

JESSE L. JACKSON, JR.

MEMBER OF CONGRESS
2ND DISTRICT, ILLINOIS

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my strong support for the ballot measure before voters in Minneapolis this November that would implement instant runoff voting for city elections.

In 2001, I embraced instant runoff voting (IRV) in my book **A More Perfect Union: Advancing New American Rights**. I have been pleased to see its progress since then, both in winning voter approval in a growing number of American cities and gaining the national support of political leaders like 2004 presidential contender Howard Dean, Senators John McCain and Barack Obama. The merits of IRV aren't just theoretical: in cities like San Francisco and Burlington (VT) voters of all races are turning out in higher numbers to use IRV effectively to express their choices and elect majority winners.

To explain in more detail why I believe our nation should adopt instant runoff voting, below is an excerpt from the several pages I devoted to IRV in **A More Perfect Union**:

“As used in Ireland, Australia and London, IRV requires the winner of an election to earn a majority of votes—unlike Clinton in 1992 or Bush in 2000. Voters rank candidates, in case their favorite candidate is eliminated, in which case the votes of the candidate's supporters count for their second choice in an instant runoff that is accomplished through the voting equipment in an immediate second tally. This process continues until one candidate earns a majority of the votes.

“For example, in 2000 progressive voters might have chosen Ralph Nader as their first choice and Gore second, with conservatives selecting Buchanan first and Bush second. Buchanan finished last, so he would be eliminated, but his voter's ballots would be assigned to those voters' runoff choices, most likely Bush. That would not have given Bush a majority, however, so Nader's voters' second choice would then be awarded, most likely to Gore. In 2000 Gore would have gained a majority and won. This simple change for greater voter choice would allow for a different method of tabulating results. The candidate with the most first choices would not automatically win as he or she does under the present plurality system. Instead, a candidate would need a 50-percent-plus-one majority to win. Such a winning democratic majority would also provide a mandate to govern....

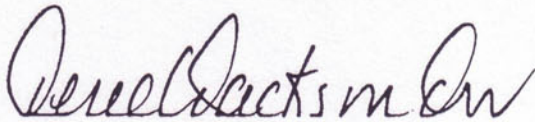
“The most recent IRV election in the United States occurred in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The Democratic and Human Rights Parties had been splitting votes, allowing Republicans to win. The Human Rights Party was the antiwar and more progressive party, and the people adopted IRV in a 1974 charter amendment. It was first used in the mayoral election of 1975. In that election the Republicans won 49 percent of the first choices, the Democrat won about 40 percent, and the Human Rights Party candidate won the rest. The Democratic candidate eventually

won because nearly all the backers of the Human Rights Part candidate ranked the Democrat as their runoff choice. As a result, Albert Wheeler became the first black mayor in the city's history. ...

“IRV would encourage a more diverse range of candidates to run and thereby help remedy a flaw in the current system: Many citizens feel left out by its limitations. This more inclusive process would give voters a greater reason to vote, with an increased chance of their vote counting toward a winner. By opening the field to more choices, which, according to polls, a majority of Americans would welcome, IRV could help to lift voter turnout in the United States.”

Instant runoff voting represents the future of American elections. I look forward to Minneapolis joining our cities and states advancing our democracy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jesse L. Jackson, Jr." The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.
Member of Congress