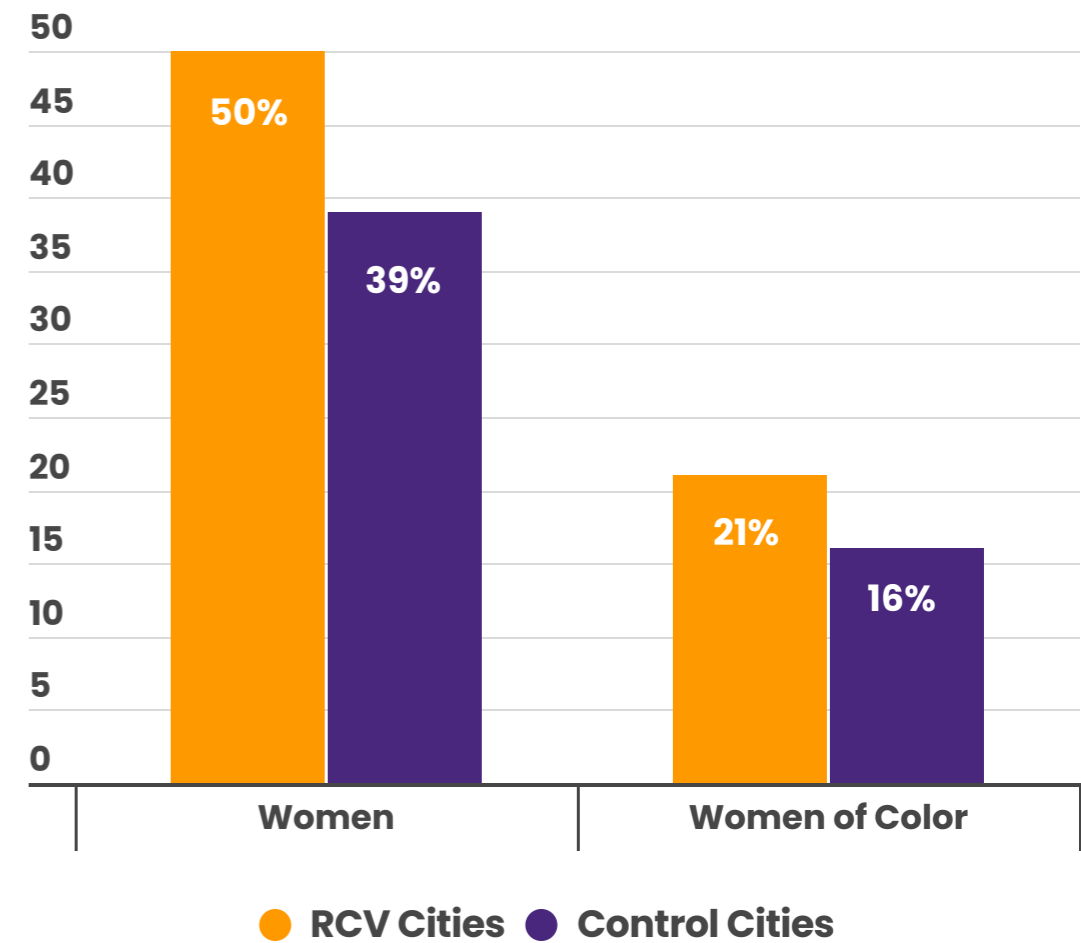
As of January 2022, RCV cities still have a higher percentage of women and women of color on their city councils.

Also true as of January 2022, of the four RCV cities, 3 (75%) have women mayors. Of the seven control cities, only 2 (28.6%) have women mayors.

Data true as of December 2022

Case Study - Utah

In 2021, 23 cities in Utah opted into a pilot program to use ranked choice voting for local elections. Of the 23, 20 actually held ranked choice elections (elections with 3+ candidates) with 19 cities using the system for the first time.

Women made up 32.5% of the candidates that ran to fill 46 seats that had races that used ranked choice voting (had 3+ candidates). Women won 37% of all RCV seats, but when looking at only the races that had women candidates, women won **46%** of them. **67%** (4 of 6) of mayoral seats that were contested by women were won by women.

Gender Breakdown of All RCV Seats Contested by Women (2021)

Women 46.00%

Men 54.00%
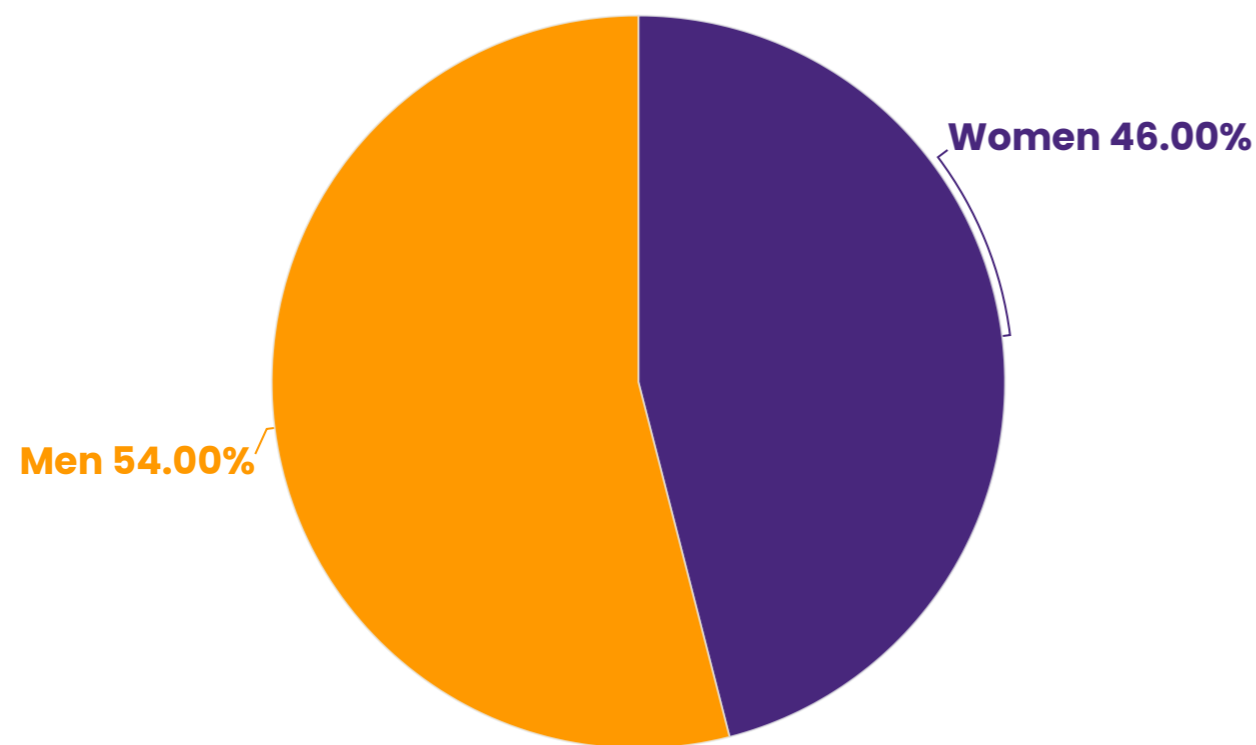
Winners of Mayoral Races Contested By Women(2021)

Men 33.00%

Women 67.00%
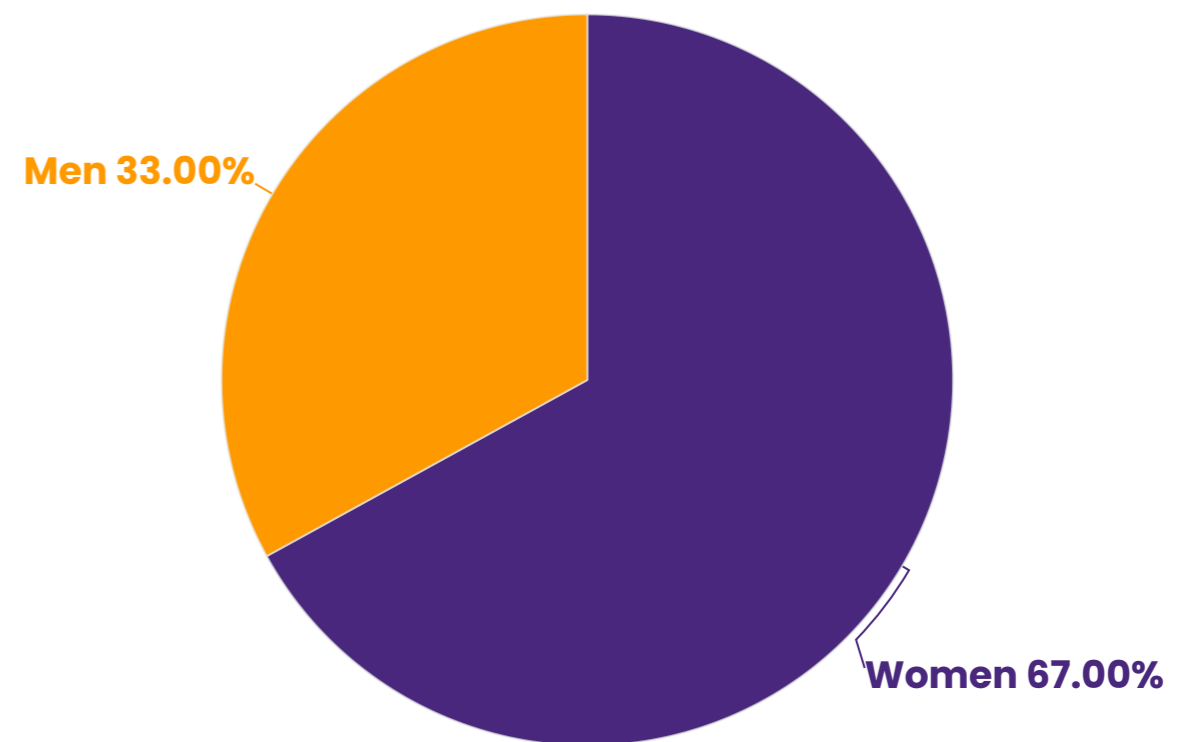
Of the 17 Utah cities that held RCV elections for their city councils, women make up 40% of their city councils.

Data true as of December 2022

Mar 2024_ MD SB0493 RepresentWomen Pro-RCV Testimo

Uploaded by: Alissa Bombardier Shaw

Position: FAV

March 01, 2024

Dear Maryland General Assembly,

I am writing to express my support of SB0493, Elections – Ranked–Choice Voting – Contests for Presidential Nomination in 2028. The organization I direct, RepresentWomen, tracks outcomes for women in jurisdictions with ranked choice voting as part of our mission to support solutions to address the barriers women face in politics.

Our research finds that women have better opportunities to run in and win RCV elections. More women can run for office in RCV elections because, without fear of splitting the vote, there is greater support for women candidates to run. Additionally, campaigns tend to be more civil and more issue-focused, which appeals to women candidates and provides greater incentive for them to run. We also find that when voters have the ability to express their true preferences rather than vote strategically, more women win as a result.

Women hold 53% of city council seats in jurisdictions with ranked choice voting and 12 out of the 32 mayoral seats elected with RCV. Janet Mills, governor of Maine, won the primary with RCV, and of course, Senator Lisa Murkowski and Representative Mary Peltola were elected using RCV in Alaska.

Here are a few of our resources that may be of interest:

- a memo on ranked choice voting & women's representation
- a dashboard on ranked choice voting stats
- a toolkit with additional RCV materials

We also released a report in February 2024, Breaking Barriers for Black Women Candidates, that discusses how ranked choice voting creates more opportunities for Black women to run and win.

Please support SB0493 to institute the use of ranked-choice voting in the 2028 statewide primary election for the office of President of the United States.

Many thanks,

Cynthia Richie Terrell
Executive Director, RepresentWomen

Brittany Stalsburg | Rina Shah Bharara | Onida Coward Mayers | Dania Korkor | Jenifer Rajkumar
Amalia Perez | Mehrnaz Teymourian | Susannah Wellford | Michelle Whittaker | Marie Wilson

SB0493_Ranked_Choice_Voting_MLC_FAV.pdf
Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV

MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE COALITION

TESTIMONY FOR SB0493
Elections – Ranked Choice Voting
Contests for Presidential Nomination in 2028

Bill Sponsor: Senator Kagan
Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition
Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair
Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0493 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our Coalition agrees with Get Money Out–Maryland (GMOM), an all-volunteer force seeking to get big money out of our political system and make elections fairer. GMOM has determined that by requiring a majority of votes cast to win public office – rather than the current system, in which a winner may have only a plurality – ranked choice voting might help build support for officeholders.

Ranked choice voting has been used for state primary, congressional, and presidential elections in Alaska and Maine. San Francisco's experience suggests that ranked choice voting can enhance public engagement.

According to GMOM, the current election system often prevents voters from choosing their preferred candidate for fear of "splitting the vote" among those who generally support the same ideology and policies, and thus allowing a candidate they oppose to win the race. Ranked choice voting could reduce this "spoiler" effect. It would also give candidates an incentive to avoid negative campaigning. Instead of bashing an opponent, a candidate would be more inclined to court that opponent's supporters in hopes of garnering their second-choice votes.

In addition to helping to get great bills like SB0493 passed, MLC's mission is to inform voters about such legislation and their legislators. We would like to see our efforts enhanced by the benefits of ranked-choice voting.

Therefore, we support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

GMOM

Get Money Out – Maryland

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 493 - ELECTIONS –
RANKED–CHOICE VOTING –
CONTESTS FOR PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION IN 2028
March 4, 2024
By Charlie Cooper, President**

Get Money Out–Maryland is an all-volunteer force seeking to get big money out of our political system and make elections fairer. We believe that every citizen should have equal access to the ballot as a voter or as a candidate. District lines should be fair to every voter, regardless of race, ethnicity, or party affiliation. The corruption of big money in politics must be eliminated, and the disproportionate influence of concentrated wealth reduced.

The current winner-take-all system can under certain circumstances fan the flames of division among the electorate. Given the rancor in our national politics, it is critical that we evaluate reforms that might nurture a culture of consensus. We believe that the bitterness we are experiencing is exacerbated by the impact of big money in our elections, which creates huge obstacles to enacting legislation in Congress that benefits the vast majority of working individuals and families.

Adopted in states and communities across the country, ranked choice voting has been chosen for state primary, congressional, and presidential elections in <u>Alaska</u> and <u>Maine</u>. SB 493 offers a chance for Maryland to take a deliberate and systematic approach to evaluating the ranked-choice methodology in the 2028 presidential primary election to evaluate how it changes candidates' appeals to voters. We hope it would give candidates an incentive to avoid negative campaigning. Instead of bashing an opponent, a candidate would be more inclined to court that opponent's supporters in hopes of garnering their second-choice votes.

The current election system often prevents voters from choosing their preferred candidate for fear of "splitting the vote" among those who generally support the same ideology and policies, and thus allowing a candidate they oppose to win the race. Ranked choice voting might also reduce this "spoiler" effect.

By assigning an order to favored candidates, voters would have a greater sense that their votes impact election outcomes. And when a majority of votes cast is needed to win, rather than the current winner-take-all system, they would feel part of a more truly representative system.

We urge the EEE Committee to issue a favorable report for SB 493.

Takoma Park 2024 - SB 493 FAV - Ranked–Choice Voti

Uploaded by: Cindy Dyballa

Position: FAV

CITY TAKOMA OF PARK
MARYLAND

<u>Support Senate Bill 493</u> – Elections – Ranked–Choice Voting – Contests for Presidential Nomination in 2028
Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
March 1, 2024

The City of Takoma Park supports and urges favorable consideration of this bill, which establishes a ranked choice voting system as a pilot for the 2028 Presidential party primaries in Maryland.

The City of Takoma Park is a densely developed, largely residential municipality of almost 18,000 people living within 2.4 square miles in Montgomery County. About half our residents are homeowners and half renters, with a wide range of incomes, backgrounds and ethnicities.

Takoma Park has implemented ranked choice voting (RCV) with great success in every municipal election since 2007. RCV was passed by the city council as an amendment to the City Charter in 2006 after an 83% vote of approval by voters in a 2005 advisory ballot question. Our residents have embraced this approach, which allows several rounds of counting ballots if on the first round no one candidate receives more than 50% of the vote for an office. Before each election, and as part of election outreach, the RCV system is explained so voters are prepared when they actually vote their ballot.

RCV allows for a fuller expression of voter preferences. Ranking additional candidates will never hurt a voter's first choice, but it may help that voter's second choice. It allows the winning candidate to feel confident they have the backing of a majority of the voters, an especially important consideration in a primary election. And at the municipal level, it saves the expense and delay of organizing a separate election to determine the ultimate winner.

While our local experience with ranked choice voting has been positive, this bill allows the State Board of Elections to in essence pilot this approach and survey voters afterward to gauge their satisfaction with the system.

In sum, the City of Takoma Park supports bill 493 and urges a favorable committee vote.

SB493 Deb Otis testimony - SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Deb Otis

Position: FAV

Testimony from:
Deb Otis

In SUPPORT of SB 493

March 1, 2024

Maryland Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express FairVote Action's support for SB 493 regarding ranked choice voting in presidential primary elections. Ranked choice voting will: (1) help parties nominate more consistently viable candidates; (2) accommodate voters having more choices on their ballots; (3) promote more positive, issues-focused campaigns; and 4) minimize "wasted votes" in presidential primaries when candidates withdraw from the race.

FairVote Action is a national nonpartisan organization that educates and advocates for electoral system reforms that improve our elections. We are seen as a leading national resource on ranked choice voting (RCV). I am the Director of Policy and Research for FairVote Action and, as part of my job, I study the impacts of RCV in the places that use it.

Approximately 13 million voters in 50 jurisdictions across the U.S. use ranked choice voting (RCV). It has become the fastest-growing nonpartisan electoral reform in the country. We support adoption of RCV in a variety of circumstances, but this testimony will focus on its benefits in presidential nominating contests.

RCV improves party nominations

By ensuring every vote counts, RCV would help political parties award their delegates to the candidate with the strongest support in Maryland. RCV works well in presidential primaries that award delegates to multiple candidates (like Democratic presidential primaries) and those that award all delegates to a single candidate (like most Republican presidential primaries).

In primaries where a single candidate earns all delegates, tabulation matches the standard "instant runoff" tabulation. If there is no majority winner after counting each ballot for its first choice candidate, the candidate in last place is eliminated and those ballots transfer to their next-highest-ranked candidate. This continues until one candidate wins with a majority of votes. In winner-take-all contests, the winning candidate earns all delegates according to party rules.

In primaries where multiple candidates can earn delegates, tabulation matches the above with one exception. Instead of ending when a candidate achieves a majority, tabulation ends after all candidates below the threshold (typically 15%) have been eliminated. Then, all candidates over the threshold earn delegates in proportion to their vote share, following party rules.

In both cases, parties benefit from including the voices of more voters in the process.

RCV gives voters more choice

One of the most powerful aspects of RCV is that it offers voters greater choice, creating space for both voters and candidates to express a wide range of views. Single-choice elections put pressure on voters to vote "strategically" – picking the candidate they believe has the best chance of defeating their last choice, instead of picking someone they like. With RCV, voters can rank the candidates they like most in honest order of preference. If their favorite can't win, they won't accidentally help the candidate they like least – their vote will simply count for their next choice.

Voters may rank as many or as few candidates as they like but, in practice, most voters choose to use multiple rankings in order to express their full preferences.

Typically, 70% of voters choose to rank multiple candidates.[1] In highly competitive or highly publicized elections, the rate is even higher. For example, 89% of New York City voters ranked multiple candidates for mayor in 2021; of those who didn't rank, most said they only liked one candidate and didn't want to rank anyone else.

RCV prevents "wasted votes" in presidential primary elections

"Wasted votes" occur when a candidate's name appears on the ballot, but they drop out of the race before primary day. Early and mail-in voters are particularly at risk of wasted votes because many fill out their ballots a week or more ahead of the election, only to have their preferred candidate drop out of the race before ballots are counted.

In 2020, over three million votes were "wasted" on Democratic presidential primary candidates who had already withdrawn from the race, representing over 8% of total votes cast in the primaries.[2] In 2016, over 600,000 votes were wasted in the Republican presidential primaries.

States who held primaries just after major candidates withdrew from the race were hit hardest. FairVote's research found that early votes were more likely to be wasted in 2020.[3]

In Maryland, 65,000 Democrats in 2020 and 17,000 Republicans in 2016 were impacted.

RCV prevents votes from being wasted because voters can identify their backup choices. If their first-choice candidate drops out of the race, their ballot simply counts for their next choice, and their voice is still heard.

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[1] Data on Ranked Choice Voting. FairVote. (2024).
https://www.fairvote.org/data_on_rcv#research_ballotuse
[2] The Wasted Votes Wheel. FairVote. (2020). https://fairvote.org/the-wasted-votes-wheel/
[3] Early votes in Washington were more likely to be "wasted." FairVote. (2020).
https://fairvote.org/early_votes_in_washington_were_more_likely_to_be_wasted/

RCV has a track record of success in presidential primary elections

Five state Democratic parties used RCV for presidential primaries in 2020, including Kansas, Alaska, Wyoming, and Hawaii for all voters, and Nevada for early voters only. Voters in these states took advantage of the opportunity to rank multiple candidates, made very few ballot errors, and turned out in large numbers. In a year when nearly 3 million early voters in states without RCV cast ballots for presidential candidates who had already withdrawn by the time ballots were counted, RCV made more votes count.[4]

Additional research on RCV

Below is a compilation of other research results from RCV use, including uses apart from presidential primary elections.

- **Voters like and understand RCV**. Exit polling results find that voters in RCV cities overwhelmingly report that they like RCV and prefer it to their previous voting method.[5] Exit polling in Utah found that 81% of first-time RCV voters found it easy to use and 88% were satisfied with the method they used to cast their ballot.[6] The numbers are even higher in New York and Alaska. In New York City, 95% of poll respondents found the ballot simple and 77% want to keep using RCV.[7] In Alaska, 92% of voters said they received instructions on how to rank their choices and 79% said RCV was "simple."[8]
- **Voters also understand RCV** well, especially compared to other electoral reforms. Survey data shows that more voters understand RCV than the "top-two" systems used in California and Washington.[9] Researchers have found no evidence of racial or ethnic differences in understanding of RCV.[10] Voter support for RCV tends to increase over time, as voters get more chances to use it.[11]

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[4] Ranked Choice Voting in 2020 Presidential Primary Elections. FairVote. (2020). Available at https://www.fairvote.org/ranked_choice_voting_in_2020_presidential_primary_elections
[5] FairVote. 2023. Exit Surveys: Voters Love Ranked Choice Voting.
https://fairvote.org/report/exit-surveys-report-2023/
[6] Survey shows positive response to ranked choice voting. The Daily Herald. (2021).
https://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/2021/nov/18/survey-shows-ranked-choice-voting-got-positive-response-in-pilot-test/
[7] Rank the Vote NYC Releases Edison Research Exit Poll on the Election. Rank the Vote NYC. (2021).
http://readme.readmedia.com/RANK-THE-VOTE-NYC-RELEASES-EDISON-RESEARCH-EXIT-POLL-ON-THE-ELECTION/17989282?utm_source=newswire&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=media_pr_emails
[8] Alaska Exit Poll Results – New Election System. Patinkin Research Strategies. (2022).
https://alaskansforbetterelections.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Patinkin_Alaska_Exit_Poll.pdf
[9] 2014 Eagleton Poll California RCV Survey Results. FairVote. (2021).
https://www.fairvote.org/2014-survey-results.
[10] Self-Reported Understanding of Ranked-Choice Voting. Donovan, T., Tolbert, C. and Gracey, K. (2019), Social Science Quarterly, 100: 1768-1776. https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12651.
[11] The 2017 Municipal Election: An Analysis & Recommendations. Minneapolis City Council. (2018).
https://lims.minneapolismn.gov/Download/RCAV2/4684/2017-Municipal-Election-Report.pdf

- **RCV decreases negative campaigning** because candidates need to reach beyond a single base of voters – and talk to everyone in order to win. Sometimes, this means appealing to be the second or third choice of voters who support a different candidate as their first choice. Studies have found that candidates use more positive language in debates,[12] voters in RCV cities perceive less negativity compared to voters in non-RCV cities,[13,14] and newspaper articles in RCV cities are more positive than in non-RCV cities.[15]
- **RCV improves diversity.** Recent research has found that RCV tends to result in greater election rates for women and candidates of color.[16,17] A 2024 FairVote report also found that voters of color are more likely to rank multiple candidates on their ballots.[18] This has played out in practice in cities across the country – RCV elections helped lead to the first-ever majority-female City Council in New York City and and just its second Black Mayor the first all-female City Council in Las Cruces, New Mexico; the first Alaska Native member of Congress, and the first City Councils in Minneapolis and Salt Lake City that are majority people of color. In 2023, St. Paul elected an all-female city council; 90% of councilors are women of color.

In conclusion, the issue of RCV has come before the Maryland legislature in previous years. With so many more prominent examples of its impact and a greater understanding of how to administer RCV effectively, the evidence in its favor has never been stronger. Voters like RCV and engage with the ranked ballot. Parties can produce strong nominees with RCV. And implementation is a smooth process.[19,20]

[12] Effect of Instant Run-off Voting on Participation and Civility. McGinn, E. (2020). http://eamonmcginn.com.s3-website-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/papers/IRV_in_Minneapolis.pdf

[13] Socioeconomic and Demographic Perspectives on Ranked Choice Voting in the Bay Area. John, S. & Tolbert, C. (2015). https://fairvote.app.box.com/v/perspectives-on-rcv-bay-area

[14] Santa Fe Voters Support Ranked Choice Voting and Have High Confidence in City Elections.FairVote. (2018). https://fairvote.app.box.com/v/SantaFeExitReport

[15] Using Campaign Communications to Analyze Civility in Ranked Choice Voting Elections. Kropf, M. (2021). https://www.cogitatiopress.com/politicsandgovernance/article/view/4293

[16] In Ranked Choice Elections, Women Win, RCV in the United States: A Decade in Review. Represent Women. (2020). https://www.representwomen.org/research_voting_reforms.

[17] The alternative vote: Do changes in single-member voting systems affect descriptive representation of women and minorities? John, S., Smith, H., & Zack, E. (2018). https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0261379417304006

[18] Ranked Choice Voting Elections Benefit Candidates and Voters of Color: 2024 update. Otis, D. & Laverty, S. (2024) https://fairvote.org/report/communities-of-color-2024/

[19] Additional resources on RCV implementation are available from the Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center at www.RCVReources.org.

[20] Ranked Choice Voting in Practice: Implementation Considerations for Policymakers. NCSL. (2022). https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/ranked-choice-voting-in-practice-implementation-considerations-for-policymakers

FairVote Action is available to answer any other questions from the committee or provide additional data. FairVote Action can also advise the legislature as it deems fit and be a resource for RCV implementation. You can reach me at dotis@fairvoteaction.org and my FairVote Action colleagues at info@fairvoteaction.org.

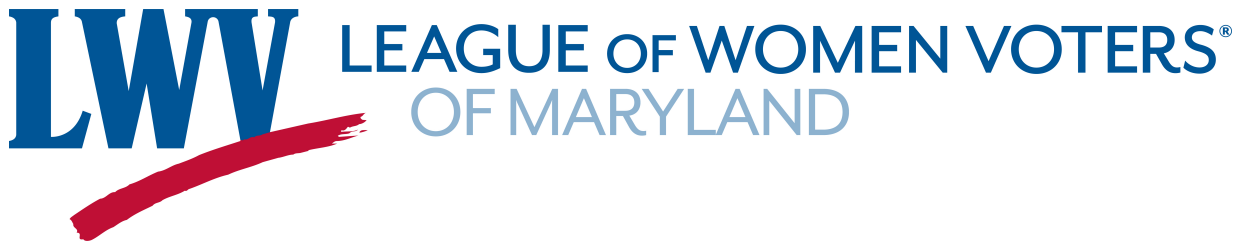Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Deb Otis

Director of Policy and Research at FairVote Action

3-4 SB 493 Elections - RCV - Contests for Presiden

Uploaded by: Jacqueline Coolidge

Position: FAV

The League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD) supports SB 493, which would establish the use of ranked-choice voting (RCV) for the presidential primary elections in 2028, along with an education campaign for voters and a survey-based assessment of voters' experiences to inform recommendations for the process in future elections.

The League was founded on the belief that voters play a critical role in a democracy. RCV maximizes that ability by ensuring that winning candidates have support from a majority of voters. The League of Women Voters of Maryland believes that it is important that election systems: 1) produce representation that reflects community sentiment; 2) help increase voter participation by encouraging a broader range of candidates and more civil campaigns and 3) are feasible to implement.

- RCV empowers voters because it allows them to vote for their true first-choice candidate without feeling as though they might be "wasting" their vote.
- RCV empowers elected officials because they have a stronger mandate and more accountability when they know they are supported by a majority (at least 50%) of voters.
- RCV encourages more civil, less negative campaigns because candidates need to appeal to their opponents' supporters for their second-choice votes.

For these reasons, the League supports the use of Ranked Choice Voting in general. We believe the use of RCV in the 2028 presidential primary, which we expect will be an open primary for both major political parties, will help ensure strong candidates who enjoy clear majority support within their parties, rather than candidates who have only garnered support from a plurality. We also believe the presidential primaries would be a good opportunity for voters to gain experience with RCV, and we would be happy to support the associated voter education campaigns throughout the state.

The LWVMD urges a favorable report on SB 493.

MD SB 493 testimony.JNBryan+12.March 4.2024.pdf

Uploaded by: Julia Nickles Bryan

Position: FAV

BILL: SB 493
CONCERNING: Elections, Ranked-Choice Voting, Contests for Presidential Nomination in 2028
POSITION: FAVORABLE
COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Hearing Date: March 4, 2024

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SB 493

We wish to express our support for SB 493 which would require the use of ranked-choice voting for the US Presidential Primaries in 2028.

We are business people, who live and work in Maryland, united in our concern about the ever deepening political divisions plaguing our communities. As Democrats, Republicans, and independents, we are Americans first, dedicated to supporting non-partisan structural reforms aimed at making our democracy work better.

Our current system of plurality voting isn't working. It fuels the toxicity we see in our elections, a discord that is undermining our democracy and civil society. As voters, because of plurality voting, we often feel our vote is wasted or that we must engage in strategic voting so as to avoid unintentionally benefitting the candidate we like least. And, under our current system, we are dismayed that our elected leaders often secure only a minority of support which both undermines their mandate and fails to reward them for their cooperative and bipartisan work.

Ranked Choice Voting is an election innovation that can address this fault in our system. We support its use in Presidential Primaries as it would:
- encourage civility in elections,
- empower voters to fully use their vote so as to elect leaders with a true mandate of majority support,
- incentivize elected leaders to be consensus builders, and
- broaden the diversity of elected candidates.

We applaud Senator Kagen for undertaking this reform effort. The election innovation enabled by SB 493 is one essential step our state can take to be part of the solution in strengthening our democracy.

We ask that the Education, Energy, and the Environment find this bill favorable.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Nickles Bryan, Baltimore
Luz Blancas Sekak, Chevy Chase
Cameron Denton, Baltimore
Michael J. Harper, Silver Spring
Staci Hartwell, National Harbor
Jessica Langerman, Chevy Chase
Susan Lee, North Bethesda
Tony Parchment, Kensington
Maxine Phillips, Annapolis
Meara Quinn Denton, Baltimore
Neal Simon, Potomac
Chad Sweet, Bethesda
Laura Urban, Baltimore

CLC Testimony re MD SB 493 3.1.24 (final).pdf

Uploaded by: Lata Nott

Position: FAV

Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Maryland Senate
March 1, 2024

Testimony of Campaign Legal Center in Support of Senate Bill 493

On behalf of Campaign Legal Center ("CLC"), we are pleased to offer this testimony in support of Senate Bill 493 ("SB 493"), which would adopt ranked choice voting for use in Maryland's 2028 presidential primary election.

CLC is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing democracy through law. Through its extensive work on redistricting and voting rights, CLC seeks to ensure that every United States resident receives fair representation at the federal, state, and local levels. As such, CLC has supported the adoption of reforms that promote equitable representation, including state-level voting rights acts and ranked choice voting.

CLC strongly supports SB 493 because it will give voters across the state access to a widely used and sensible election reform with documented benefits for electoral participation and engagement. The use of RCV in presidential primaries is particularly beneficial to ensure that every voter's vote counts toward an active candidate on Election Day. SB 493 would protect Maryland voters and make sure their voices are heard in selecting candidates for the highest office in our democracy.

I.   The Civic Benefits of Ranked Choice Voting

Ranked choice voting ("RCV") makes a simple yet powerful change to how voters vote. Instead of selecting just one candidate in each race, RCV gives voters the power to rank candidates in order of preference: first choice, second choice, and so on.

In an election to select a single winner, the candidate with the majority of first-choice votes wins. If no candidate wins a majority of first-choice votes, the candidate who received the fewest first-choice votes is eliminated, and votes for that candidate are redistributed to the voter's next choice candidate. This process repeats until one candidate receives a majority of the votes and is declared the winner.[1]

Studies show that RCV has a number of beneficial effects.[2] For example, RCV's tabulation process ensures that no vote is wasted and every ballot counts: in any election requiring multiple rounds of tabulation, if a voter's first choice cannot win, then their vote still counts for their next choice among viable candidates. In this way, RCV frees voters to fully express their electoral preferences without the pressure to vote strategically or worry that their vote won't matter.

RCV also reduces negative campaigning and rewards candidates who run civil campaigns.[3] Traditional plurality voting, in contrast, incentivizes candidates to use negative tactics to ensure that they are the voters' only choice and that other candidate(s) are not. RCV rewards candidates who take a more positive approach, who balance their efforts to get first-choice votes without alienating other candidates' supporters who might list them as second or third choice.[4] RCV's ability to encourage more civil campaigns[5] can, in turn, reduce political polarization.[6]

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[1] Importantly, the steps required for RCV tabulation are carried out by election administrators, using voting systems and equipment specifically designed to run RCV elections—for voters, the process is as simple as ranking their preferred candidates.

[2] *See generally, e.g.*, Alexandra Copper & Ruth Greenwood, *The Civic Benefits of Ranked Choice Voting: Eight Ways Adopting Ranked Choice Voting Can Improve Voting and Elections*, Campaign Legal Center (Aug. 17, 2018), https://campaignlegal.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/CLC%20Issue%20Brief%20RCV%20PDF.pdf.

[3] *See id.* at 1-3 (collecting sources).

[4] *Id.* at 2.

[5] The capacity of RCV to foster civility is well documented. *See id.*; *see also, e.g.*, Sarah John & Andrew Douglas, *Candidate Civility and Voter Engagement in Seven Cities with Ranked Choice Voting*, NATIONAL CIVIL REVIEW 25, 26 (2017); Todd Donovan, Caroline Tolbert & Kellen Gracey, *Campaign Civility Under Preferential and Plurality Voting*, 42 ELECTORAL STUDIES 157, 159-60 (2016); Caroline Tolbert, *Experiments in Election Reform: Voter Perceptions of Campaigns Under Preferential and Plurality Voting*, Presented at Conference on Electoral Systems Reform, Stanford University, at 11-13 (Mar. 15-16, 2014); Todd Donovan, *Candidate Perceptions of Campaigns under Preferential and Plurality Voting*, Paper prepared for the workshop on Electoral Systems, Electoral Reform, and Implications for Democratic Performance, Stanford University, at 10 (Mar. 14-15, 2014); Robert Richie, *Instant Runoff Voting: What Mexico (and Others) Could Learn*, 3.3 ELECTION LAW JOURNAL 501, 504 (2004); Steven Hill & Robert Richie, *Success for Instant Runoff Voting in San Francisco*, NATIONAL CIVIC REVIEW 65, 66 (Spring 2005); Haley Smith, *Ranked Choice Voting and Participation: Impacts on Deliberative Engagement*, FairVote Civility Report #7, at 4 (Jun. 2016).

[6] Copper & Greenwood, *supra* note 2 at 6-7.

RCV likewise promotes majoritarian outcomes and ensures fair minority representation. In races for single-winner offices, RCV requires that the winning candidate get support from a majority of the electorate, ensuring the winner has broad community approval. At the same time, RCV encourages a greater number of candidates with more diverse views and backgrounds to run and have a chance to be elected.[7] Because RCV mitigates the so-called "spoiler effect," more candidates can run without fear of splitting votes with another likeminded candidate. Candidates from historically underrepresented communities with similar platforms, for example, need not worry about competing for voters and may, instead, all run for office and work together to ensure representation for the group. In this way, RCV's structure benefits minority candidates, including candidates of color and women, as numerous studies have confirmed.[8]

Recognizing these many benefits, more than fifty jurisdictions across the country—including 2 states, 3 counties, and 45 cities—have adopted RCV for use in some or all elections.[9] In total, approximately 13 million Americans across 24 states [10] —including presidential primary voters in at least 4 states[11]—rely on RCV to cast their ballot and express their voice in American democracy.

Moreover, experience proves that voters who use RCV both understand it and have confidence in its results. Surveys conducted in jurisdictions that use RCV consistently show that the vast majority of voters find RCV ballots easy to understand,[12] and are satisfied with RCV and want to continue using it.[13]

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[7] *Id.* at 5-6 (citing studies).

[8] *See, e.g.*, Cynthia R. Terrell, Courtney Lamendola & Maura Reilly, *Election Reform and Women's Representation: Ranked Choice Voting in the US*, 9 POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE 332-34, https://www.cogitatiopress.com/politicsandgovernance/article/view/3924/2154 (2021); Deb Otis & Nora Dell, *Ranked Choice Voting Elections Benefit Candidates and Voters of Color*, FairVote (2021), https://fairvote.org/report/report_rcv_benefits_candidates_and_voters_of_color/; Cynthia R. Terrell et al., *In Ranked Choice Elections, Women WIN: RCV in the United States: A Decade in Review*, RepresentWomen (July 2020), https://representwomen.app.box.com/s/9m839giwkro4wuhej2ponaytk98xqnzn.

[9] *See Ranked Choice Voting Information: Where Is Ranked Choice Voting Used?*, FairVote, https://fairvote.org/our-reforms/ranked-choice-voting-information/ (last visited Feb. 29, 2024).

[10] *Id.*

[11] *See Ranked Choice Voting in the 2024 Presidential Primaries*, FairVote, https://fairvote.org/ranked-choice-voting-in-2024-presidential-primaries/ (last visited Feb. 29, 2024).

[12] *See, e.g.*, Copper & Greenwood, *supra* note 2, at 10-11 (collecting sources); *see also, e.g.*, Deb Otis, *Exit Surveys: Voters Love Ranked Choice Voting*, FairVote (Nov. 16, 2023), https://fairvote.org/report/exit-surveys-report-2023/.

[13] *See, e.g.*, Copper & Greenwood, *supra* note 2, at 10-11 (collecting sources); Otis, *Exit Surveys*, *supra* note 12.

Evidence even shows that use of RCV can increase voter participation,[14] with increased turnout particularly pronounced among young voters.[15]

In short, the benefits of RCV to democracy are numerous.

II. SB 493 Brings the Benefits of RCV to Maryland's 2028 Presidential Primaries, and Beyond

SB 493 would expand the availability of RCV to Maryland voters, bringing its representational benefits to bear on Maryland's 2028 presidential primary election.

The benefits of RCV would be particularly pronounced in the context of Maryland's presidential primary elections. Maryland holds its presidential primaries well after Super Tuesday, which increases the risk that candidates withdraw from the race while Maryland voters are casting their ballots. In the 2020 Democratic primary, for example, 6% of Maryland voters cast their ballots early for candidates who subsequently dropped out before the State's primary;[16] nationally, more than 3 million votes—impacting roughly 9% of all voters—in the Democratic primary were wasted in this way.[17] Voters are effectively penalized for voting early.[18] By allowing voters to rank multiple candidates, however, RCV ensures that every voter can cast a ballot that will count for an active candidate on Election Day.[19]

In addition to adopting RCV for the 2028 presidential primary election, SB 493 would implement an education campaign to inform Maryland voters about RCV and a survey after the 2028 primary to gauge voters' satisfaction with RCV. The bill likewise requires the State Board of Elections to provide recommendations by January 2029 regarding the use of RCV in future elections, including reporting on any administrative or implementation challenges. These provisions will ensure that Maryland voters are fully informed about RCV and dispel any confusion to help voters cast their ballots

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[14] *See, e.g.*, Copper & Greenwood, *supra* note 2, at 9-10 (collecting sources).

[15] *See, e.g.*, Courtney L. Juelich & Joseph A. Coll, *Ranked Choice Voting and Youth Voter Turnout: The Roles of Campaign Civility and Candidate Contact*, 9 POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE 319, 329 (2021).

[16] *See Ranked Choice Voting in the 2024 Presidential Primaries*, FairVote, *supra* note 11.

[17] *See* Deb Otis, *Ranked Choice Voting in 2020 Presidential Primary Elections*, FairVote, at 3 (July 21, 2020), https://fairvote.app.box.com/s/nio79ymdmpiqjpqen241fbs07akk5smx. In 2016, almost 6% of Republican primary voters experienced the same issue. *Id.*

[18] *See Ranked Choice Voting: The Solution to the Presidential Primary Predicament*, Unite America Institute, at 3 (June 2020), https://docsend.com/view/jnu3d442irjgaagb.

[19] *See generally, e.g.*, Drew Johnson & Matthew Germer, *Ranking Presidents: How Ranked-Choice Voting Can Improve Presidential Primaries*, R Street Policy Study No. 271 (Dec. 2022), https://www.rstreet.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/FINAL_policy-study-no-271-R3.pdf (discussing the positive impact of RCV on Democratic and Republican primaries).

effectively.[20] The survey and recommendation provisions will further ensure that any future use of RCV in Maryland elections is deliberative and includes the input of voters and election administrators.

SB 493 thus would not only bring the benefits of RCV to Maryland's 2028 presidential primaries but would also empower voters to cast their RCV ballots effectively and provide key insights on the use of RCV in the Free State. For these reasons, we strongly support SB 493 and urge you to enact it.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Alexandra Copper

Alexandra Copper, Legal Counsel
Michael Ortega, Legal Fellow
Aseem Mulji, Legal Counsel
CAMPAIGN LEGAL CENTER
1101 14th St. NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20005

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[20] *See, e.g.*, Cheryl Boudreau, Jonathan Colner & Scott MacKenzie, *Ranked-Choice Voting and Political Expression: Voter Guides Narrow the Gap between Informed and Uninformed Citizens*, New America (Mar. 1, 2021), https://www.newamerica.org/political-reform/reports/ranked-choice-voting-and-political-expression/; Victoria Shineman, *Ranking for the First Time: Evidence that Voting in a Ranked Choice Vote (RCV) Election Causes People to Increase their Positive Evaluations of RCV* (working paper; Jan. 12, 2021), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3764853.

HB122F and SB1052.pdf

Uploaded by: Maryann Judy

Position: FAV

Please let it be know that as a member of the Election Integrity Group-Talbot County, I want to adamantly support <mark>House Bill 1222F</mark> as well as the <mark>Senate Bill 1052</mark>. It is imperative that our vote counts a citizen of both the United States and Maryland.

Thank you for representing We the People.

Maryann Judy

03_01_24_FAVORABLETestimony_SB493.pdf

Uploaded by: Owen Anderson

Position: FAV

1614 Park Grove Avenue   March 1, 2024
Catonsville, MD 21228

Testimony in Favor of SB 493
Elections – Ranked–Choice Voting – Contests for Presidential Nomination in 2028

I am submitting testimony in support of SB 493 because I believe that using RCV ballots ensures that nominees better reflect voters preferences, reduce wasted votes, incentive greater civility and encourage greater diversity of candidates. RCV ballots empower voters by giving them a greater voice in the selection process and strengthen democracy by solving several major problems encountered in our presidential primary process. These problems include:

1) Toxic presidential primary campaigns. In the current system if there are multiple candidates, a candidate could potentially win with just a fraction of eligible voters by appealing to their base. RCV ensures that nominees have support from a majority of the party. It incentivizes candidates to appeal to a broader audience of voters to earn their second or third choices in the ranking process. Because of this imperative, negative campaigning and toxic messaging are discouraged.
2) Wasted votes. Early voting and rapidly changing candidate fields can result in votes wasted on candidates who are no longer viable. This is especially a problem for the military, residents living overseas, and other early voters. With RCV, if a voter's first choice drops out or is not viable their next highest-ranked candidate vote will be counted.
3) Fear of "splitting the vote". Candidates of color often fear splitting the vote when they run against opponents of the same race or ethnicity. Candidates of color are not penalized by unintentionally dividing community support.

RCV is already being used all across the country, including in Maryland, in a wide range of jurisdictions. This election reform is not new.
- Voters in 24 cities and counties – home to 10 million people – used RCV in 2023.
- Across those 24 jurisdictions, voters used RCV in 70 elections.
- Voters in seven cities voted voted in favor of preserving, adopting, or expanding RCV
- Six states passed RCV legislation.

By 2020 Democratic primary voters in Alaska, Hawaii, Kansas, and Wyoming used RCV. Additionally, RCV was used by the Virginia Republican Party to select their nominees for statewide office and select congressional districts in 2021. RCV remains the fastest-growing nonpartisan election reform in the nation. Maryland can continue to lead this movement by passing enabling legislation for the adoption of RCV for elections at every level, including presidential primaries. Passing SB493 will be an important step in empowering voters in our electoral process. I hope that you will support this bill.

Thank you for your consideration,
Owen Anderson

Testimony in support of SB0493.pdf

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

3/04/2024

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#/0493 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Elections – Ranked–Choice Voting – Contests for Presidential Nomination in 2028

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB#/0493, Elections – Ranked–Choice Voting – Contests for Presidential Nomination in 2028

This bill, it must be stressed, is to implement a program in 2028, thus will have no effect on the election this year.

The organization RankedVote has evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of a ranked choice voting system. [1]The advantages of Ranked Choice Voting include:
  1) Determines the candidate with the strongest support
  2) Encourages civil campaigning
  3) Reduces wasted votes
  4) Eliminates the need for multiple elections.

While it may add some complexity to voting, a vigorous education campaign by the state and voter interest groups will negate that critique. Since ranked choice voting will eliminate the need for runoff elections with attendant costs for managing that process it will save money. There is no partisan advantage, rather it promotes candidates who will appeal to the broad spectrum of voters without identification with the more radical elements of a specific party. "Democracy's legitimacy and strength derive from two key concepts: consent of the governed and majority rule. Ranked choice voting is an approach that makes it more likely that the majority's voice is heard." While reporting of the results might face a short delay the candidate who comes out of the process is truly the choice of the majority of voters.

Ranked choice voting is being used in Alaska and Maine to great effect. Maryland should join in the implementation of this system to force candidates to appeal to all voters and not just their base. It enhances voters picking their representatives and not representatives picking their voters.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#/0493

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[1] https://www.rankedvote.co/guides/understanding-ranked-choice-voting/pros-and-cons-of-rcv

FINAL 2024 MD SB493 Testimony - Robert Melvin.docx

Uploaded by: Robert Melvin

Position: FAV

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Free Markets. Real Solutions.
www.rstreet.org

Testimony from:
Robert Melvin, Senior Manager, State Government Affairs for the Northeast Region, R Street Institute

Testimony in Support of MD SB 493, "Elections – Ranked-Choice Voting – Contests for President Nomination in 2028."

March 4, 2024

Maryland Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

Chairman Feldman and members of the committee,

My name is Robert Melvin, and I am the senior manager of state government affairs for the Northeast region for the R Street Institute. The R Street Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy research organization. Our mission is to engage in policy research and outreach to promote free markets and limited, effective government in many areas, including reforms that promote safe, secure and accessible elections. This is the reason our organization has a significant interest in SB 493.

Regarding voting reforms, the R Street Institute is a staunch supporter of legislation that enhances the experience of eligible voters while nurturing confidence in our electoral processes. Senate Bill 493, which would use ranked-choice voting (RCV) for the 2028 presidential primary election, is one such improvement.

In this system, voters are encouraged to list candidates based on personal preference. These rankings are then used to conduct an instant run-off election, where candidates are eliminated one at a time until one candidate obtains a majority of the votes. This system helps identify the candidate with the broadest appeal and amplifies voters' voices when choosing their elected officials. RCV allows voters to demonstrate support for more than one candidate, and they can be assured that even if their top-choice isn't the victor, they still had input on selecting the winner.[1]

The strongest feature of RCV, however, is the impact it has on the incentives of candidates. RCV encourages candidates to interact with more voters to increase their odds of being ranked above their competitors. On the other hand, plurality elections abet negative campaign tactics that focus on

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[1] Matthew Germer, "Restoring Losers' Consent: A Necessary Step to Stabilizing Our Democracy," *R Street Policy Study* No. 240, September 2021. https://www.rstreet.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Final-No.-240.pdf.

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appealing to a narrow, partisan base.[2] In effect, RCV presses candidates to appeal to a broader swath of the electorate.

The R Street Institute has thoroughly analyzed the use of RCV in presidential primary elections and found it specifically beneficial for voters in these contests.[3] During the normal progression of presidential primaries, candidates continue to appear on primary ballots in states even after dropping out of the race. Considering that Maryland tends to hold its presidential primary elections in the spring after many candidates have been eliminated, RCV would be particularly desirable for the state.

Unfortunately, misinformation has led some to believe that a new voting system could cause confusion for voters. Fortunately, our research has shown that voters are not confused by RCV and instead take advantage of the opportunity to rank candidates.[4] Most importantly, voters retain the ability to simply select only one contender if they do not desire to rank candidates. No one is disenfranchised by RCV. Perhaps this is why a majority of voters in Maryland strongly back instant-runoff elections.[5]

SB 493 would grant voters more power in presidential primary elections, encourage better behavior from candidates, and ensure broadly appealing winners. For these reasons, I strongly urge your support of SB 493.

Thank you,

Robert Melvin
Senior Manager, Government Affairs for the Northeast Region
R Street Institute
rmelvin@rstreet.org

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[2] Drew Johnson and Matthew Germer, "Ranking Presidents: How Ranked-Choice Voting Can Improve Presidential Primaries," *R Street Policy Study* No. 271, Dec. 7, 2022. https://www.rstreet.org/2022/12/07/ranking-presidents-how-ranked-choice-voting-can-improve-presidential-primaries.

[3] Johnson and Germer. https://www.rstreet.org/2022/12/07/ranking-presidents-how-ranked-choice-voting-can-improve-presidential-primaries.

[4] Matthew Germer, "An Analysis of Ranked Choice Voting in Maine," *R Street Shorts* No. 106, September 2021. https://www.rstreet.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Final-Short-106.pdf.

[5] School of Public Policy, "Six-in-Ten Favor Ranked Choice Voting in Federal Elections," University of Maryland, April 20, 2022. https://publicconsultation.org/united-states/six-in-ten-favor-ranked-choice-voting-in-federal-elections.

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SB493_RCV for MD_Favor.pdf

Uploaded by: Sarah Lynch

Position: FAV

8484 Georgia Ave, Suite 240
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Feb 28, 2024

Testimony in Favor of SB 493 Elections – Ranked–Choice Voting – Contests for Presidential Nomination in 2028

I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Ranked Choice Voting for MD Coalition, (www.RCVMD.org) a non-partisan non-profit organization registered in Maryland that is working across the state to promote the adoption of RCV at the local, county and state levels including in presidential primaries.

RCV for MD supports SB 493 because we believe that using RCV ballots ensures that nominees better reflect voters preferences, reduce wasted votes, incentive greater civility and encourage greater diversity of candidates. RCV ballots empower voters by giving them a greater voice in the selection process and strengthen democracy by solving several major problems encountered in our presidential primary process. They include:

1) Toxic presidential primary campaigns. In the current system if there are multiple candidates, a candidate could potentially win with just a fraction of eligible voters by appealing to their base. RCV ensures that nominees have support from a majority of the party. It incentivizes candidates to appeal to a broader audience of voters to earn their second or third choices in the ranking process. Because of this imperative, negative campaigning and toxic messaging are discouraged.

2) Wasted votes. Early voting and rapidly changing candidate fields can result in votes wasted on candidates who are no longer viable. This is especially a problem for the military, residents living overseas, and other early voters. With RCV, if a voter's first choice drops out or is not viable their next highest-ranked candidate vote will be counted.

3) Fear of "splitting the vote". Candidates of color often fear splitting the vote when they run against opponents of the same race or ethnicity. Candidates of color are not penalized by unintentionally dividing community support.

RCV is already being used all across the country including in Maryland, in a wide range of jurisdictions and is no longer a novel approach to electoral reform.

- Voters in 24 cities and counties – home to 10 million people – used RCV in 2023.
- Across those 24 jurisdictions, voters used RCV in 70 elections.
- Voters in seven cities voted voted in favor of preserving, adopting, or expanding RCV
- Six states passed RCV legislation.

By 2020 Democratic primary voters in Alaska, Hawaii, Kansas, and Wyoming used RCV. Additionally, RCV was used by the Virginia Republican Party to select their nominees for statewide office and select congressional districts in 2021.

As 2024 begins, there's no doubt that RCV is on the move. It remains the fastest-growing nonpartisan election reform in the nation. Maryland can be a leader in this movement by passing the enabling legislation for the adoption of RCV for elections at every level, including presidential primaries. Passing SB493 will be an important step in strengthening democracy and empowering voters to engage in our electoral process and make their voices heard. I hope that you will support this bill.

Thank you for your consideration
Michelle Whittaker, Advisor
RCV for Maryland

Ranked Choice Voting Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Sen. Cheryl Kagan

Position: FAV

CHERYL C. KAGAN
Legislative District 17
Montgomery County

———

Vice Chair
Education, Energy, and
the Environment Committee

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Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee

Joint Committee on Federal Relations

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Ranked Choice Voting for the 2028 Presidential Primary (SB493)
Senate Education, Energy, & the Environment Committee: March 4, 2024, 1:00pm

Our current "choose-one" election system frequently denies voters options and encourages negative campaigning. Strategic voting often prevails to avoid "wasting" votes on less competitive candidates. In primary elections, those who win with a plurality of votes perform worse in general elections than those who win with a majority – a phenomenon that is possible under the current system. Electoral reforms are needed to increase representation and enhance the integrity of the democratic process.

SB493 would implement Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) solely for the 2028 Presidential Primary Election. The State Board of Elections would create an educational campaign and share it (free of charge) with Local Boards of Elections. Political parties and individual candidates will also work to educate the public. A post-election report created by the SBE, due in January 2029, would include data on voter satisfaction; administrative or implementation challenges; any increased need to cure ballots; and recommendations for use in future elections.

RCV allows voters to select the candidates in order of preference. If a candidate receives more than half of the first choices, that person wins. If there is no majority winner after counting first choices, the race is decided by an "instant runoff." The candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and votes for that candidate are reallocated to the voter's number two choice. This process continues until one candidate earns majority support.

RCV empowers voters by fostering a system in which victory requires broad support. This motivates positive campaigning, encourages civility, and enhances cooperation among candidates. According to FairVote, this method also improves representation for underrepresented communities. When NYC implemented RCV in 2021, the mayoral primary election had the highest voter turnout in over 30 years.

Unlike other alternative voting systems, RCV is widely used and tested. Our neighbors in Arlington, Virginia have employed this system. Takoma Park, MD has been using it for nearly 20 years. This voting method is also used in Australia, Alaska, Maine, and many jurisdictions around the country.[1] RCV has been or will be used in Democratic Presidential Primaries in Alaska,

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[1] AK; Albany, CA; Arden, DE; Arlington, VA; Basalt, CO; Benton County, OR; Berkeley, CA; Bloomington, MN; Bluffdale, UT; Boulder, CO; Broomfield, CO; Burlington, VT; Cambridge, MA; Carbondale, CO; Corvallis, OR; Cottonwood Heights, UT; Draper City, UT; Easthampton, MA; Elk Ridge, UT; Genola, UT; Goshen, UT; Heber City, UT;

Hawaii, Kansas, Maine, Nevada, and Wyoming. In Republican Party elections or conventions, Virginia and Indiana have used this system. Pennsylvania, Delaware, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, and Oklahoma Democrats have used this method in Party elections or conventions. Both parties in Utah already use this system.

With nearly four years to prepare, education and implementation are feasible. The voting equipment currently used in all Maryland jurisdictions is RCV-capable and only needs compatible software upgrades to process ballots.

Now is the time to embrace RCV as many others already have. This voting system embodies the principles of fairness, inclusivity, and empowerment that lie at the heart of a vibrant democracy.

I urge a favorable report on SB493.

Las Cruces, NM; Lehi, UT; Magna, UT; Maine; Midvale, UT; Millcreek, UT; Minneapolis, MN; Minnetonka, MN; Moab, UT; New York City, NY; Newton, UT; Nibley, UT; Oakland, CA; Palm Desert, CA; Payson, UT; Portland, ME; River Heights, UT; Riverton, UT; Salt Lake City, UT; San Francisco, CA; San Leandro, CA; Sandy, UT; Santa Fe, NM; St. Louis Park, Minnesota; St. Paul, MN; South Salt Lake, UT; Springville, UT; Vineyard, UT; Woodland, UT

Sen. Kagan's RCV Presentation.pdf

Uploaded by: Sen. Cheryl Kagan

Position: FAV

What is Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)?

Instead of choosing just one candidate, RCV allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference (1st, 2nd, 3rd choices).

With RCV, if your 1st choice gets eliminated, your vote stays in play and rolls to your 2nd choice.

Arlington County, Virginia used Ranked Choice Voting for the first time in the 2023 Democratic Primary Election. This sample ballot educated voters about the process.

How are Votes Counted?

RANKED CHOICE VOTING: HOW IT WORKS   ROCK THE VOTE

1 VOTERS RANK THE CANDIDATES FIRST CHOICE TO LAST CHOICE
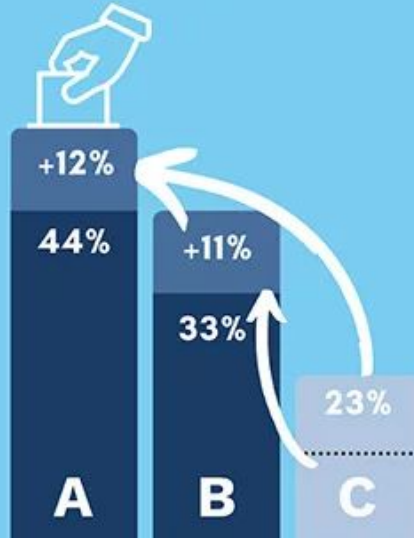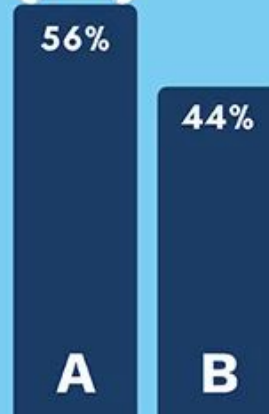
1 Candidate C
2 Candidate A
3 Candidate B

44% A
33% B
23% C

2 CANDIDATE C HAS THE FEWEST VOTES, SO 1ST CHOICE VOTES FOR CANDIDATE C WILL CHANGE TO VOTER'S 2ND CHOICE

+12%
44% A
+11%
33% B
23% C

3 CANDIDATE A HAS NOW WON, SINCE THEY HAVE OVER 50% OF THE VOTES

56% A
44% B

Why Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)?

RCV more accurately reflects voters' preferences, allowing them to show support for their next preferred candidate if their first choice does not have enough votes.

It is simple and intuitive to voters, and it's already used in many countries, states, and municipalities.

Mayor Alcalde	1st choice 1a opción	2nd choice 2a opción	3rd choice 3a opción	4th choice 4a opción
Seth Grimes	◯	◯	◯	◯
Talisha Searcy	◯	◯	◯	◯
Jarrett Smith	◯	◯	◯	◯
Write-in candidate/candidato autonominado	◯	◯	◯	◯

Council – Ward 4 Concejo – Distrito 4	1st choice 1a opción	2nd choice 2a opción
Terry Seamens	◯	◯
Write-in candidate/candidato autonominado	◯	◯

Example of an RCV Ballot in Takoma Park, Maryland (2022)

Ranked Choice Voting by State

Source: FairVote.org
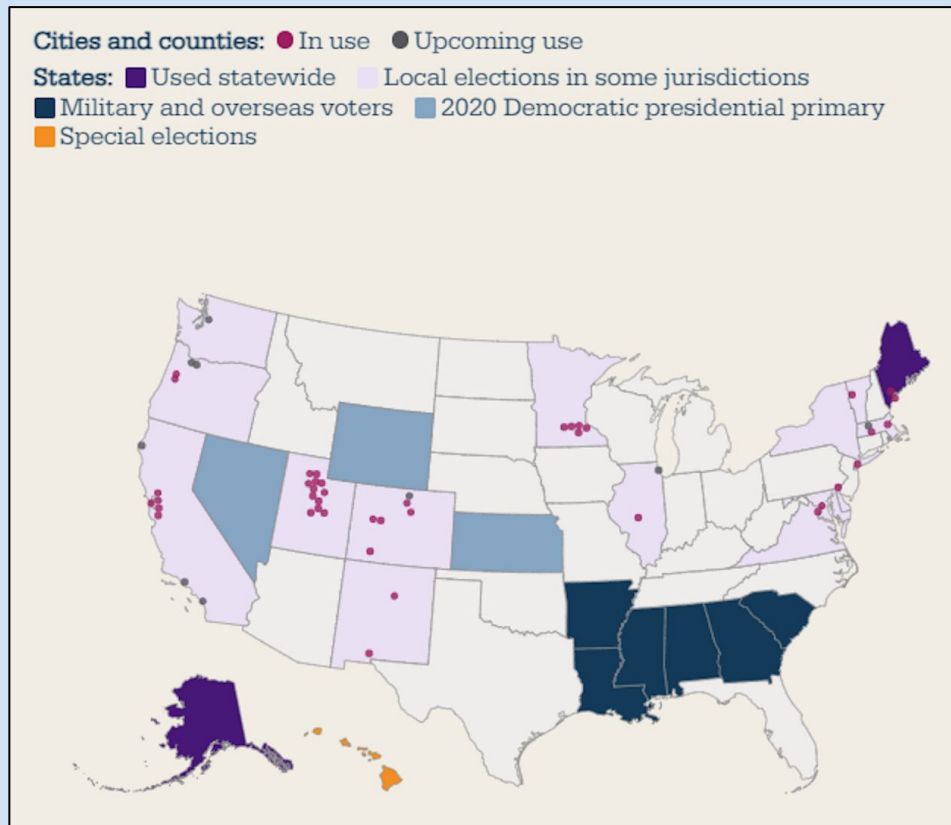
Ranked Choice Voting is used in…

- Australia (since 1918)
- Ireland (since the 1910s)
- Malta (since 1921)
- Scotland (since 2007)
- Maine (statewide!) (since 2018)
- Alaska (statewide!) (since 2022)
- Kansas, Nevada, Wyoming (since the 2020 primaries)
- UMBC (for Student Government Elections)
- Academy Award "Oscars" for Best Picture

Source: FairVote.org

2024 HB0423 NPR Article discussing pros and cons o

Uploaded by: Alan Lang

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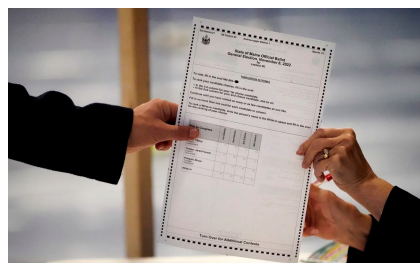
POLITICS

Ranked choice is 'the hot reform' in democracy. Here's what you should know about it

DECEMBER 13, 2023 · 5:00 AM ET

Miles Parks

8-Minute Listen   PLAYLIST   Download

A clerk hands a ballot to a voter on Election Day, Nov. 8, 2022, in Lewiston, Maine. The state is one of 50 American voting jurisdictions to have moved to a ranked choice voting system, and more places may follow next year.

Robert F. Bukaty/AP

Most Americans are worried about the state of U.S. democracy.

Polls over the past year have consistently found 80% or more of Americans are concerned or feel there's a threat to the U.S. democratic system.

That has many people searching for a solution. And lately one proposed reform seems to be rising to the top.

"Ranked choice voting is the hot reform," said Larry Jacobs, a political science professor at the University of Minnesota. "It's being driven by deep, almost existential panic about the demise of American democracy. People are looking around what's going to respond to this. And ranked choice voting is the 'it' reform at this moment."

Roughly 50 American voting jurisdictions — from small cities to states — have now moved to a ranked choice voting system, according to tracking by the advocacy group FairVote, and it's shaping up to be one of the political subplots of 2024.

This story is part of a series of reports on alternatives to how U.S. voters cast ballots and elect their political leaders. Click here for more NPR voting stories.

Advocates say ranked choice voting could help take some of the toxicity out of American politics while giving voters access to a broader swath of ideas. Skeptics worry it makes voting more confusing, which could especially harm voters from marginalized communities.

Here are answers to some commonly asked questions about ranked choice voting:

How does it work?

In an election that features more than two candidates, most voters are used to picking their favorite and moving on.

But in a ranked choice system, the voter has the opportunity to instead rank the candidates on the ballot from favorite to least favorite.

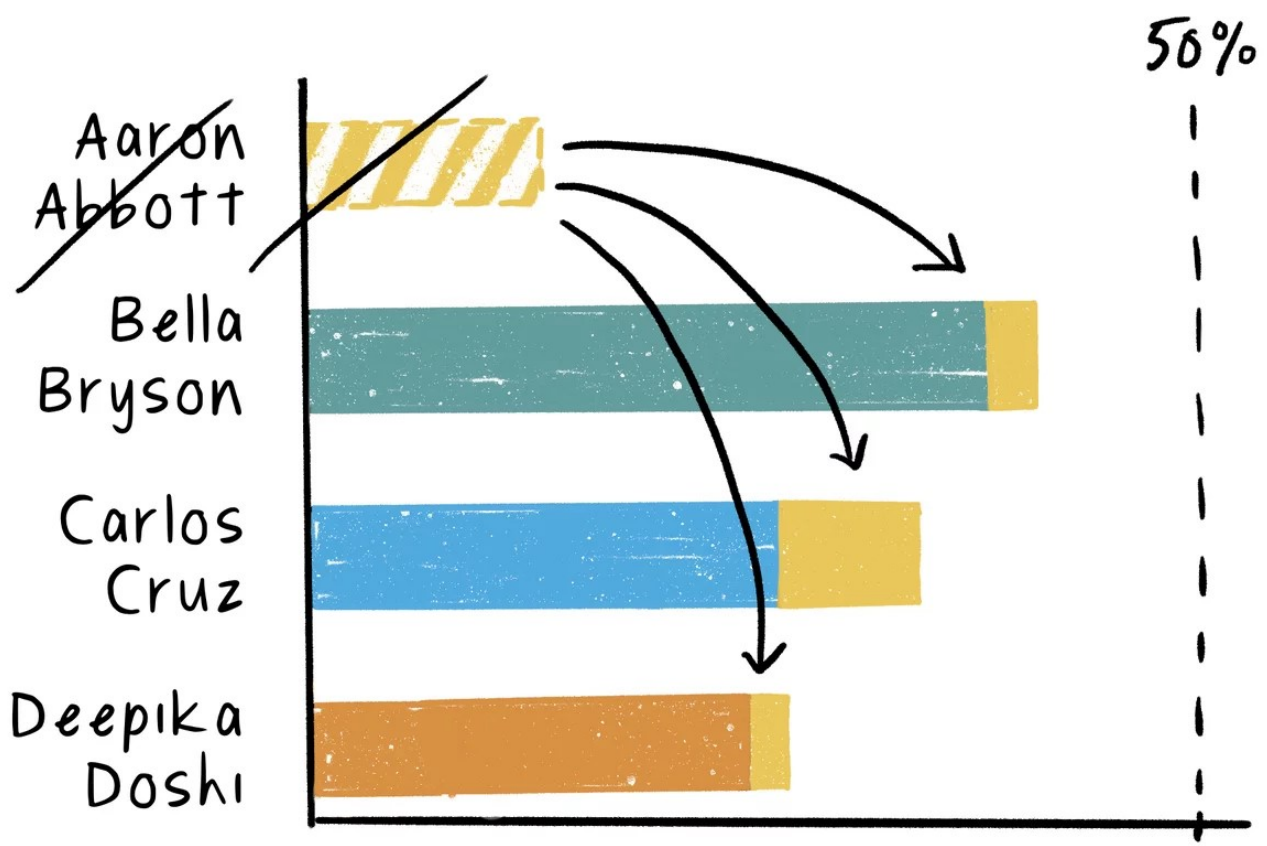*Connie Hanzhang Jin/NPR*

If one candidate has more than half of the first place votes, the election is over
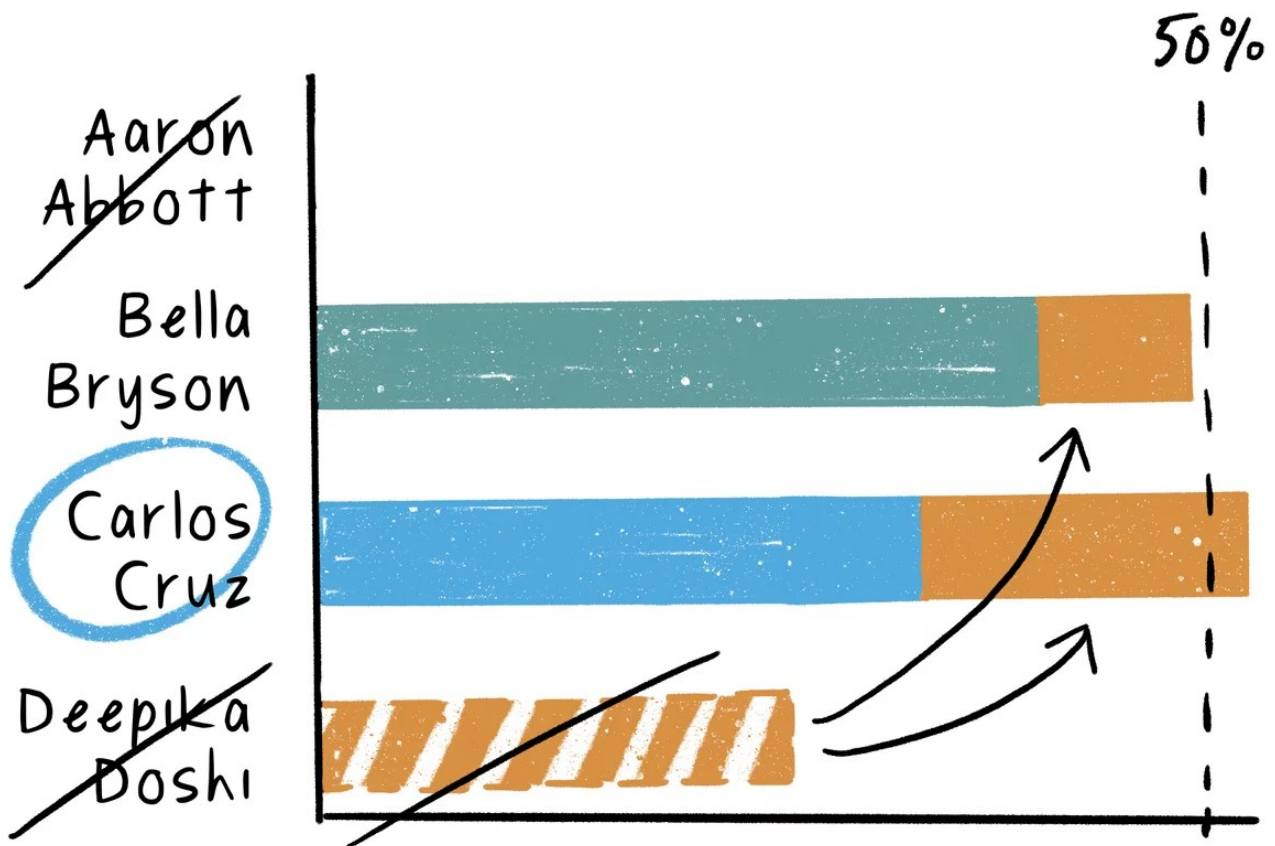
and that candidate wins.

Connie Hanzhang Jin/NPR

If not, then the candidate with the least votes is eliminated and that candidate's voters are moved to their second choice.

Connie Hanzhang Jin/NPR

That keeps going until someone gets majority support.

Connie Hanzhang Jin/NPR

How does this help democracy?

Advocates argue that the system incentivizes politicians to find middle ground in their districts, to try to be voters' second and third choices even if they initially like someone more. That should, in theory, lead to less ideologically extreme lawmakers.

"A lot of voters are frustrated with the status quo in politics, and this method is not a huge change," said Deb Otis, who oversees research and policy at FairVote. "But in the places that use it, it has brought positive impacts."

In Alaska last year, Otis says, the system worked.

Voters there approved a move to a ranked choice voting system in 2020, and the state used it in 2022 for its statewide races. Voters reelected Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski, who voted to impeach former President Donald Trump after the Jan. 6 insurrection.

"While similar Republicans — Republicans who maybe bucked their party or

appeared bipartisan or moderate like Liz Cheney — were getting knocked out in primaries," Otis said. "[Alaska voters] also elected Mary Peltola to the House, who is considered one of the most moderate Democrats in the House in a race that included a couple of real hardliners who would not be considered moderate by any definition."

Another benefit to ranked choice is allowing voters to voice their true preferences, as opposed to settling.

Take the presidential race. Generally there's a Democratic and a Republican, and whenever someone notable considers running as a third-party candidate, there's a huge amount of hand-wringing over whether it'll have the unintended consequence of helping one candidate or the other by siphoning off votes.

TRACKING THE ISSUES IN THE 2024 ELECTION

How the Republican presidential candidates view Jan. 6, democracy and voting issues
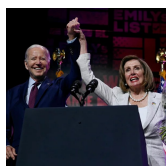
POLITICS

Democrats sound alarms over No Labels third-party bid

But in a ranked choice system, theoretically it should allow more candidates to run who represent a wider swath of viewpoints, since voters can feel free to support them without fear of inadvertently helping a candidate they *definitely* don't want to win.

In Alaska and Maine, currently the only states that will use ranked choice voting next year in 2024, even if there's a third-party challenger, Otis says voters will be able to just vote for who they want to be president, without trying to game the system.

"Neighbors won't be telling their neighbors, 'Oh, you're wasting your vote if you vote for so-and-so,' " Otis said. "If a legitimate third-party challenge happens this year, all of the other voters in all the other states are going to have a really hard time with that, trying to navigate what to do, trying to play the strategist and figure out how to make our votes most impactful without harming our own side."

Advocates also say ranked choice voting can replace costly and complicated runoff voting systems, like the ones in Georgia among other places, because a ranked choice system is its own form of contained runoff election.

Where is ranked choice voting happening?

Alaska and Maine are currently the only states to use ranked choice voting in statewide races, but more could soon join them.

Voters in Nevada will vote in 2024 on whether to approve a constitutional amendment that would bring the voting method to the state's congressional and state elections, after clearing the first hurdle to passage in last year's midterms. In Oregon, the legislature this year passed a law to bring the question of ranked choice voting to voters next year too. Ballot measures have also been proposed in other states.

Close to four dozen cities, notably including New York City, have now moved to the voting system for local races as well.

And while momentum toward ranked choice has heated up recently, it's not actually new. Cambridge, Mass., adopted the voting method for its city council elections in 1941, and San Francisco has been voting that way since the early 2000s.

"It tends to start around one or two cities and then a lot of other cities in that region opt in," Otis said. "The Bay Area of California is one of those where they've had new adoptions on the heels of success in San Francisco, Berkeley and Oakland. Minnesota is another area. Minneapolis and Saint Paul have had it for years, and then several new Minnesota cities have opted in just over the last four years."

But changing how elections work always brings pushback too.

Five states, all controlled by Republicans, have now banned ranked choice voting in the last two years: Tennessee, Florida, Idaho, Montana and South Dakota.

Resistance to the reform hasn't been strictly along party lines, Otis says, but lately conservatives have started to push back more forcefully.

"It's really regional," Otis said. "In Virginia, the Virginia Republican Party is leading the way on ranked choice voting. But then in Alaska, Republicans have come out against it. In Nevada, both parties opposed their ballot measure [in 2022]. In other places, we've had both parties supporting it."

Generally, ranked choice voting is thought to somewhat dilute the power of the two major political parties in the U.S.

What's the case against ranked choice voting?
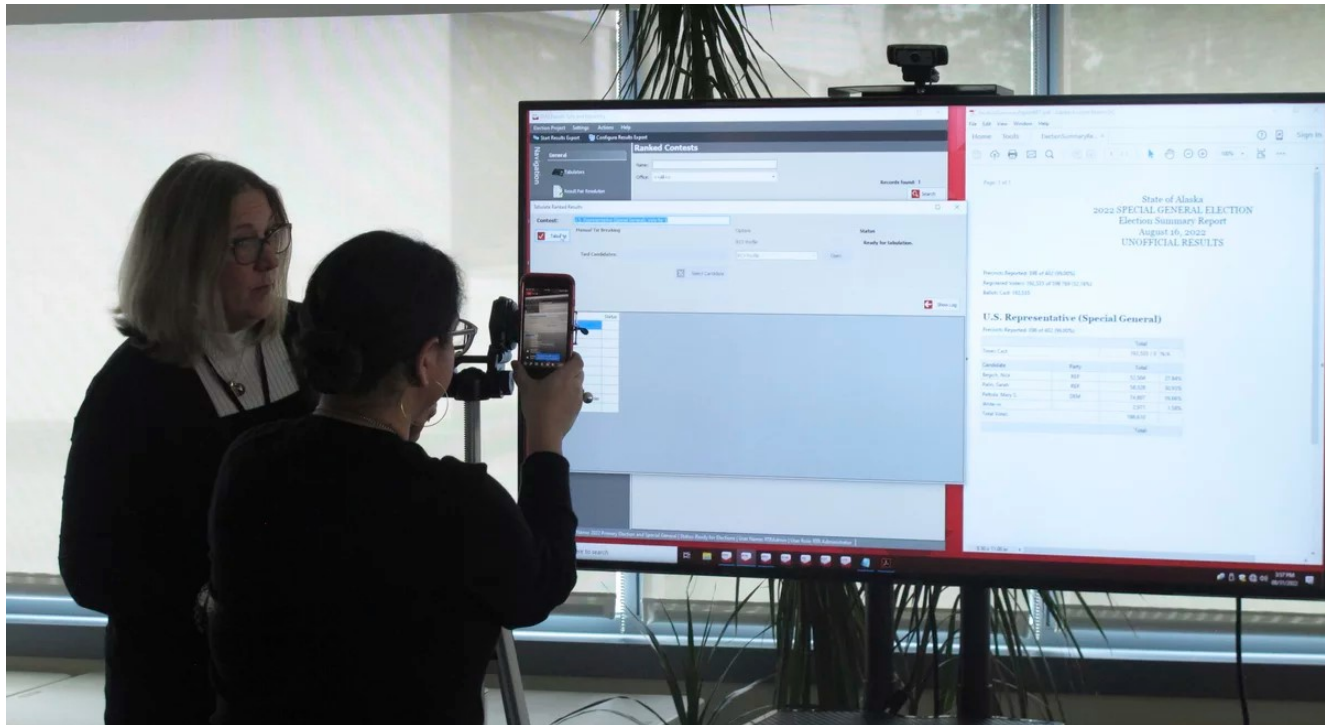
Alaska Division of Elections officials are shown during an Aug. 31, 2022, livestream of the results of a U.S. House special election. The contest won by Democrat Mary Peltola was the first statewide ranked choice vote election in Alaska under an initiative passed by voters in 2020.
Becky Bohrer/AP

Conservative groups like the Heritage Foundation and the Honest Elections Project argue that ranked choice voting is a way to "manipulate elections outcomes" as a way to "ensure left-leaning politicians get elected to office."

There's no evidence the voting system actually favors candidates from one political party over the other, however.

But Jason Snead, of the Honest Elections Project, also told NPR that ranked choice makes voting more confusing, which isn't what the U.S. needs at a time

when many voters are already sitting out of the democratic process.

"I think that we need to be careful about trying to address problems like divisiveness in politics by simply changing the system that we use to elect candidates," Snead said. "Many of the issues that we are experiencing, the bitterness and the division in our politics, are symptoms of other problems. And I don't know that we have to solve something at some sort of system level."

Even some experts who are more open-minded to the reform are skeptical it can bring about the sort of transformational change advocates promise.

Jacobs, of the University of Minnesota, co-wrote a paper poking holes in a number of claims ranked choice advocates have made about the voting system.

Most notably, he says, there isn't much evidence at this point that it decreases polarization. He does concede, though, it's possible the system just hasn't been in place long enough for the politics to change around it.

"We need some caution, because in America, we have a tendency going back a century or more to latch on to the new kind of quick fix to what ails us in our democracy," he said. "Some of those things have not worked out well."
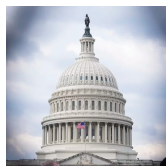
ELECTIONS

Many voters say Congress is broken. Could proportional representation fix it?

ELECTIONS

The U.S. has a 'primary problem,' say advocates who call for new election systems

He pointed to primary elections, which when they were first implemented were seen by advocates as a change to include more people in the decision-making process. They would take power away from party elites and put it into the hands of voters.

"Instead, what we see is, it tends to be a fairly small number [of voters participating]," Jacobs said. "They tend to be quite ideological, and not

representative of the people."

With ranked choice voting, "there's a logic to it that makes it almost irrefutable," Jacobs said.

But in practice, research has found that the voters who actually take advantage of the ranking opportunities tend to be white voters, and affluent voters with more education.

"So it's kind of continuing and appearing to multiply the disparities in our current democracy," Jacobs said. "We need to be clear when we say 'democracy' that we mean a system in which there is equal participation."

Andrea Benjamin, an expert on race and voting behavior at the University of Oklahoma, agrees. She's optimistic about the potential of ranked choice voting to improve representation in the U.S., but at the end of the day, any real transformative change to the political system will only come from higher voter turnout. You can change vote-tallying methods all you want, she said, but it's still just a snapshot of the most motivated sliver of the population.

"The only accountability mechanism is that we agree to turn out and that we agree to chime in," Benjamin said. "When we're talking about primaries [that have] 15, 12% turnout ... we are not keeping our end of the bargain."

voting stories

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———————————— ECONOMICS ————————————

SWITCHING IT UP

Ranked-choice voting and the quest to save democracy in the US

Who was AOC's first choice candidate?

Image: Reuters/Andrew Kelley

By Ephrat Livni Published July 31, 2019

Americans are accustomed to choice. We like options and equate them with freedom. Yet

when it comes to federal elections our system is remarkably rigid—you can only ever vote for one candidate for one position at a time.

There is an alternative approach, however. It's a notion called ranked-choice voting, or RCV, which is being adopted by counties nationwide, and which some 2020 Democratic presidential candidates support.

What is ranked-choice voting?

This method, also known as "instant-runoff voting," was invented around 1870 and has since been adopted by a handful of democracies across the world. Australia has used ranked-choice voting in its lower house elections since 1918. The system essentially allows voters to choose candidates in the order of their preference, and is meant to yield a winner who most pleases the most people.

Here's how it works. In ranked-choice voting elections, voters can—but do not have to—rank the candidates on the ballot in their order of preference. If a candidate wins a majority of first-preference votes, they win the race. If not, the candidate with the fewest first-preference votes is eliminated, and the second-choice votes of voters who preferred the eliminated candidate are allocated to those who remain in the race. This process continues until one candidate has a majority.

If it sounds confusing, that's because it is, at least a little. "This is one of those things I had thought, 'Nah, I don't think so. I don't think I understand this well enough,'" Massachusetts senator and Democratic presidential contender Elizabeth Warren said in a podcast with Vox's Ezra Klein in June. "And yet, I've started reading more of the data, working through more of the examples, and there's a lot to be said for it."

What's wrong with what we have?

Currently, in most US elections, voters have to choose twice, during party primaries, and in the final election. The process is expensive and unsatisfying to voters because it doesn't always end with someone who represents the majority.

Ultimately, voters choose between one of two or three candidates, a Democrat, a

Republican, and an Independent, if one runs. That means a winner could have a mere 34% of the vote and take the race, leaving a majority of the electorate—a whopping 66%—unhappy with their representative.

What are the advantages of ranked-choice voting?

Ranked-choice voting could ensure that a winner has the approval of a majority of voters by taking into account their preferences, apart from first choice. In this way, the problem of winning on a mere plurality is mitigated and public servants are chosen because they more truly reflect the electorate's desires.

It could also streamline the election process, making it less expensive, more efficient, and more fair. Primaries and runoffs are costly. Critics of the contemporary system say elections will work better if voters rank their choices on the ballot rather than being forced to go to the polls twice and ultimately vote for a party primary winner that they don't much care for.

Rather than holding primaries, political parties would list all eligible candidates on a single final ballot and allow a true consensus choice to emerge. Instant-runoff voting would also eliminate the need for runoffs in close elections, according to ranked-choice supporters.

While the ranked-choice voting system makes the process of determining a winner more complicated, the most important advantage of this approach, according to its proponents, is that it leads to better results.

Entrepreneur Andrew Yang, who is campaigning for the 2020 presidential race, argues that ranked-choice voting leads to more moderate representatives who better reflect voter preferences rather than rewarding ideological extremists. The system also prevents a "spoiler effect" in which a third (or fourth or fifth) candidate splits the vote of the most-popular candidates by making elections less of an either-or proposition. Yang also says it leads to less negative campaigning, stating on his website page devoted to ranked-choice voting, "Since each voter can potentially vote for a candidate as well as their opponent, candidates shy from negative campaigning that would alienate the supporters of other candidates, instead trying to appeal to those voters as their second or third choice."

This month, another presidential contender, New York senator Kirsten Gillibrand, at a Portsmouth, New Hampshire town hall also expressed her support for instant-runoff voting. She joined Yang, Colorado senator Michael Bennet, former Alaskan senator Mike Gravel, Vermont senator Bernie Sanders, and Massachusetts congressman Seth Moulton, all of whom support the ranked-choice approach.

What are the disadvantages of ranked-choice voting?

Opponents of ranked-choice voting contend that it is not a democratic approach and that it won't solve election problems. They say it will, in fact, create more of them. "Ranked-choice voting is the flavor of the day. And it will turn out to have a bitter taste," according to Gordon Weil, a former Maine state agency head and municipal selectman, writing in 2015 when voters in that state were mulling the system's adoption. "Its advocates want to replace real democracy, in which a majority picks the winner, with something akin to a game show method of selection. The result could be more like *Family Feud* than a decision about one of the most important choices people can make."

In a 2016 essay in Democracy, Simon Waxman argues that RCV doesn't actually lead to a candidate who represents the majority of voters. Also, an easily exhausted electorate doesn't always rank all the candidates on a ballot, according to a 2014 paper in the journal Electoral Studies that looked at ballots from 600,000 voters in California and Washington counties. As a result, some voters end up with their ballots eliminated and no say in the final outcome.

Say there were five names on a ballot and you only ranked three, who were all eliminated, your now-blank ballot wouldn't be counted in the final vote at all. You will not have expressed any choice about the two leading candidates.

Waxman contends that RCV is not a "solution." It may just be another complication, and of that we should be wary. He writes, "[T]here are reasons for skepticism when it comes to RCV—and not just RCV itself, but the larger notion that what is broken in American politics, and therefore what will fix it, is procedure."

Which US cities and states already use ranked-choice voting?

New York City voters will decide in November whether to adopt a ranked-choice voting system for municipal elections, thus eliminating runoff contests in crowded races. Four California regions already use the instant-runoff system; one county in Oregon has RCV; and municipalities in Colorado, Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Maryland, New Mexico, Utah, and Tennessee have all adopted the new voting system. Maine has approved instant-runoff voting in state and federal elections.

In 2018, after ballots were counted in Maine's second congressional district, Democrat Jared Golden trailed Republican incumbent Bruce Poliquin by about 2,000 votes. But with the ranked-choice voting system, Golden ultimately won by about 3,000 votes, picking up Democratic votes that initially went to independents Tiffany Bond and Will Hoar.

Correction: This post was updated to reflect the fact that many US municipalities, not counties, have adopted RCV.

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LIFESTYLE

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T.J. Maxx and thrift stores are siphoning shoppers from

2024 HB0423 Study showing ranked voting advantages

Uploaded by: Alan Lang

Position: UNF

Where's the evidence supporting Ranked Choice Voting Claims?

Penny Thomas
PhD candidate, Department of Political Science, University of Minnesota

Lawrence Jacobs
Professor, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota

April 2023

Reform to create Ranked Choice Voting reflects widespread disaffection with today's venomous politics dominated by angry ideologues. Change is a must.

But does Ranked Choice Voting deliver on its promises? America has a long history of passionate calls for change that failed to deliver. The evidence is all around us. Primary elections were introduced a century ago as a means to create a democracy that responds to "the people." Today, primary elections are driven by relatively small groups of activists devoted to agendas that often lack wide support.

We have carefully reviewed the track record of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) and it fails to support four of the advocates' promises for improvements over today's system.

#1 RCV claim: Reduce today's polarization of the political parties.

Claim: RCV predicts less partisan polarization as more moderates and independents run for office because voters no longer fear "wasting" their vote by casting a ballot for preferred candidates and allowing the election of extreme alternatives.

What have researchers found?

There is little research to support the proposition that RCV decreased polarization.

➢ A particularly sophisticated analysis found that RCV actually *increased* animosity among Democrats and Republicans compared to our current system.[1]

➢ A study of the 2020 election found that RCV elections were more open to new parties in Maine but that independent and third-party candidates still only received 6.6% of the vote.[2]

#2. RCV claim: Increase the diversity of elected government officials.

There is little support for this claim.

➢ RCV may have contributed to an increase in the number of candidates who are racial and ethnic minorities, but there is little evidence that they were more successful in winning office.[3]

➤ A study found a modest 2% increase in the number of women wining election to the city council in the Bay Area of California after the introduction of an RCV election, but this may have resulted from the increased recruitment of women candidates and a national trend of more women being elected to office.[4]

#3. RCV claim: Increased voter turnout and engagement of voters of color.

Claim: Advocates claim that RCV allows voters to choose among a wider range of candidates, which in turn improves voter engagement among those who previously didn't like any of the candidates.

There is little research to support that RCV increases voter engagement and turnout by voters of color and some evidence that it chases them away.

➤ A series of studies report that RCV *decreases turnout and the use of ranking opportunities* among African Americans.[5] Conversely, whites were more likely to report ranking a higher number of candidates.[6]

➤ Overall, analysts found no difference in turnout in cities using RCV compared to those using the current system.[7] They report errors, confusion, and lower turnout due to the greater complexity of RCV and its process of ranking candidates and tabulating multiple rounds of voting.[8]

#4. RCV claim: Decreased negative campaigning.

Claim: Candidates in a RCV system have an incentive to make positive appeals to voters for their second or third votes and steer away from alienating these voters who may list other candidates above them.

While some studies report that RCV reduced negative campaigning,[9] most research found little to no impact or even increased negativity.

➤ A study found only a 'slightly' more positive tone in newspaper articles in cities with RCV compared to those without it. But Twitter traffic was more negative in RCV cities.[10]

➤ A separate study reports increased negativity in Maine's RCV elections in 2018.[11]

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[1] Sean Fisher, Amber Lee, and Yptach Lelkes. 2021. "Electoral Systems and Political Attitudes: Experimental Evidence." Available at:
https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3803603
[2] Joseph Cerrone and Cynthia McClintock. 2021. "Ranked-Choice Voting, Runoff, and Democracy: Insights from Maine and Other U.S. States." Available at:
http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3769409

[3] David C. Kimball and Joseph Anthony. 2016. "Voter Participation with Ranked Choice Voting in the United States," *Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association;* Sarah John, Haley Smith, and Elizabeth Zack. 2018. "The alternative vote: Do changes in single-member voting systems affect descriptive representation of women and minorities?" *Electoral Studies* 54: 90-102.

[4] Cynthia Richie Terrell, Courtney Lamendola and Maura Reilly. 2021. "Election Reform and Women's Representation: Ranked Choice Voting in the U.S." Politics and Governance 9(2): 332–343.

[5] Jason A. McDaniel. 2016. "Writing the Rules to Rank the Candidates: Examining the Impact of Instant-Runoff Voting on Racial Group Turnout in San Francisco Mayoral Elections," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 38:387-408.

[6] Francis Neely, Corey Cook, and Lisel Blash. 2006. "An Assessment of Ranked-Choice Voting in the San Francisco 2005 Election." Daly City, CA: Public Research Institute, San Francisco State University.

[7] David C. Kimball and Joseph Anthony. 2016. "Voter Participation with Ranked Choice Voting in the United States," *Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association.*

[8] Craig M. Burnett and Vladimir Kogan. 2015. "Ballot (and Voter) 'Exhaustion' under Instant Runoff Voting: An Examination of Four Ranked-Choice Elections." *Electoral Studies* 37:41–49.

[9] Todd Donovan, Caroline Tolbert, and Kellen Gracey, 2016. "Campaign civility under preferential and plurality voting." *Electoral Studies* 42: 157-163.

[10] Martha Kropf. 2021. "Using Campaign Communications to Analyze Civility in Ranked Choice Voting Elections" *Politics and Governance* 9(2): 280–292.

[11] Jesse Clark. 2020. "Rank Deficiency? Analyzing the Costs and Benefits of Single-Winner Ranked-Choice Voting." Available at: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3703197

2024 SB0493 Testimony against 2024-03-04.pdf
Uploaded by: Alan Lang
Position: UNF

Testimony Against SB0493

Please vote against SB0493.

This bill would mandate ranked choice voting for President in the 2028 primary election for each political party as an experiment. Although not explicitly stated, it tasks the State Board of Elections to develop a voter education campaign about how to do ranked-choice voting prior to the election. However, it does not state how the ranked-choice voting should take place.

There are various methods. Should we assume that the State Board would decide which method to use? I dislike having appointed staff make that selection.

After the election, the bill tasks the State Board to survey the voters to gauge their satisfaction with the new voting process. The bill does not state how large a sample would be required and whether it would be purely random or require sampling x percent of the voters in each of the 24 jurisdictions or how many of each party would be selected. Again, surveys can be skewed to get the answers sought and the parameters should not be left to political appointees.

In other bills calling for this type of voting, if one does not rank every candidate, one's ballot is rejected. Also, unlike the MVP voting in baseball where the first place choice gets 5 points, the second place choice gets 3 points for second, and third choice gets 1 point, and the others get zero with the winner getting the most points, other bills calling for ranked-choice voting do not give any weighting to a first choice versus lesser ranked candidates.

Also, how would write-in candidates be handled with ranked choice voting as not all ballots would have a write-in choice to handle massive write-in situation as was done for President Biden in the New Hampshire primary?

Other bills have complicated algorithms to allocate votes to candidates until one receives a majority. We already have trust issues that the software correctly applies the voting in the current process.

Please vote against SB0493.

Alan Lang
242 Armstrong Lane
Pasadena, MD 21122
410-336-9745
Alanlang1@verizon.net

Testinony against RCV SB 493 .pdf

Uploaded by: Brigitta MULLICAN

Position: UNF

My name is Brigitta Mullican
Rockville, Maryland, LD-17 –   March 1, 2024

Please oppose SB 493, Ranked–Choice Voting – Contests for Presidential Nomination in 2028.

I believe rank-choice voting is too difficult to understand for the average voter, requires education and the purchase of new software, and takes away from more important issues.   It is unclear how recounts would happen with this new system. What assurance is there about how the machines will calculate the results?

My main objections to this bill are the costs associated with this unnecessary change to the rank choice voting (RCV) method and the complications of educating the voters about this system. It will require more time for each voter to complete their ballots, especially when there will be so many different candidates' names on the ballot. In Montgomery County, we had 29 candidates on a ballot including races for county executive, county council, judge of the circuit court, State's Attorney, clerk of the circuit court, register of wills, judge of orphans' court, sheriff, and members of the board of education. Imagine how much time it will take to complete a ballot with so many names to rank. Voters will simply not vote using RCV. How will recounts be handled?

In 2019 the fiscal and policy note produced by the Maryland Department of Legislative Services estimated the total 4-year cost of implementing Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) for Montgomery County was $1.8M and we know that cost estimates for legislation are routinely underestimated. We can use that money for better priorities. Why allow a waste of county money on something not needed when we have more pressing issues? This change would also require reprogramming the State BOE procedures and rewriting all the instructions.

Rank choice voting is confusing and will require the voter to spend more time to complete a complex ballot. As a former chief election judge, I regularly saw voters come to the polls unprepared and required help. This alternative method will likely compound exponentially. It will also frustrate the voters.

Is RCV a fair way to conduct an election? NO. Is this likely to confuse the voter? YES.

I believe **RCV** could keep voters from voting and only those who understand the system will be the only ones voting. This kind of change could undermine voter confidence.

Many voters cite very strong concerns.   Our local electoral system has more pressing concerns. Fewer regular voters have asked for Rank Choice Voting methods. Keep what works.

Please oppose SB-493 and keep our voting less complicated.

Thank you.

Please oppose SB 493.pdf

Uploaded by: Dennis Evans

Position: UNF

Please oppose SB 493. It makes voting more complicated and allows for fraud and stolen elections.

SB0493 Oppose Hurts Minorities.pdf

Uploaded by: Jean Benhoff

Position: UNF

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

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.

###

- Tags Ranked-Choice Voting

SB493_RankChoiceVotingOPPOSE.pdf

Uploaded by: Katherine Sullivan

Position: UNF

Witness:	Katherine Strauch Sullivan
Jurisdiction:	Baltimore County
Bill:	**SB493** Elections – Ranked–Choice Voting – Contests for Presidential Nomination in 2028
Sponsor:	**Senator Kagan**
Position:	**OPPOSE**

Recent polling suggests that a majority of Americans on both sides of the aisle fear for the survival of the American democratic system. Ranked-choice voting (RCV), also called "instant runoff voting," would be harmful to American elections.

Below is the evidence to back up that claim.

1. **ERROR RATES FOR RCV ELECTIONS REMAIN HIGHER THAN THOSE OF TRADITIONAL ELECTIONS**. Instructions for RCV ballots are generally cumbersome, often confusing voters. This results in more citizens having their votes thrown away because of an overly complex system.

2. **WITH RANKED-CHOICE VOTING, NOT ALL VOTES COUNT**. "Exhausted ballots" in RCV elections do not count towards the final tally. Because of ballot exhaustion, winners of RCV races do not necessarily represent the choice of all voters who participated. Below are two races supporting this claim:

ME

MAINE'S 2ND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 2018 DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY:

Although a total of 126,139 votes were cast, only 117,250 votes counted towards the final round.

This means that approximately seven percent of voters—nearly 9,000 people—had their voices silenced by ballot exhaustion.[13]

CA

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA'S 2010 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS GENERAL ELECTION:

After 20 rounds of tabulations, 53 percent of ballots had been exhausted, and only 8,200 ballots contributed towards the final results.[14]

More ballots were thrown out than were counted.

3. **RANK-CHOICE VOTING HAVE LOWER VOTER TURNOUT RATES.**
   A multitude of studies support this claim but to name one, a study of San Francisco elections from 1995 to 2011 revealed a strong relationship between a decline in voter turnout and the adoption of RCV. Because RCV is more complex than traditional voting, the system inherently discourages new and infrequent voters from participating. Between voter confusion, high rates of ballot exhaustion, and the difficulty of tabulating the results, the RCV risks are not worth the few rewards.

4. **RANKED-CHOICE VOTING CHANGES AND DELAYS THE ELECTION COUNTING PROCESS.** Because of the convoluted and centralized tabulation process, counting the final results in RCV elections is time consuming, and rarely are election results available on Election Day.

MN

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA'S 2009 MAYORAL RACE:

The election office estimated that, for a turnout of 70,000 voters, tabulation would take 37 eight-hour shifts with 102 election officials working.

In other words, tabulation was estimated to take 30,192 man-hours or nearly 13 days of round-the-clock counting.[24]

NY

NEW YORK CITY'S 2021 MAYORAL DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY:

NYC's primary took 15 days to reach a conclusion, with the two final candidates only separated by slightly more than one percent of the vote.[25]

A contributing factor to the delay was the erroneous inclusion of 135,000 test ballots.[26]

SAY NO TO RANK CHOICE VOTING IN MARYLAND. The good news is that eliminating and restricting RCV has bipartisan support in state governments across the country. **Such a needlessly complicated voting system leads to voter confusion, lower turnout, and slower election results.** Strengthening trust in the election process should not be a partisan issue. Banning ranked-choice voting is a measure that everyone ought to support to protect election integrity.

WE ASK THAT THE COMMITTEE OPPOSE SB493.

SB493_RCV Underlying Data to Support Claims.pdf

Uploaded by: Katherine Sullivan

Position: UNF

SUPPORTING DATA

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UNFAVORABLE.SB493.LauraBogley.MDRTL.pdf

Uploaded by: Laura Bogley

Position: UNF

Opposition Statement SB 493
Elections – Ranked Choice Voting- Contests for Presidential Nomination in 2028
Laura Bogley, JD
Executive Director, Maryland Right to Life

We Strongly Oppose Ranked Choice Voting

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Maryland Right to Life, I strongly object to Senate Bill 493. This bill would undermine our elections by replacing the longstanding principle of "one person, one vote" with a contrived ranking system where voters cast votes for more than one candidate.

According to the Freedom Foundation, ranked-choice voting (RCV) is a deeply flawed electoral system that confuses voters, reduces voter satisfaction and disproportionately disenfranchises voters of color. RCV is a solution in search of a problem that replaces the traditional one person, one vote system with a scheme that denies voters informed choice without ensuring that every vote counts. Unlike the plurality voting system to which the vast majority of Americans are accustomed, RCV creates needless complexity at a time when we should be making voting more, not less accessible. RCV should be opposed for the following reasons.

• RCV is confusing;

• Every vote does not count with RCV;

• RCV lowers voter confidence and voter satisfaction;

• RCV disenfranchises minority voters; and

• RCV does not foster positive campaigns or increase voter participation.

Ranked Choice Voting is Confusing

Political scientists Francis Neely and Jason McDaniel have found that RCV is unnecessarily complex. The pair analyzed "almost two million individual ballots in order to measure the incidence of errors that disqualify a ballot from being counted after the adoption of Ranked-Choice Voting in San Francisco elections." They "found that such errors were significantly more common in RCV elections than plurality elections."[1] McDaniel explained that "it is highly likely that implementation of RCV will result in higher rates of ballot errors that cause individual ballots to be disqualified. These ballot errors will be concentrated among those portions of the electorate who are already most vulnerable to being underrepresented."[2]

Columbia University computer scientist Stephen Unger has sharply criticized RCV's complexity. Unger wrote that RCV "has serious drawbacks. Particularly when there are three or more serious contenders,

some very strange things can happen, such as the defeat of a candidate who would have won over each of the other candidates in a 2-person race, or a situation where A is deprived of a victory because several voters changed their first-place votes from B to A."[3] RCV complexity "also mandates central counting of votes and this, in turn, provides increased opportunities for wholesale fraud or malfunction. Hand counting and recounting becomes slower and more expensive," he noted. [4]

RCV Undermines Principle of One-Person, One-Vote

Two political scientists, Ohio State University associate professor Vlad Kogan and Craig M. Burnett analyzed more than 600,000 votes cast using RCV in four elections in California and Washington State. In none of the four elections did the winning candidate receive a majority of votes cast. Ballot and voter exhaustion was the reason. An exhausted ballot happens when a voter overvotes, undervotes, or ranks only candidates that are no longer in contention in an RCV election. An exhausted ballot does not count when the final vote count takes place.

The pair extensively argued this point in their 2014 study, "*Ballot (and voter) 'exhaustion' under Instant Runoff Voting (IRV): An examination of four ranked-choice elections*." The two political scientists wrote that RCV "greatly increases the difficulty of the task facing voters." Furthermore, they argued that under RCV "a substantial number of voters either cannot or choose not to rank multiple candidates, even when they have the ability to do so. Instead, many opt to cast a vote for their top choice, neglecting to rank anyone else."[5]

RCV Lowers Voter Confidence in Elections

In a 2017 study, political scientist Lindsay Nielson found that RCV has "no positive impact on voters' confidence in elections and the democratic process. Study participants who voted in the RCV treatment were not any more likely to prefer RCV elections to plurality or majoritarian elections, and, overall, most voters do not prefer to vote in RCV elections and do not think that they result in fair election outcomes."[6]

Following the 2018 race in Maine's second congressional District, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Political Science Department Ph.D. candidate Jesse Clark analyzed "observational data from the 2018 midterm election in Maine" and "public opinion from a survey of voting methods conducted in Maine following the first-ever statewide implementation of IRV."[7] Clark concluded ''[RCV] lowers voter confidence, it causes voters to spend more time voting (which may have downhill impacts for voters in high-turnout elections), and it is more difficult to use. Furthermore, it lowers satisfaction in voting, as well as increases the belief that the rules are stacked against the voter and their party.[8]

RCV Disenfranchises Minority Voters

Jason McDaniel, the associate professor of political science at San Francisco State University referenced earlier, examined five San Francisco elections from 1995 to 2011, the last two of which utilized RCV. After analyzing over 2,500 precincts in five elections, McDaniel concluded that "turnout declines among African-American and white voters was significantly correlated with the adoption of RCV." In addition,

the "adoption of RCV exacerbated disparities in voter turnout between those who are already likely to vote and those who are not, including younger voters and those with lower levels of education."[9]

In 2017 testimony before the Kansas Special Committee on Elections, Vignesh Ganapathy, the policy director for American Civil Liberties Union of Kansas, noted that RCV has "resulted in decreased turnouts up to 8% in non-presidential elections" and that it "exacerbates economic and racial disparities in voting. In Minneapolis, for example, nearly 10% of ranked choice ballots were not counted, most of these in low-income communities of color. Other municipalities have seen similar effects."[10]

New York City voters approved RCV in 2019. As the city transitioned to this system in 2021, prominent civil rights leaders sounded the alarm about the unique dangers RCV poses to communities of color. Several prominent African-American leaders in New York City rebuked RCV in strong terms. "Our communities have shed blood for the right to vote. Now, when we are able to participate and our participation rates are rising, they want to change the rules? No — this is not for us and we will vote no," said Hazel Dukes, the president of the New York State chapter of the NAACP. Following the approval of RCV, Dukes continued to sound the alarm "Some progressive white folks got together in a room and thought this would be good, but it's not good for our community.[11] The New York State chapter of the NAACP joined a group of city officials in suing to preclude the Board of Elections from implementing RCV. [12]

RCV Does Not Increase Voter Confidence

Professor McDaniel told The New York Times in 2020, "The Democratic Party position now is that we need to remove barriers to voting, and I think ranked-choice voting is counter to that. My research shows that when you make things more complicated, which this does, there's going be lower turnout." McDaniel added that since RCV "usually advantages people who are incumbents or well known, or who have a lot of campaign funds," there was little guarantee it would spark real structural change.[13]

Several progressive communities have repealed RCV because it fails to produce more civil campaigns with higher voter participation.

> Even though Aspen, Colo. voters moved to amend the city's charter in 2007 to utilize an RCV system, fed up voters repealed it in 2010. According to the city's former mayor and current Councilwoman Rachael Richards, RCV proved too complicated for many voters. "There was concern about whether people would game the system in some way, or fear that maybe your second choice would end up wiping out your first choice," Richards said.
>
> In the progressive bastion of Ann Arbor, Michigan, voters overwhelmingly repealed the city's RCV's system (then oftentimes referred to as preferential voting) with 61 percent in 1976. [14] "City voters reacted to the confusion of last year's mayoral election yesterday, and repealed preferential voting (PV) for mayor-a process which they had approved only 17 months ago. …Last

year's election cost the city some $80,000-twice the normal figure." The *Michigan Daily* reported at the time.

In sum, Ranked Choice Voting fails to deliver on its advocates' central promises. Rather than increasing voter participation and ensuring that every vote truly counts, RCV confuses voters, lessens voter satisfaction and disproportionately disenfranchises voters of color. It is an extremely flawed electoral system that continuously fails to deliver on its central and most important promise: to change politics for the better.

For all of these reasons, we urge your unfavorable report on Senate Bill 493.

Original Source: Freedom Foundation of Minnesota, ''*Ranked Choice Voting: A Risk Voters Shouldn't Take*'', 2021.
End Note Citations:

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SB0493 Oppose RCV -Hurts Minorities.pdf

Uploaded by: Lee Flaherty

Position: UNF

To: Senator Kagan

Re: SB 0493

Position: Opposed

Ranked-Choice Voting Hurts Minorities: Study

- Post author

- By [centerforelectionconfidence](#)
- [Post date](#)
- [January 11, 2024](#)
- 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."

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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:

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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

UNFAVORABLE Testimony for SB0493 Rank Choice Votin

Uploaded by: Mary Nelson

Position: UNF

UNFAVORABLE Testimony for SB0493 Rank Choice Voting

Mary G Nelson, 1465 Blue Ball Rd, Elkton, MD 21921- 443-485-0255 marygnelson3@icloud.com

Please vote NO for Rank Choice Voting.

- It disenfranchises anyone who only picks one candidate.
- It makes auditing the results almost impossible.
- It is confusing and has no transparency.
- It has been a major disaster in many of the attempts to use it.
- It is basically a way to cheat the public from making a majority choice.

2024-HB0423-SB0493-UNFav.pdf

Uploaded by: Nelda Fink

Position: UNF

HB0423 / SB0493 – UNFAVORABLE !

Nelda Fink

MD District 32

I strongly oppose this bill because rank choice voting would lend to a no party system. The majority vote ends up going to an individual and the multi-/bi-partisan system we have today would basically be eliminated. The long term tendency for this kind of voting system has been shown by mathematicians and statistical analysts to eventually trend towards a majority vote based system where the minority losses it's representation all together. This then becomes unconstitutional under the Maryland Constitution AND under the US Constitution.

While the RCV eludes to a better system it deceptively degrades our rights to fair elections and becomes unconstitutional.

100% OPPOSE this bill. It was a test case in Montgomery. Stop there.

Thank you.

Nelda Fink

SB 0493 RCV 2028 presidential -- 2024 UNF.pdf

Ella Ennis, Legislative Chairman
Maryland Federation of Republican Women
PO Box 6040, Annapolis MD 21401
Email: eee437@comcast.net

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chairman
And Members of the Education, Energy and The Environment Committee
Senate of Maryland
Annapolis, Maryland

Re: **SB 0493** – Ranked Choice Voting for Presidential Primary in 2028 - **UNFAVORABLE**

The Maryland Federation of Republican Women strongly opposes SB 0493 because Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is confusing and manipulative.

A process of elimination rounds to finally reach a majority vote for a single candidate may work in a setting where everyone is in the room and can make an informed decision about the candidates in succeeding rounds; but that same opportunity for an informed vote does not exist with RCV when all choices must be made before the first (or succeeding) round results are known.

Ranked choice voting will introduce a complex system of voting that will be difficult for voters to understand. Presidential primary elections (governed by federal regulation) are not stand-alone elections. You could have one system for choosing your presidential candidate and a very different voting system for other offices on the ballot.

Concurrent with voting for your choice for president in the Primary, voters choose delegates to their National Convention, the Party's nominees for U.S. Senate and Congress, and judges. If pending legislation is enacted, the Primary may also include a special election for any State legislator appointed to their position since the last gubernatorial election.

RCV will likely require costly changes to the electronic software and hardware used for counting votes. Cost projections for this bill are not yet available; but the Fiscal Note for Montgomery County's 2023 Ranked Choice Voting bill (HB 344) estimated a cost of $1.2 million in County funds and $273,000 in State general funds to implement RCV in Montgomery County for the 2024 elections.

SB 0493 requires that the State Board of Elections (1) develop and pay the cost of a voter education program, (2) share that voter education campaign with the local boards, and (3) conduct and pay the cost of a survey of voters after the primary election to gauge their satisfaction with RCV.

The bill is unclear whether the State Board of Elections will pay only for the development of the voter education program or whether the State Board will be burdened with the entire cost to reach all registered voters in Maryland (4.1 million in 2022) and to train election judges and election officials at the local, county and state levels.

Ella Ennis, Legislative Chairman
Maryland Federation of Republican Women
PO Box 6040, Annapolis MD 21401
Email: eee437@comcast.net

The more candidates involved, the more cumbersome and tedious the process. Voters will need much longer to make 3 or more choices for each position on the ballot. Some election day voters are likely to walk away from the polls if the line is too long or moving too slowly. Mailed ballot voters will have no one present to explain the new, complicated process. Voters exasperated with the complicated and burdensome RCV ballot may skip the down-ballot local races. Statistics already show a decrease in the number of votes cast in those very important down-ballot races, including school board races.

RCV will complicate and slow the process of counting votes and certifying election results. RCV requires complex and confusing formulas for calculating votes that will undermine the public's confidence in election results. A jurisdiction's inability to open and close polls on time or to promptly calculate and certify election results will have a negative impact on the entire state.

Election results do not reflect the projected benefits of the most recent changes to election law and the voting process (Early Voting, Mail-In Voting, Drop Off Boxes, Same Day Voter Registration and Voting, etc.). In fact, in the statewide 2022 General Election, the Maryland State Board of Elections' Official Turnout Reports show voter turnout was down 10 percent statewide from the 2018 General Election.

The decrease in voter turnout (2022 vs 2018) was greatest in Maryland's largest counties, where turnout dropped 10 to 15 percent:

Prince George's County 15%	Baltimore City 11%
Charles County 13%	Baltimore County 10%
Montgomery County 12%	Howard County 10%

Multiple changes in the election process confuse voters, undermine confidence in the election process, and make people question election results. This legislation could set a statewide precedent for changing the method of voting for all elected offices.

Let's not replace our democratic process – majority picks the winner – with RCV.

Please vote an **UNFAVORABLE** report on **SB 0493**.

Sincerely,
Ella Ennis
Legislative Chairman

SB-493 RCV Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Steve Brown

Position: UNF

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
- Post date
- January 11, 2024
- 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.

###

- 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 Vo□ng (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
.
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.

SB0493 (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Suzanne Duffy

Position: UNF

SB0493 Rank Choice Voting, the sound of it is **rank with a foul odor.** The bill should be titled **'THE FIX IS IN Bill'. It is a smoke and mirror controlled outcome, it does not work and it has been a disaster anywhere it has been tested. It is the only way a minority party can attempt to win,** or a **party no one ever heard** of like the **'Forward Party',** lol. Trust will fall to new depths if this is even considered. Does election accuracy mean anything anymore?

AND it hurts minority voters! This RCV or to **" rank candidates on a ballot rather than choose one, may harm black and Native American voters disproportionately, according to a new study by a Princeton University professor."** Also **"overly complicated and confuses voters"** **Via yet another recent study dated Jan 2024**

Princeton School of Public & International Affairs

@PrincetonSPIA

"Andrew Yang, a former presidential candidate and the founder of the Forward Party, argues that "ranked choice voting ensures the most accurate allocation of delegates based on voters' true preferences."14 Ranked-choice voting is the central focus of the new party that Yang and others launched recently."

"Critics argue that ranked-choice voting is **confusing and that voters are overwhelmed by the task of ranking all candidates** rather than **just choosing one.** For example, **Senator Tom Cotton (R-Ark.)** wrote on Twitter: **"Ranked-choice voting is a scam to rig elections. 60% of Alaska voters voted for a Republican, but thanks to a convoluted process and ballot exhaustion—which disenfranchises voters—a Democrat 'won.'"** (2)

Yang wouldn't be pushing this RCV if he had any other way to win, because he has NO chance of winning, RCV comes into play, it is basically as a nice way to cheat, imho.

LINKS:

(1) https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2020/10/02/why-ranked-choice-voting-improve-american-elections-yang-weld-column/5877731002/
(2) https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2022-election/sarah-palins-election-loss-sen-tom-cotton-calls-ranked-choice-voting-s-rcna45834

Please say **NO to CHEATING in Maryland. When election confidence** is at an **all time LOW** and **many of us do not believe OUR vote even counts, say no to this bad idea. Lawsuit will ensue! This will cost the state billions.**

Suzanne Price
AACo, MD

SB0493.pdf

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"Andrew Yang, a former presidential candidate and the founder of the Forward Party, argues that "ranked choice voting ensures the most accurate allocation of delegates based on voters' true preferences."14 Ranked-choice voting is the central focus of the new party that Yang and others launched recently."

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LINKS:

(1) **https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2020/10/02/why-ranked-choice-voting-improve-american-elections-yang-weld-column/5877731002/**
(2) **https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2022-election/sarah-palins-election-loss-sen-tom-cotton-calls-ranked-choice-voting-s-rcna45834**

Please say **NO to CHEATING in Maryland. When election confidence** is at an **all time LOW** and **many of us do not believe OUR vote even counts, say no to this bad idea. Lawsuit will ensue! This will cost the state billions.**

Suzanne Price

AACo, MD

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO SB 493.pdf

Uploaded by: VINCENT GISRIEL, JR

Position: UNF

<u>WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO SB 493 ENTITLED ELECTIONS-RANKED-CHOICE VOTING-</u>

<u>CONTESTS FOR PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION IN 2028</u>

The concept of Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV) is so new to Maryland that there has been very little public discussion about it. RCV has caused confusion and chaos in some jurisdictions where it has been tried or implemented. Errors in calculations and lack of transparency are some of the problems associated with RCV, causing concern of lower voter turn-out.

When one votes for only one candidate. as opposed to a first, second, third choice and so forth, there is the potential that their single choice will not make it for a subsequent round. In Maryland, we are accustomed to voting for our first choice and not having to list alternates whom we would not otherwise choose to select.

RCV can result in a winner being determined who never garnered a true majority. Maryland would be wise to reject RCV outright. Thank you for your consideration.

Vincent dePaul Gisriel, Jr.

14008 Sailing Rd

Ocean City, MD 21842

410-251-1360

RCVRC Legislative Testimony MD SB493 RCV President

Uploaded by: Ryan Kirby

Position: INFO

Maryland General Assembly
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 4, 2024

Testimony of Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center on Senate Bill 493

On behalf of the Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center (RCVRC), we are pleased to offer this informational testimony on Senate Bill 493.

The RCVRC is a 501(c)(3) nonpartisan nonprofit that helps make ranked-choice voting elections successful. We provide best practices, software tools, educational material, and other resources for ranked choice voting implementation to anyone interested in the voting method. With decades of experience administering elections, our team has also administered statewide, municipal, and district-level ranked-choice voting elections.

I.   Introduction

With ranked choice voting, voters rank candidates in order of preference. Candidates running in ranked choice voting elections do best when they attract a strong core of first-choice support while also reaching out for second, third, and later choices. When used to elect a single candidate like a mayor or governor, ranked choice voting helps elect a candidate that better reflects the preferences of most voters.[1] Ranked choice voting can also be used for presidential primaries to allocate delegates proportionally or using winner-take-all. Bottoms-up RCV is used to allocate delegates proportionally. Last-place candidates are eliminated until all remaining remaining candidates are above a predetermined percentage threshold set by that party.[2]

Ranked choice voting, in both its single-winner and proportional forms, has now been implemented in elections of all types in the United States. This includes local elections in cities such as San Francisco, California, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and New York City, New York, as well as state and federal contests in Alaska and Maine.[3] RCV was used in the 2020 Democratic presidential primaries in Alaska, Hawaii, Kansas, Nevada, and Wyoming. Maine will use RCV in its 2024 presidential primary and the Republicans in the U.S. Virgin Islands have already used RCV in their presidential primary this year. While election administration practices vary across the country, updates necessary to implement ranked choice voting fall into a few standard categories:

- Voting systems (software and/or hardware)

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[1] *How Ranked Choice Voting Works*, City of Portland, Maine (May 12, 2021), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4UtDFAqLC0Y.
[2] Deb Otis, *Ranked Choice Voting in 2020 Presidential Primary Elections*, FairVote (July 21, 2020), https://fairvote.org/report/ranked_choice_voting_in_2020_presidential_primary_elections/.
[3] *Where It's Used*, Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center, https://www.rcvresources.org/where-its-used.

- Ballot design;
- Voter education;
- Results centralization; and
- Results display.

Each of these updates will be discussed briefly below.

II.   Voting Systems

Voting systems are the software and hardware used to run elections. Among other functions, they provide election administrators the ability to design ballots, program machines to capture votes, and efficiently count up results totals in elections.[4] The current voting systems used in Maryland are DS200, DS850, and/or ExpressVote equipment.

To run ranked choice voting elections, voting systems must produce data known as a cast-vote record. According to our conversations with each of the voting system vendors, all modern voting systems are ranked choice voting capable.[5] We have also developed ranked choice voting counting software, known as RCTab, which can be used in addition to voting systems to produce ranked choice voting results.[6] The RCTab software is available for free via this link: http://github.com/brightspots/rcv.

III.   Ballot Design

Ranked choice voting elections require voters to interact with a style of ballot that allows them to rank candidates in order of preference. Maine's sample ballots from both the Democratic and Republican presidential primaries are included in the appendix. The Center for Civic Design (CCD) produced best practice reports for designing and introducing ranked choice voting ballots. These should be relied upon for designing any ranked choice voting ballots. Those reports are available on our website, as well as on CCD's website.[7]

2024 Democratic Presidential Primary Sample Ballot Grad

President of the U.S.	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice
Biden, Joseph R., Jr.	○	○	○
Phillips, Dean B.	○	○	○
Write-in	○	○	○

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[4] Election Terminology Glossary, "Voting System," National Institute of Standards and Technology, https://pages.nist.gov/ElectionGlossary/.

[5] *Major Voting Equipment Vendors' Ranked Choice Voting Capabilities*, Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center (May 2019), https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3K2g6IIQMWsWmJDYWRvMjdqM28/view?resourcekey=0-drPnMVVx2Z-G190NcMhPsQ.

[6] RCTab can also be used as a verification tool post-election, provided it is not used to produce official results.

[7] *Reports*, Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center, https://www.rcvresources.org/reports (at the bottom of page); *Design principles for ranked choice voting,* Center for Civic Design, https://civicdesign.org/projects/rcv/.

IV. Voter Education

Educating the public about ranked choice voting is a necessary part of administering a successful ranked choice voting election. Specifically, voters need to be taught two things: how to mark the ballot and how votes are counted. Up to and on election day, voters are most interested in learning how to mark their ballot. Voter education should focus on this aspect during that time frame. Materials, such as videos and handouts, describing how votes are tabulated should be made available during this time but will be most valuable after polling places close. Ideally, ranked choice voting education and outreach will complement existing efforts for voters, candidates, and election officials. Such efforts also benefit from coordination with community and civic organizations throughout the State. Previous implementations have proven that the most impactful and inexpensive voter education method is verbal and written instruction when the voters present themselves to vote. The RCVRC website provides links to a variety of education and outreach methods that have been used by jurisdictions.[8] In addition, organizations like Democracy Rising provide voter education support for ranked choice voting jurisdictions.[9]

V. Ranked Choice Voting Results

Determining the winners in a ranked choice voting election requires producing a round-by-round count to determine the winner or winners in an election. Running this round-by-round count means election administrators need to have the candidate ranking order on each ballot to know 1) who has the fewest votes in the election and 2) who is ranked next on each of those ballots. Election administrators also need to know how many ballots were cast in total to determine how many votes candidates must have to win. This means two things for producing ranked choice voting results: all ballot data must be available, and it must be centralized. Ranked choice voting requires that election officials centralize ballot data known as cast vote records (CVRs) to run the round-by-round count. After these cast vote records are centralized, that data can be run through ranked choice voting counting software, such as RCTab, to produce round-by-round results – which only takes seconds or minutes – and determine which candidates emerge with the most votes.

The timeline for centralizing final cast vote record data and determining final round-by-round results depends on the size of the jurisdiction producing results, the technology available to centralize results data, and any laws regulating when ballots can arrive after election day and still be counted in an election. Jurisdictions using ranked choice voting now produce round-by-round results as early as election night, with regular updates to those election night

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[8] *Voter Education and Outreach*, Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center, https://www.rcvresources.org/blog-post/voter-education-outreach.
[9] Democracy Rising, https://www.wearedemocracyrising.org/.

results as more ballots are counted and more cast vote record data is centralized.[10] All jurisdictions using RCV use paper ballots for their elections and centralize their election data using standard election material centralization processes. Election administrators in the City of Minneapolis, for example, scan in or hand count paper ballots at precincts on election day. They then send ranked choice voting data or ranked choice ballots to the city elections office, which produces round-by-round results the day after election day.

SB493 enacts RCV for use in the 2028 primary for president. Producing the round-by-round count requires administrators to have RCV tabulation software compatible with the state's RCV counting rules and the data coming out of their voting systems. Maryland has voting systems from a single vendor, ES&S, which makes running the round-by-round count simpler than if they had systems from multiple vendors. Either ES&S's ExpressRunoff software or RCVRC's RCTab could be used to run the round-by-round count on those CVRs.[11] The tabulator is open source and available for free from RCVRC.[12]

When the cast vote records begin to arrive, they could be uploaded to a secure, non-internet-connected, computer which could then process the round-by-round count and produce unofficial ranked choice voting results. Depending on how long polling places take to wrap up counting on election night, these unofficial round-by-round results could begin to be produced within hours after polls close. Results could be updated as ballots are added to totals. The timing of those updates depends on how Maryland chooses to adapt any existing results reporting procedures to ranked choice voting.

Before unofficial round-by-round results are produced, first-choice totals can be reported as unofficial results. First-choice totals are simple to produce: results tapes from voting equipment can print out first-choice totals in ranked choice voting elections, just as they print out vote totals in non-ranked choice voting elections. As with non-ranked choice voting elections, those results can be reported back to the appropriate elections office, which can combine totals and publish just first-choice totals. First-choice results can only serve as temporary unofficial results, however. Ranked choice voting results will ultimately require round-by-round results to determine final winners.

After round-by-round results are produced, displaying them in an easy-to-understand format is fundamental to ensuring voters understand and accept the results. RCVis.com implements best practices for displaying those results and is free to use. It is compatible with results data from

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[10] Dept. of Elections, *Nov. 3, 2020 Election Results - Detailed Reports*, City and County of San Francisco, https://sfelections.sfgov.org/november-3-2020-election-results-detailed-reports (Preliminary Reports are uploaded on a regular basis starting on election day and continuing daily thereafter); Utah County Elections Division, *Ranked Choice Election Results*, Utah County, https://www.utahcounty.gov/Dept/ClerkAud/Elections/2021RankedResults.asp (results uploaded on election night and on a regular basis thereafter).
[11] Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center, *RCTab*, www.rcvresources.org/rctab (last visited Feb. 22, 2024).
[12] The tabulator is compatible with Dominion, ES&S, Hart, and Unisyn data.

VI. Post-Election Audits of Ranked Choice Voting

Election officials conduct post-election audits to ensure votes are recorded and tallied as cast and to help ensure public confidence in elections. Two primary types of audits exist: conventional audits and risk-limiting audits. Ranked choice voting elections in the United States are regularly subject to conventional audits. Conventional or traditional audits have two major steps:

1) Election administrators randomly select voting machines used in a given election; then,
2) Election administrators compare the paper record of ballots from the machines being audited to the digital results produced by those voting machines.[15]

Single-winner and proportional RCV races in the Bay Area and Minneapolis are regularly audited using conventional audit procedures. For example, Minneapolis randomly selects two RCV contests to audit – one single-winner and one proportional. The City then selects one precinct from each contest and city staff review every ballot in that precinct by hand. City of Minneapolis staff compare the total number of rankings each candidate received in that precinct to digital records from the scanners used in each precinct. If these totals match, the audit is complete. If vote totals differ, the audit will expand. Bay Area audits follow similar procedures.[16]

Risk-limiting audits (RLAs) are the gold standard of post-election tabulation audits. They review a randomized sample of ballots to provide strong evidence that the election outcome is correct. Risk-limiting audits are the most efficient type of audit (regardless of voting method) and can be implemented through a variety of methods in single-winner RCV contests and presidential primaries using RCV. RLAs are reliable and efficient, but they are uncommon in the United States and have rarely been used in RCV elections. Additional RLAs of RCV need to be

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[13] RCTab is the RCVRC's open-source ranked choice voting counting software which can be used alongside voting systems to produce ranked choice voting results. The RCTab software is available for free via this link: http://github.com/brightspots/rcv.

[14] Whitney Quesenbery and Taapsi Ramchandani, *Best Practices for Ranked Choice Voting Ballots and Other Materials*, Center for Civic Design (Feb. 28, 2017), https://drive.google.com/file/d/1T_u5h4RZ1rTu6_0BXnxBVDSrndsGF0V9/view; *Reports*, Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center, https://www.rcvresources.org/reports.

[15] Audit laws may be written to audit precincts or to audit machines. Either way, voting machines are the things being reviewed – in a precinct-based law, the voting machines used in that precinct are audited. In a voting machine law, a random assortment of machines from across the election jurisdiction (city, county or state) are audited, instead of a specific precinct.

[16] For more on conventional audits of RCV, see our Auditing RCV webinar. Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center, Auditing Ranked Choice Voting, https://www.rcvresources.org/auditing-ranked-choice-voting (March 29, 2018).

conducted to firmly establish RCV RLA practices and tools and to ease RCV RLA adoption across the United States.[17]

VII. Conclusion

SB493 offers a valuable opportunity for Maryland to adopt ranked choice voting for its presidential primary in 2028. As discussed in this testimony, there are concrete, actionable steps Maryland can take to implement ranked choice voting. The RCVRC stands ready to assist with any ranked choice voting implementation, free of charge.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

/s/ Rosemary Blizzard

Rosemary Blizzard
Executive Director
Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center
PO Box 5176
Kinston, NC 28503

Ryan Kirby
Director of Public Policy
Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center
PO Box 5176
Kinston, NC 28503

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[17] For more on RLAs of RCV, see our Post-Election Audits and RCV policy brief. Chris Hughes & Ryan Kirby, Post-Election Audits and Ranked Choice Voting, https://www.rcvresources.org/blog-post/post-election-audits-and-ranked-choice-voting (Sept. 19, 2022).

Appendix

Exhibit 1. ES&S Ballot, Maine Congressional District 1, Nov. 6, 2018.

SS District 34   SR District 20   York District 1   Style No. 2

State of Maine Sample Ballot
General Election, November 6, 2018
for
Acton, Lebanon

Instructions to Voters

To vote, fill in the oval like this ●

To rank your candidate choices, fill in the oval:

• In the 1st column for your 1st choice candidate.
• In the 2nd column for your 2nd choice candidate, and so on.

Continue until you have ranked as many or as few candidates as you like.

Fill in no more than one oval for each candidate or column.

To rank a write-in candidate, write the person's name in the write-in space and fill in the oval for the ranking of your choice.

U.S. Senator	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice
Brakey, Eric L. Auburn Republican	○	○	○	○
King, Angus S., Jr. Brunswick Independent	○	○	○	○
Ringelstein, Zak Yarmouth Democratic	○	○	○	○
Write-in	○	○	○	○

Rep. to Congress District 1	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice
Grohman, Martin J. Biddeford Independent	○	○	○	○
Holbrook, Mark I. Brunswick Republican	○	○	○	○
Pingree, Chellie North Haven Democratic	○	○	○	○
Write-in	○	○	○	○

Turn Over for Additional Contests

Exhibit 2. ES&S Ballot, Maine Democratic Presidential Primary, March 5, 2024.

State of Maine Sample Ballot
Democratic Presidential Primary Election
March 5, 2024

To vote, fill in the oval like this ⬤

To rank your candidate choices, fill in the oval:

- In the 1st column for your 1st choice candidate.
- In the 2nd column for your 2nd choice candidate, and so on.

Continue until you have ranked as many or as few candidates as you like. Fill in only one oval in each column (ranking).

To rank a Write-in candidate, write the person's name in the Write-in space and fill in the oval for the ranking of your choice.

To have your vote count, do not erase or cross out your choices. If you make a mistake, ask for a new ballot.

President of the U.S.	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice
Biden, Joseph R., Jr.	○	○	○
Phillips, Dean B.	○	○	○
Write-in	○	○	○

You Have Completed Voting

Style No. 2R

State of Maine Sample Ballot
Republican Presidential Primary Election
March 5, 2024

To vote, fill in the oval like this ⬤

To rank your candidate choices, fill in the oval:

- In the 1st column for your 1st choice candidate.
- In the 2nd column for your 2nd choice candidate, and so on.

Continue until you have ranked as many or as few candidates as you like. Fill in only one oval in each column (ranking).

To rank a Write-in candidate, write the person's name in the Write-in space and fill in the oval for the ranking of your choice.

To have your vote count, do not erase or cross out your choices. If you make a mistake, ask for a new ballot.

President of the U.S.	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice	6th Choice
Binkley, Ryan L.	○	○	○	○	○	○
DeSantis, Ron	○	○	○	○	○	○
Haley, Nikki R.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ramaswamy, Vivek G.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Trump, Donald J.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Write-in	○	○	○	○	○	○

You Have Completed Voting

Exhibit 4. ES&S Results Report, Maine Congressional District 2, Nov. 6, 2018.

Report Name	**Summary Report**

Election Name	**General Election**
Election Date	**11.06.18**
Office Title	**Congressional District 2**

Candidate Names	Round 1			Round 2	
	Votes	Percentage	Transfer	Votes	Percentage
Bond, Tiffany L.	16552	05.71%	-16552	0	00.00%
DEM Golden, Jared F.	132013	45.58%	**10427**	142440	50.62%
Hoar, William R.S.	6875	02.37%	-6875	0	00.00%
REP Poliquin, Bruce	134184	46.33%	4747	138931	49.38%
Ballot Exhausted					
By Overvotes	435		98	533	
By Undervotes	6018		7820	13838	
By Exhausted Choices	0		335	335	
Continuing Ballots	289624		0	281371	
TOTAL	**296077**		**0**	**296077**	
Winning threshold by round	144813			140686	

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Total = Ballot Exhausted by Overvotes + Ballot Exhausted by Undervotes + Exhausted Ballot + Continuing Ballots

Winning Threshold = [Continuing ballots/(Vote for [number] +1)] + 1

"*" symbol signifies elimination due to Tie Resolution.