Recall Contest Control Voting Method

The Recall Controlling/Controlled contest pair was initially introduced as a method to place on a ballot a measure to recall an elected official and concurrently to allow selection of the replacement for the recalled official if the measure was successful. The ballot measure was essentially a referendum on whether to recall the official with a Yes or No type selection. A subsequent contest was place on the ballot, usually immediately below it, with a list of candidates that selections that were vying to replace the candidate being recall. A voter had to make a selection on the Recall Referendum in order for any selection for the replacement candidate. There were two variations of rules for eligibility. In one, the voter had to vote Yes on the Recall in order for the vote on the replacement selection to be counted. In the other, the voter could vote either Yes or No on the Recall in order for the replacement selection to be counted. The justification for the latter rules was that even if the voter didn't want the candidate to be recalled, the voter should be able to select the replacement if the recall passed. Note that California and Colorado are included in states that used this process. However, a court challenge in California to the Gubernatorial recall in 2003 voided the use of the linked contest pair in California and required that the two contests be independently tabulated.

There are situations that this pair of controlling and controlled contests has been used in, other than for recall of an elected official. One occurred in Indiana where the controlling contest was a referendum on the establishment of a new district and the controlled contest was the selection of the members of the governing board of the district in the event the referendum passed. Note that in this case the controlled contest was a multi-seat contest where the controlled contest in the recall case is single seat.

From a generic standpoint, the method, using a controlling contest selection to enable voting in a controlled contest, applies whether the controlling contest is a question or a contest and even if it is a multi-selection contest. It also applies whether the controlled contest is a question or a single or multi-seat contest. The generic name of Recall contest has stuck independent of the usage.