

What do all of us want or should want regarding elections? That they be **Free, Fair, and Transparent**. Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) complicates, confuses and corrupts elections. Here are multiple reasons why:

1. **One cannot Vote Against a Candidate** – Voters must rank candidates for whom they may never, in their whole freaking life, consider casting a vote. By including a candidate in the ranking, one has voted for that candidate.
2. **Extreme Candidates Can Win** – Large vote disparities in the initial rounds can be overcome allowing candidates with little initial support to win. This can result in the election of candidates that a majority of voters do not or will never support.
3. **Moderates Get Squeezed Out** – RCV can favor polarizing candidates by dividing votes among more moderate options. As factions consolidate behind extreme choices, centrist candidates may struggle to survive the ranking process.
4. **Ballot Exhaustion** – If a voter does not rank every candidate, their ballot will be discarded in later rounds once all their ranked choices are eliminated. This is known as “ballot exhaustion” and effectively silences those voters, undermining the inclusivity of the election. So it is as if those voters never voted.
5. **Lower 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 RCV for some time, voter turnout has been consistently lower than in earlier elections without ranked choice voting.
6. **Confusing to Voters** – RCV is complicated and difficult to explain, thus reducing election transparency. This is against the principles of FFT elections referenced earlier. Confusion leads to voter disengagement, which contradicts the goal of an accessible and understandable voting process. Reports from Fairfax County, VA, which conducted an RCV election in 2022, were largely negative. Notably, seventeen (17) states have BANNED rank choice voting due to these concerns.
7. **Increased Risk of Election Mismanagement and Fraud** – The complexity of RCV means the election is more difficult to track and thus RCV creates opportunities for election mismanagement and fraud. RCV requires additional ballot handling, transportation, chain of custody considerations and adjudication. All of which increase the likelihood of errors, security breaches and potential fraud.
8. **Reporting Delays** – RCV elections take significantly longer to determine a winner. Ballot exhaustion and multiple rounds of counting contribute to reporting delays. In New York City’s 2021 RCV election, it took nearly a month to declare a winner. Similarly, Alaska’s 2022 RCV election results took over two weeks to determine.

Conclusion

In summary, RCV increases election complexity, reduces transparency, increases the time to determine the outcome and diminishes voter confidence. In addition, RCV has a negative impact on voter participation and ultimately requires increased costs to implement.

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