



I am Mike Pellittere and I live in Odenton. I am a Navy veteran and a volunteer with Veterans for All Voters.

In 2016, during the presidential primary, I was underway on USS FARRAGUT. I filled out my absentee ballot to vote and dropped it in the mailbox onboard. The next day, my selected candidate dropped out of the race. My vote would no longer count.

Even worse, the candidate I voted for was NOT the one I wanted to win, NOT the one that best aligned with my views. Instead, it was the one who I thought had the best chance of winning the Primary against the forerunner.

Had ranked choice voting been in place, my vote still would have counted. I could have voted for my preferred candidate. If they didn't perform well, then my vote would have automatically gone to my second or third choice until one of the candidates garnered a majority of votes.

Ranked Choice Voting is not too difficult for people to understand. As a child, my mom sent me into the grocery store with instructions to "buy 1%, but if they are out, buy skim." Australia has been doing Ranked Choice Voting for over 100 years. Surely those who say that RCV is too complicated for voters to understand aren't claiming that Marylanders are less intelligent than our Aussie friends. 84% of Alaskan voters found RCV to be "simple"¹ and 91% of Portland, Oregon voters understood the system after their first election.²

Ranked Choice Voting is not too expensive or too slow. According to the Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center, our voting systems already support RCV.³

Ranked Choice Voting will not help just one party or the other. It helps drive towards consensus. A party can push up multiple candidates, not having to worry about the spoiler effect. If a party wants to win, they can advance candidates that better represent the constituents in their district.

Ranked Choice Voting will drive down the temperature of campaigns that are turning people away.⁴ Candidates seeking to become other voters' second choice will focus less on attacks and more on the issues – theoretically what we are supposed to be voting on.⁵

Veterans are more likely to be excluded from partisan primaries, because we are less likely to affiliate with a party than our non-veteran peers, so our current election system disproportionately harms veterans.⁶

All Marylanders deserve a better system. This bill is the first step towards a better, more representative government.

¹ "Exit Polling Shows Alaskans Found Ranked Choice Voting Simple," Alaskans for Better Elections, 12/3/2024

² "Exit Poll – Portland voters were well informed on ranked-choice voting," City of Portland Elections Division, 12/3/2024

³ "Maryland Ranked Choice Voting State Readiness Assessment," Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center, 2023

⁴ "As Partisan Hostility Grows, Signs of Frustration with the Two-Party System," Pew Research Center, 8/2022

⁵ "What we Learned from New York City's Second Ranked Choice Voting Election," FairVote, 1/9/2024

⁶ "Changing Partisan Coalitions in a Politically Divided Nation," Pew Research Center, 4/9/2024