

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)

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

1. **You cannot vote against a candidate.** You have 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.
2. **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.
3. **Moderates get squeezed out.** Votes get divided up between the extreme factions.
4. **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. This is not inclusive at all as people's votes are discarded.
5. **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, representative society. In Minneapolis, St. Paul, and San Francisco, which have had ranked choice voting for a while, voter turnout has been consistently lower than in earlier elections without RCV.
6. **Confusing to voters.** It is complicated and hard to explain, thus it decreases election transparency. This is precisely against the principles of FFT elections referred to in the introduction. Confusion leads to lower turnout. Fairfax County, VA utilized RCV in 2022 local municipal elections and all the reports I have heard were very negative for the reasons cited.
7. **More chances 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, and more adjudication which opens up the system to potential fraud.
8. **Reporting delays.** An RCV election is practically not auditable because of ballot exhaustion. The multiple rounds with ballot exhaustion required result in delays in determining the winner.

In summary, RCV increases election complexity, decreases transparency, increases time to achieve the outcome and lowers voter participation and confidence in elections and increases costs.

Please drop all consideration of Ranked Choice Voting.