

Ranked Choice Voting: It's Common Sense

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is a nonpartisan electoral reform that gives voters the freedom to rank candidates in order of choice. In single-winner races, all first-choice votes are counted, and if a candidate has a majority, they win. However, if no candidate has a majority, the candidate with the least number of votes is eliminated and those voters have their ballot count instantly for their next choice. This process continues until a candidate receives a majority of the votes and is declared the winner. RCV ensures that American elections are **fair**, **fiscally responsible**, and **accountable to the people**.

Fair

Our current “winner-take-all” election system allows candidates to be elected into office without receiving a majority of the vote. In 2013, Republican Ken Cuccinelli lost the Virginia race for governor to Democrat Terry McAuliffe, 45.2% to 47.8%. Libertarian candidate Robert Sarvis received 6.5% of the vote. With RCV, Sarvis would have been eliminated and his voters’ 2nd choices would have been used instead. Thus, RCV protects the integrity of American elections by requiring a majority of the vote to win.

Fiscally Responsible

Runoff elections are costly and inefficient because they split one election into two. This often results in low voter turnout and a waste of taxpayer money. RCV consolidates voter preference onto one ballot, eliminating the need for a separate runoff. This reform saves voters’ time, money, and energy.

Accountable

In our current system, politicians can ignore large swaths of the electorate because they can win without a majority. In contrast, RCV requires politicians to have broad appeal to reach voters that are not in their immediate base. RCV elections are often more civil and candidates run more issue-based campaigns to receive voters’ second-choice votes. In other words, politicians must now be accountable to the majority of the population in order to maintain office.



“Instant runoff voting will lead to good government because voters will elect leaders who have the support of a majority. Elected leaders will be more likely to listen to all and cities will be able to enjoy big tax savings and keep majority rule.”
- Sen. John McCain

Support from Elected Republicans

In 2017 alone, 18 Republican state legislators across nine states sponsored legislation that would have implemented RCV. Currently, Alabama, Louisiana, South Carolina, Mississippi, and Arkansas use RCV for military and overseas voters. In 2016, 15 former Republican Maine state legislators and the former Maine Republican Party Chair, Mark Ellis, all endorsed the Maine RCV initiative which won statewide.