

# EQUAL VOTE

Our election system is broken. For every office in the land. The [root of the problem](#) is our reliance on an archaic, misrepresentative voting method. We're [starting at the local level](#), then working statewide and nationally, to fundamentally reboot our electoral process and bring true representative democracy to the U.S. for the first time.

We are proposing a new system, [Score Runoff Voting](#), that gives us a radically more expressive ballot and an equal weight vote:

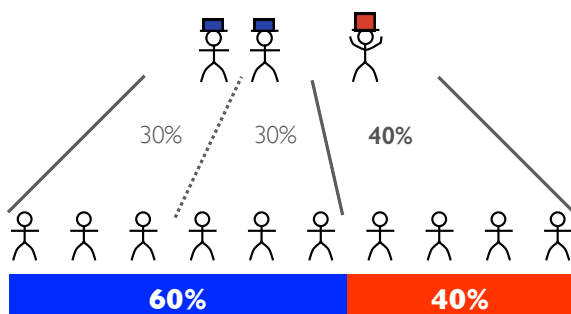
Envision Expressive and Meaningful Voting

THE RULES: (YES, IT'S REALLY THIS SIMPLE)

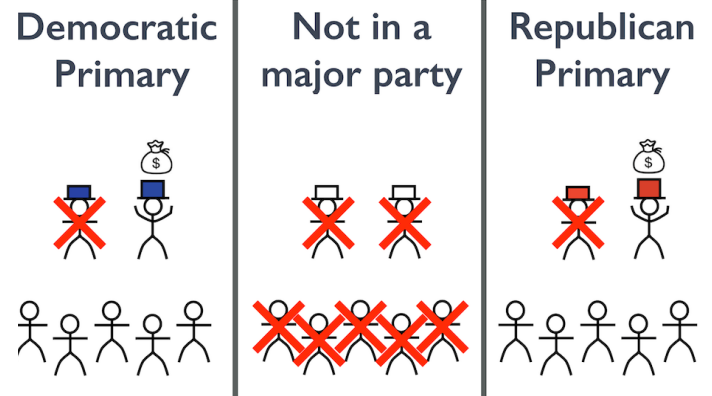
The two highest scoring candidates advance to an instant runoff. In the runoff, your vote goes to the one you scored higher.

	LEAST SUPPORT	MOST SUPPORT
Jill GREEN	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Bernie INDEPENDENT	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Donny REPUBLICAN	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Hillary DEMOCRAT	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Marco REPUBLICAN	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Marty DEMOCRAT	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Gary LIBERTARIAN	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

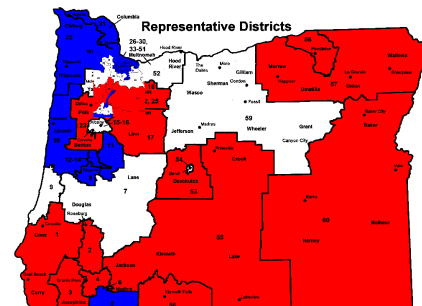
Our current way of voting, known as Plurality Voting, limits us to picking a single favorite in each election, so whenever there are more than two options, the more similar ones split supporters' votes, **giving more weight to those of us who prefer fewer candidates.**



Because of this fundamental inequality, we are encouraged not to “waste our vote” on a long shot “spoiler” candidate we might really like. Instead, to prevent our worst option from winning, we are compelled to vote for the “lesser evil” - the more tolerable of the two candidates most beholden to well-funded and partisan special interests.



When Progressives created the partisan primary election more than 100 years ago to give voters, not the party bosses in “smoke filled back rooms,” the choice of which two major candidates would be nominated to the general election, they created a second inequality in the vote.



Here in Oregon, more than a third of us don't affiliate with either the Democratic or Republican parties and another 17% are in the minority in “safe” districts that give just one party so much of an advantage that whomever wins their primary always wins the general election. **In total, the partisan primary denies more than half of Oregon's voters a meaningful representative vote.** The existence of the primary election forces those not in safe districts to run two campaigns back-to-back, doubling the time and money they need to spend to win.

In 2016, the primary system demonstrably failed on the national level as well: ultimately U.S. voters were given a choice between two major party candidates for President, **both of whom** were disliked by a majority of voters.

**The Solution: One Fair Election.** What if we have a single election process that provides the voters an equal say, accurately reflects the will of the voters in the outcome, is easy for voters to ballot and for elections officials to tabulate, and allows voters to honestly express their nuanced opinions on the outcome?

**Enter Score Runoff Voting (SRV).** One significant outcome of the 2014 Oregon effort at reform was the invention, by some of the nation's top voting reform experts, of a new voting system. Instead of limiting the voter to supporting just one of the candidates, SRV allows voters to rate all the candidates just like we rate books on Amazon, restaurants on Yelp and songs on iTunes. Scoring is a thoroughly-understood, ubiquitous method of expressing a fine degree of opinion on a subject.

Score Runoff Voting - Sample Ballot

LEAST SUPPORT MOST SUPPORT

Allen 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Bianca 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Chris 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Desi 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Edith 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Frank 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

The two highest scoring candidates advance to an instant runoff.  
In the runoff, your vote goes to the one you scored higher.

First, all the scores for all the candidates are added up. A first stage election result might look like this:

CANDIDATE	TOTAL POINTS
Desi	1500
Bianca	1325
Allen	1052
Edith	525
Chris	401
Frank	70

The second step is an instantaneous runoff between the two highest scoring candidates. **In the runoff, your full vote goes to whichever of the top two you rated higher.**

In the election above, Desi and Bianca advance to the instant runoff because they are the two top scorers, your full runoff vote would go to Bianca, because you gave her a 9 and you gave Desi a 5.

Score Runoff Voting breaks the tradeoffs inherent in other systems: it avoids the wacky outcome tendency and ballot and tabulation complexity of IRV, and its runoff step corrects the “bullet voting” and other strategic distortions of scoring methods like Approval Voting. **SRV provides a path forward to true representative democracy.**

**Revolutionary Reform: The Oregon Way.** Oregon has long led the nation in innovative reform proposals, from the initiative system itself to Vote-by-Mail, and Motor Voter just to name a few. Given the state of our national politics today, it's time for Oregon to step up again and demonstrate that a better way forward is possible.

**Phase 1: Start Local.** We have drafted a short amendment to the Lane County charter we intend to put on the November, 2017 ballot. This will allow real voters to use SRV in a real election as soon as May of 2018.

**Phase 2: Democracy - an Oregon First.** Oregon's Legislative Counsel has been begun drafting an election reform law that will be considered in the 2017 legislature and aimed at the November 2018 ballot. This measure eliminates the partisan primary for state and local offices and uses SRV in a single general election when the most voters turn out.

**Phase 3: Go Big at Home - the 2020 Vision.** With the removal of state and local primary elections, Oregon will be free to significantly reform its Presidential Primary Election. We call this new system the Oregon Poll. On Super Tuesday, all Oregon voters, regardless of party, will be able to score all presidential candidates, regardless of party. Where other states see a candidate “win” a contested primary with 14% of a vote amongst the 9% of the electorate that turned out for that party primary, Oregon will show the strength of every candidate across the whole of the electorate, and thus have an outsize impact on the national understanding of voting systems and equality.

DHM Research, Oregon's leading pollster queries the electorate every year and [wrote this year](#), “Even two years ago, those saying the system needs to be radically reformed were bumping along at just over one-third of the population, while a clear majority saw the system as essentially sound. Our August survey found those positions had flipped.”

The time is now for significant reform. Join us at <http://equal.vote!>