



IRV America

www.fairvote.org

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There is a crowd in our current voting system. Plurality voting, where the candidate with the most votes wins, is dysfunctional when more than two candidates run. It promotes zero-sum politics that discourage new candidates, suppress new ideas and encourage negative campaigns rather than inclusive efforts to build consensus.

In contrast, instant runoff voting (IRV) elects candidates who have majority support, accommodates voters having better choices and encourages winning candidates to reach out to more people. Join with us to seek IRV to elect our top local, state and national leaders.

IRV America program advances IRV through research, outreach and advocacy. We assist in every step of what it takes to implement IRV from initial community education to researching past elections and laws, advising campaigns and assisting implementation. We also help with increasing understanding of IRV through its use in student elections, online voting and much more.

How IRV Works: The voters rank their choices for an office: 1, 2, and 3. (Nobody has to rank more than one candidate.) In the first round of counting, the voters' first choice rankings are totaled. If any candidate has won a majority of the vote, that candidate wins. If not, the ballot rankings are used to simulate a series of runoff elections – instantly. The weak candidates are successively eliminated, and ballots cast for those candidates are counted for their next choice candidate who remains in the runoff round of counting. Once the field is reduced to two, the winner is guaranteed to have a majority of the vote.

Where it is used:

Utah: In 2002, the Republican Party started using IRV at its state conventions for nominating congressional and statewide candidates.

Louisiana: More than 10,000 overseas and out-of-state military voters received IRV ballots in 2004.

The system works very well. Arkansas and South Carolina passed similar laws in 2005-2006.

Washington State: Gov. Gregoire (D) signed a bill in April 2005 allowing IRV for a pilot program in three major cities, which passed with bipartisan support in the legislature.

“Instant runoff voting would... encourage candidates to hold a firm set of principles without worrying that their beliefs could make them unviable. It would allow people to vote for candidates they really want to elect, thereby increasing both enthusiasm and turnout.”

- Howard Dean, 2005

“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.”

- John McCain, 2002

Vermont: Gov. Douglas (R) in May 2005 signed a bill for Burlington to use IRV in mayoral elections in 2006. Burlington's first mayoral election went “flawlessly”, and legislation to adopt IRV statewide has broad support.

California: San Francisco had highly successful IRV elections in 2004 and 2005 after voters approved IRV in 2002. The City expects to save at least \$15 million over the coming decade.

Universities: Many colleges use IRV for student elections, including nearly all Ivy League schools and the Universities of Minnesota, Oklahoma, UC-Davis and Virginia.

Organizations: Many corporations and groups elect their boards with IRV. Even the Heisman trophy is determined by ranked voting.

Make it Happen!

- Connect locally. Several states and cities have groups advancing IRV. Visit www.fairvote.org/irv for links to your area.
- Obtain our *IRV Activist Kit* online, with tips on reform opportunities and talking points.
- Investigate the possibility of using IRV at colleges, K-12 schools and private groups.
- Support federal and state legislation
- Ask well-known Americans to support IRV.
- Join national or state listservs. For more information, visit www.fairvote.org