

FairVote 2006

the consent of the governed

the time to make real the  
promise of democracy

# EQUAL

WE THE PEOPLE

the way democracy will be...



# FAIRVOTE

## our vision

FairVote pursues an innovative, solution-oriented pro-democracy agenda. Our vision of an equally secure, meaningful and effective vote for all Americans is founded on the principles articulated in the Declaration of Independence, Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and Martin Luther King's I Have a Dream speech: we are created equal, government is of, by and for the people and it is time to make real the promise of democracy.

Founded in 1992 and operating for many years as the Center for Voting and Democracy, FairVote is the nation's leading organization acting to transform our elections to achieve unfettered, fraud-free access to participation, a full spectrum of meaningful choices and majority rule with fair representation and a voice for all.

Achieving our goals rests upon bold, but achievable reforms: a constitutionally protected right to vote, direct election of the president, instant runoff voting for executive elections and proportional voting for legislative elections. As a reform catalyst, we develop and promote practical strategies to improve elections for local, state and national leaders.

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# letter from our chair...

...the way democracy will be

*That's our new slogan. It captures how our optimistic vision of democracy is at the cutting-edge of reform, but grounded in achievable strategies that have always defined our organization.*

*In 1980, after twenty years in Congress and a decade in the Republican congressional leadership, I ran for president as an independent. Today, I am proud of the independence from partisan calculation that FairVote brings to America's campaign for fair elections. That approach is not only idealistic; it is also practical. Putting the American voter first is the only way to achieve the consensus necessary to achieve enduring change.*

*FairVote's combination of idealism and pragmatism shows itself throughout our work. We promote what truly free and fair elections should be while working closely with local reformers to win tangible reforms. Through careful research, countless writings and persistent support for grassroots activism, our dedicated staff and volunteers have succeeded far beyond what many said was possible.*

*As I write this letter in July 2006, I am more convinced than ever that we can achieve our goals. Working with a dedicated community of reformers across the nation and knitting together a vision of democracy that strengthens the case for each of its elements, FairVote provides a roadmap for reform. I look forward to traveling that road with you.*



John B. Anderson  
Chair of the Board of Directors  
FairVote





## effective media...

...bringing our vision to the american people

We make sure the stories of our reform victories reach high and wide in the American press and to the changemakers most likely to back our reforms.

From the **Washington Post** to **USA Today**, **Associated Press** and the **New York Times**,

commentaries and news articles about our work reach millions of readers every year. FairVote's

staff members have been quoted in dozens of publications and have appeared on outlets like

**National Public Radio**, **NBC**, **CSPAN**, **CNN** and **Fox News**. We regularly write pieces targeted to

constituency publications. Our postal and email newsletters reach more than 30,000 readers.

# effective advocacy...

...translating vision into reality

## **Research that Changes How Americans Think About Elections:**

Understanding that solutions only come after successfully defining problems, FairVote pursues innovative research into local, state, federal, and international elections to demonstrate and explain flaws in America's electoral rules.

**Spotlight:** Our signature *Monopoly Politics* series, started in 1997, forever changed how our nation's leading political observers gauge congressional races and understand the roots of non-competitive elections.

## **Outreach to Infuse Our Big-Picture Vision into Reform Coalitions and Legislation:**

We communicate our unique insight into America's electoral flaws and how to fix them. We help build local, state and national reform coalitions and provide technical assistance to policymakers who embrace our reforms.

**Spotlight:** In 2003, our *Claim Democracy* conference brought together hundreds of leading advocates, civic leaders and elected officials to discuss strategies and support a broad-based pro-democracy vision that has increased cooperation among reformers.

## **Implementing Reform by Targeting Advocacy for Victories and Maximum Impact:**

Communities considering our innovative reforms want evidence of success. FairVote nurtures and supports winnable and high-profile reform campaigns to demonstrate the viability and value of our solutions.

**Spotlight:** We worked on every step of the instant runoff voting (IRV) success story in San Francisco, California – from advocacy to implementation and evaluation. This success sparked a rapid increase in cities and states debating and implementing IRV.

*"Pleased and amazed. Those words come to mind each time we have worked with FairVote."*

DR. BARBARA KLEIN, VICE PRESIDENT,  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ARIZONA

# VISION

# everyone's vote is equal...

## ...achieving presidential elections where we all count

Our system of presidential elections shreds the democratic principles of equality and majority rule. Popular vote losers can win, votes in different states carry unequal power and campaigns completely ignore two-thirds of the country.

FairVote works to ensure that everyone's vote is equal when electing America's one elected national office, no matter where they live. FairVote was the first national organization to embrace and help build support for the **National Popular Vote** plan that seeks to bring states representing a majority of electoral votes into a binding interstate agreement to award all of their electoral votes to the winner of the national popular vote. Within months of going public in 2006, it passed two state legislative chambers and won the endorsement of major publications like *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times* and *Chicago Sun Times*.

**Spotlight:** FairVote seeks to make nominations for the presidency more inclusive by giving more states an opportunity to participate in meaningful contests. Under **the American Plan**, more states would have a chance to hold competitive contests, rather than let Iowa and New Hampshire pick nominees for everyone. Small population states vote first, in order to give outsiders a chance, with larger states holding later contests to allow time for re-examination of frontrunners. Within each category, states would take turns going first. The proposal has won the support of Young Democrats of America and interest from Republicans and Democrats alike.

*"FairVote and its allies want to persuade legislatures in states representing at least 270 electoral votes – a majority of the 538-vote Electoral College – to pass laws entering their states into a legally enforceable interstate compact. That agreement would bind those states to give all of their electoral votes to whichever presidential ticket wins a majority of the national popular vote."*

SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER, MARCH 20, 2006

# EQUAL



# everyone has a right to vote...

...establishing a constitutional right to vote and universal registration

FairVote's Right to Vote Initiative imagines a democracy in which every eligible citizen has an equally protected right to vote in fairly administered elections. To achieve this goal we support a series of reforms, the centerpiece of which is an affirmative constitutional right to vote and municipal action in support of that ideal.

Together, our reforms would ensure that every citizen has a secure right to vote and that this right is not infringed by problems with registration, ballots, voting machines or partisan officials.

FairVote develops innovative strategies and works closely with backers of a constitutional right to vote, both in Congress and in the public interest community.

**Spotlight:** FairVote's chair John Anderson wrote a *New York Times* commentary in 2006 with the U.S. Election Assistance Commission's Ray Martinez that proposed policies designed to introduce all young adults to the mechanics of voting in their community and register them to vote. We drafted model legislation to allow 16-year-olds to "pre-register" to vote, with their registration automatically activated once they reach voting age. John Anderson and Rob Richie joined Rhode Island backers of this bill when introduced by a 24-year-old state legislator. The bill reached the governor's desk just two months later.

## Why It Is Time to Protect the Right to Vote

Because American elections started when universal suffrage was not widely accepted, states and counties have traditionally made key decisions about voting, often without sufficient funds. The results are grim:

- > More than nine million American citizens are denied the right to vote in federal elections where they live, but could vote if living in another state.
- > More than 13,000 jurisdictions make independent decisions about how to run national elections, all separate and largely unequal. Far more run local elections with little oversight.
- > Jurisdictions must choose voting equipment created by for-profit, under-regulated companies that do not provide public interest, transparent, verifiable voting.
- > Fewer than three in four eligible adults (and barely half of young adults) are registered to vote, reducing turnout and undercutting effective election administration.
- > The efforts of well-intentioned administrators and pollworkers are undercut by lack of funding and standards, with American democracy generally run "on the cheap."



# the majority decides...

...spoiler-free, majority voting  
in one election

There is a crowd in our democracy. When more than two candidates run, the candidate with the most votes can win despite being opposed by a majority of voters. This problem of “spoilers” discourages outsider candidacies, suppresses new ideas and can overturn the basic principle of majority rule. Traditional runoffs seek to ensure majority winners, but force candidates to raise more money, cost taxpayers millions and hurt voter turnout.

In contrast, instant runoff voting (IRV) elects candidates with majority support, accommodates voters having better choices and encourages candidates to reach out to more people – all in one election. IRV is a ranked choice voting system used for national elections in Ireland and Australia and in a growing number of American cities.

*“[Instant runoff voting] would allow people to vote  
for candidates they really want to elect, thereby  
increasing both enthusiasm and turnout.”*

Gov. HOWARD DEAN, 2005

*“Instant runoff voting will lead to good  
government because voters will elect leaders who  
have the support of a majority.”*

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN, 2002

**Spotlight:** In San Francisco (CA) and Burlington (VT), FairVote helped ensure voters could vote in spoiler-free elections with higher turnout and less negative campaigning. Boosted by our tools for education and advocacy, IRV passed in three other cities, with an average winning percentage of 75%.

# ELECT





## ...challenging winner-take-all with proportional voting

Our legislative bodies poorly reflect America's political views and racial, cultural and gender differences. By denying representation to up to 49% of voters, winner-take-all voting leads to undemocratic outcomes. In contrast, proportional voting ensures the right to rule belongs to a majority, but the right to representation belongs to all. It grants like-minded groupings of voters their fair share of seats – 51% of the vote earns a majority, but 10% earns 10% of seats.

Used around the world and in dozens of American cities, proportional voting has been advanced by both Sen. Barack Obama and President George Bush in their states. FairVote's community education, media outreach and cutting-edge research demonstrate how winner-take-all election systems lead to uncompetitive results, under-representation of women and communities of color, regional polarization and unfair partisan advantage. We need other political reforms, but only proportional voting allows all voters to choose their representatives.

**Spotlight:** We have filed amicus briefs proposing and defending proportional voting in numerous lawsuits, including 2006 filings in Washington state and in California in partnership with Common Cause. The California brief defended the state's new Voting Rights Act, an approach that could greatly expand fair representation and proportional voting in other states.

with fair representation for all...

*"The work that FairVote does on proportional voting is so valuable because it's one of the most important ways we can improve how democracy works. You're really responsible for getting information out at a local level."*

ANITA EARLS, DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY,  
CENTER FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

# FAIR

# innovative and influential analysis...



...exposing problems,  
proposing solutions

FairVote's Voting and Democracy Research Center helps Americans better understand their democracy by presenting revealing and objective research on the results and consequences of our elections. We issue regular print and on-line analyses and have collected the world's most substantive on-line resources on topics like non-majority winners in executive races, voter turnout in runoffs, the roots of partisan polarization and redistricting in all 50 states.

We have three series: *Research Reports*, *Policy Perspective* and *Democracy Innovations*. They range from analysis of the institutional dynamics of overseas elections to measurements of turnout, competition, proportionality of results and the implications of institutional design for representative democracy. By contrasting what works and doesn't work abroad, we build a menu of options that can inform the American reform movement.

**Spotlight:** FairVote's ***Monopoly Politics*** and ***Dubious Democracy*** series on congressional elections have been influential with experts, pundits and reformers who turn to us to gauge competitiveness and likely election outcomes. Within days of U.S. House elections, *Dubious Democracy* will quantify key measures of democratic health in all 50 states and *Monopoly Politics* will project winners and victory margins in the great majority of U.S. House elections to take place two years later – a startling insight into why Members of Congress are so entrenched.

*"When I'm looking for a unique take on the state of the nation's electorate, I always know Rob Richie and the team at FairVote are going to deliver. More importantly, I always am confident that the statistical framework from which their analysis is derived is never compromised."*

CHUCK TODD, EDITOR, *THE HOTLINE*



# looking forward...

...projects on FairVote's horizon

## **From Campus to Community:**

### **Students Advancing Reform**

In 2003, University of California-Davis students reached out to FairVote for support before handily passing a measure to adopt choice voting for electing their student senate and instant runoff voting their president. After voting with these systems, college students lobbied the Davis City Council to pass them in city elections. The City of Davis Governance Taskforce voted 8-1 to recommend choice voting, and the Council then placed it on the Davis ballot. This model of empowering students to reform their campus elections and export the positive changes to their city and state is one we will replicate at campuses around the nation.

*"FairVote brings an important voice to the democracy reform world – always looking for new ideas to invigorate democracy in America, and working with others to help bring those ideas to fruition."*

STUART COMSTOCK-GAY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
NATIONAL VOTING RIGHTS INSTITUTE AND  
DEMOCRACY PROGRAM DIRECTOR,  
DEMOS: A NETWORK OF IDEAS AND ACTION

## **Municipal Right to Vote Initiative:**

### **Think Constitutionally, Act Locally**

Addressing our national failure to protect the right to vote, FairVote plans to join with allies in calling on local governments to pass a resolution endorsing a right to vote amendment in the U.S. Constitution. That model resolution also would call for concrete action. City elections can fall far short of current standards for state and federal elections, but also have the potential to surpass those standards. Cities can expand the franchise to allow legal immigrants or people with felony convictions to vote in their local elections, explore universal voter registration or provide more multilingual voter education. They can mitigate the effects of restrictive state laws by taking extra steps to help residents comply with potential regressive changes to state laws.

## **Military and Overseas Voters:**

### **Lessons for Protecting the Right to Vote**

We can learn a lot about how we protect the right to vote when seeing how our system can accommodate voters who have been displaced or moved overseas. The federal government passed a statute to protect the rights of military voters, and one result has been the Department of Justice advising states to allow overseas voters to cast instant runoff voting ballots in elections with runoffs. But the law doesn't cover state and local elections, which FairVote seeks to change. We have identified a range of ways to improve protections of military voting that also would help a broad range of overseas and student voters who cast absentee ballots.

FUTURE

# indicators of success...

## ...website impact

Number of Pages on FairVote's Website:  
2,325

Average Number of Unique Visitors to  
Website Per Month:  
140,000 and rising

**Internet Users Rely on FairVote's Web Resources** – We are in the top-ten search results for key reform terms in the nation's leading internet search engines (including Google, Yahoo, etc).

### Sample Terms

- Redistricting
- Voter Turnout
- Voting
- Runoff Election
- Direct Election
- Democracy
- Fair Elections
- Youth Voter Registration
- Election Reform
- Better Elections
- Spoiler Problem
- National Popular Vote
- Instant Runoff Voting
- Proportional Representation

## ...media outreach

FairVote's media outreach has resulted in editorials, op-eds, letters to the editor and articles discussing our reforms in all of the nation's twenty largest newspapers.

### Top Twenty Papers by Circulation

1	USA Today	2,528,437
2	Wall Street Journal	2,058,342
3	New York Times*	1,683,855
4	Los Angeles Times	1,231,318
5	Washington Post*	960,684
6	Chicago Tribune*	957,212
7	New York Daily News	795,153
8	Philadelphia Inquirer	705,965
9	Denver Post	704,806
10	Houston Chronicle	692,557
11	New York Post	691,420
12	Detroit News/Free Press	669,315
13	Dallas Morning News*	649,709
14	Minneapolis Star Tribune*	606,698
15	Boston Globe*	604,068
16	Newark Star-Ledger	599,628
17	Atlanta Journal-Const.	561,405
18	Phoenix Arizona Republic	556,465
19	New York Newsday	488,825
20	San Francisco Chronicle*	451,504

\*Indicates FairVote's Rob Richie has also met with the editorial board.

## ...universities

Over 50% of the nation's top thirty national universities (based on rankings by *U.S. News and World Report*) have adopted instant runoff voting and/or choice voting for their student government elections.

- California Institute of Technology
- Cornell University
- Dartmouth College
- Duke University
- Georgetown University
- Harvard University
- Johns Hopkins University
- Massachusetts Inst. of Technology
- Princeton University
- Rice University
- Stanford University
- Tufts University
- University of California – Berkeley
- University of California – Los Angeles
- University of Virginia
- Wake Forest University



FairVote has the support of loyal donors, innovative foundations and dedicated FairVote staff. We have received critical volunteer help, ranging from pro bono legal assistance in filing amicus briefs and non-profit applications to having more than 100 energetic young people work as interns. We thank our donors for their increasing levels of support each year to boost our progress. Between 2000 and 2005, our number of \$100 donors nearly tripled, our \$1,000 donors doubled and our \$5,000 donors quintupled.

We have also diversified our revenue streams, and bolstered our programs by running ranked choice voting elections for private organizations and corporations. Too often, universities and organizations looking to reform their elections hit a wall of voting equipment that cannot accommodate choice voting and instant runoff voting. FairVote is developing the capacity to perform on-line elections – a project that not only will greatly increase the number of people directly experiencing better voting methods, but pay for itself.

Charitable foundations have been essential to our progress. Those supporting our programs during the past decade include:

<i>Arca Foundation*</i>	<i>San Francisco Foundation</i>
<i>Deer Creek Foundation</i>	<i>Solidago Foundation</i>
<i>Dudley Foundation</i>	<i>Stern Family Fund</i>
<i>Funding Exchange</i>	<i>Stewart Mott Charitable Trust</i>
<i>Ford Foundation*</i>	<i>Terrell Family Fund</i>
<i>Herb Block Foundation</i>	<i>Tides Foundation</i>
<i>HKH Foundation</i>	<i>Trellis Fund</i>
<i>Joyce Foundation*</i>	<i>Vanguard Foundation</i>
<i>McKay Foundation</i>	<i>William Trout Charitable Trust</i>
<i>Ms. Foundation</i>	<i>Working Assets</i>
<i>Open Society Institute*</i>	<i>Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation</i>
<i>Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund</i>	<i>* Grants totaling more than \$100,000, 1996–2006</i>
<i>Rockefeller Brothers Fund</i>	

# a rising base of support...

*“By grounding analysis of our elections in solid facts and its willingness to adopt bold initiatives, FairVote forces us to ask hard questions about the state of our democracy and the reforms that we embrace.”*

MICHAEL CAUDELL-FEAGAN, SENIOR OFFICER, STATE  
POLICY INITIATIVES, PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS

# our leadership...

FairVote's 21-member Board of Directors is a mix of national leaders and local reformers, reflecting a broad range of experience and accomplishment. The Board meets four times a year and provides overall direction and fundraising assistance to FairVote. Members are also active on committees and work directly with staff.

John Anderson, *Chair*  
*Law professor, former Member of Congress (IL) and 1980 presidential candidate*

Edward Hailes, Jr., *Vice-chair*  
*Senior attorney, Advancement Project*

Cynthia Terrell, *Secretary*  
*Board member, American Friends Service Committee*

William Redpath, *Treasurer*  
*CPA and Chair, Libertarian Party*

Nikolas Bowie  
*Student, Yale University*

Erin Bowser  
*Executive Director, Ohio PIRG*

Antonio Gonzalez  
*President, William C. Velasquez Institute*

Hendrik Hertzberg  
*Senior editor, New Yorker magazine*

Jesse Jackson Jr.  
*U.S. House of Representatives (IL)*

Malia Lazu  
*Director, Racial Justice Campaign Fund*

Laura Liswood  
*Corporate executive and Secretary General, Council of Women's World Leaders*

Pete Martineau  
*Board, Californians for Electoral Reform*

Nina Moseley  
*Former Director, Democracy South*

Clay Mulford  
*Partner, Jones Day law firm and campaign manager, 1992 Perot presidential campaign*

Krist Novoselic  
*Author, Of Grunge and Government*

Jamin Raskin  
*Professor, Washington College of Law*

William Raspberry  
*Retired columnist, Washington Post*

Ken Ritchie  
*CEO, Electoral Reform Society*

Rashad Robinson  
*Director of regional media, GLAAD*

Katherine Spillar  
*Executive Vice-President, Feminist Majority*

David Wilner  
*Co-Founder, Wind River Systems*

FairVote Vice Chair Edward Hailes, Jr.

## our staff...

The national office has nine staffers, typically supported by both long-term and short-term volunteers – including 17 in both the summer of 2005 and 2006.

A close-knit **team**, staffers focus primarily on their own programs, supporting each other's work when needed. Executive director Rob Richie has led FairVote since its founding in 1992. Program director David Moon started with FairVote as a legal intern, then rejoined us as program director. As FairVote's program **expands**, we expect to add full-time staff to run FairVote's Voting and Democracy Research Center, IRV America program and Program for Representative Government, along with additional support staff to assist with field organizing and research.

Rob Richie  
*Executive Director*

David Moon  
*Program Director*

Ryan O'Donnell  
*Communications Director*

Bill Shein  
*Presidential Elections Reform Director*

Christina Bernard  
*Development Director*

Rachel Lewis  
*Outreach Director*

Ryan Griffin  
*Field Director*

Jack Santucci  
*Research Fellow*

Usman Ahmed  
*Communications Associate*

# FAIRVOTE

*"FairVote asks 'What would Thomas Jefferson (and Madison and Hamilton and Washington) do today?' Carrying the spirit of the Founders into the 21st century: that's FairVote's modest, yet audacious mission."*

HENDRIK HERTZBERG, SENIOR EDITOR, *THE NEW YORKER*

*"I am proud to support FairVote, which continues to do important work to bring real democracy to the United States."*

LANI GUINIER, HARVARD LAW PROFESSOR

*"FairVote is a strong advocate for returning government control back to American citizens."*

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE JOHN TANNER (TN)

*"Music and politics are both about people coming together. I've seen the music world transformed and today see a desire for changing politics, particularly among young people. As a FairVote board member active in my community, I'm part of a forward-looking, positive new wave of democracy."*

KRIST NOVOSELIC, FORMER BASS PLAYER IN *NIRVANA*

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