

§723-A. Determination of winner in election for an office elected by ranked-choice voting

1. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Batch elimination" means the simultaneous defeat of multiple candidates for whom it is mathematically impossible to be elected. [IB 2015, c. 3, §5 (NEW).]

B. "Continuing ballot" means a ballot that is not an exhausted ballot. [IB 2015, c. 3, §5 (NEW).]

C. "Continuing candidate" means a candidate who has not been defeated. [IB 2015, c. 3, §5 (NEW).]

D. "Exhausted ballot" means a ballot that does not rank any continuing candidate, contains an overvote at the highest continuing ranking or contains 2 or more sequential skipped rankings before its highest continuing ranking. [IB 2015, c. 3, §5 (NEW).]

E. "Highest continuing ranking" means the highest ranking on a voter's ballot for a continuing candidate. [IB 2015, c. 3, §5 (NEW).]

F. "Last-place candidate" means the candidate with the fewest votes in a round of the ranked-choice voting count. [PL 2019, c. 320, §9 (AMD).]

G. "Mathematically impossible to be elected," with respect to a candidate, means either:

(1) The candidate cannot be elected because the candidate's vote total in a round of the ranked-choice voting count plus all votes that could possibly be transferred to the candidate in future rounds from candidates with fewer votes or an equal number of votes would not be enough to surpass the candidate with the next-higher vote total in the round; or

(2) The candidate has a lower vote total than a candidate described in subparagraph (1). [PL 2019, c. 320, §9 (AMD).]

H. "Overvote" means a circumstance in which a voter has ranked more than one candidate at the same ranking. [IB 2015, c. 3, §5 (NEW).]

H-1. "Ranked-choice voting count" means the ranked-choice counting process described in this section and in rules adopted by the Secretary of State. [PL 2019, c. 320, §10 (NEW).]

I. "Ranking" means the number assigned on a ballot by a voter to a candidate to express the voter's preference for that candidate. Ranking number one is the highest ranking, ranking number 2 is the next-highest ranking and so on. [IB 2015, c. 3, §5 (NEW).]

J. "Round" means an instance of the sequence of vote counting steps established in subsection 2 and in rules adopted by the Secretary of State. [PL 2019, c. 320, §11 (AMD).]

K. "Skipped ranking" means a circumstance in which a voter has left a ranking blank and ranks a candidate at a subsequent ranking. [IB 2015, c. 3, §5 (NEW).]
[PL 2019, c. 320, §§9-11 (AMD).]

2. Procedures. Except as provided in subsections 3 and 4, the following procedures are used to determine the winner of an election determined by ranked-choice voting. The ranked-choice voting count must proceed in rounds. In each round, the number of votes for each continuing candidate must be counted. Each continuing ballot counts as one vote for its highest-ranked continuing candidate for that round. Exhausted ballots are not counted for any continuing candidate. The round then ends with one of the following 2 potential outcomes.

A. If there are 2 or fewer continuing candidates, the candidate with the most votes is declared the winner of the election. [IB 2015, c. 3, §5 (NEW).]

B. If there are more than 2 continuing candidates, the last-place candidate is defeated and a new round begins. [IB 2015, c. 3, §5 (NEW).]
[PL 2019, c. 320, §12 (AMD).]

3. Ties. A tie under this section between last-place candidates in any round must be decided by lot, and the candidate chosen by lot is defeated. The result of the tie resolution must be recorded and reused in the event of a recount. A tie between candidates for the most votes in the final round must be decided as provided in section 732.
[PL 2019, c. 320, §13 (AMD).]

4. Modification of ranked-choice voting ballot and ranked-choice voting count. Modification of a ranked-choice voting ballot and ranked-choice voting count is permitted in accordance with the following.

A. The number of allowable rankings may be limited to no fewer than 5. [PL 2019, c. 320, §14 (AMD).]

B. Two or more candidates may be defeated simultaneously by batch elimination in any round of counting. [PL 2019, c. 320, §14 (AMD).]
[PL 2019, c. 320, §14 (AMD).]

5. Effect on rights of political parties. For all statutory and constitutional provisions in the State pertaining to the rights of political parties, the number of votes cast for a party's candidate for an office determined by ranked-choice voting is the number of votes credited to that candidate after the initial counting in the first round described in subsection 2.
[PL 2017, c. 316, §9 (AMD).]

5-A. Rules. The Secretary of State shall adopt rules for the proper and efficient administration of elections determined by ranked-choice voting. At a minimum, rules required under this subsection must include procedures, as determined appropriate by the Secretary of State, for requesting and conducting recounts of the results as determined in the rounds of counting described in subsection 2. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined by Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.
[PL 2019, c. 320, §15 (AMD).]

6. Application. This section applies to elections held on or after January 1, 2018.
[IB 2015, c. 3, §5 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

IB 2015, c. 3, §5 (NEW). PL 2017, c. 316, §§8-10 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 320, §§9-15 (AMD).

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