

Ranked Choice Voting Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS RANKED CHOICE VOTING?

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is a system in which **voters rank candidates by preference**, and those preferences are used to elect the winner(s) of the election. If no candidate receives a majority, 50+% of the vote, the candidate with the least amount of votes is eliminated and any first choice votes they received are redistributed. This **continues until a candidate receives a majority of the vote**.

WHY DOES REPRESENTWOMEN SUPPORT RCV?

RCV is **one of RepresentWomen's core reforms**. Research has indicated that RCV **leads to more diverse representation** by eliminating the "spoiler effect", encouraging more civil campaigns, and more.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE STATUS QUO/WINNER-TAKE-ALL?

Winner-Take-All systems discourage women in several ways. Political parties are less likely to support a woman running over a male candidate and may **even actively discourage women from running**. This system also creates **more expensive and negative campaigns**. Both aspects can act as a stronger deterrent to women rather than men.

HOW CAN YOU BE SURE RCV HELPS WOMEN?

There is no definitive way to prove that RCV causes better outcomes for women, but it is a type of electoral reform that has **correlated with positive results for women, people of color, and women of color**. Even if the women-positive results from RCV elections were bolstered by other factors, there is **strong evidence that RCV seems to benefit women candidates in comparison to Winner-Take-All system**.

SHOULDN'T CANDIDATES BE ELECTED BY MERIT, NOT GENDER?

Absolutely. The **issue of the current system is that many highly qualified women, especially women of color, are not running in the first place due to structural barriers**. RepresentWomen supports RCV because it creates a fairer environment for these candidates to run and win.

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WHY IS DIVERSE REPRESENTATION IMPORTANT?

America is an extremely diverse country in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, and beliefs. By having more accurate representation, **more of our communities have a seat at the political table**. Through their Representatives, these communities can have their concerns, issues, ideas, and desires heard – leading to **more inclusive, innovative, and just legislation**.

DOES RCV HURT MINORITIES?

FairVote released a report in 2021 that examined the ways in which communities of color benefit from RCV. Their report concluded that candidates of color benefited from the round-by-round counting process and that voters of color tended to rank more candidates. **There was no indication RCV hurts minorities.**

IS RCV TOO COMPLICATED FOR VOTERS?

A critical measurement of a voting system is how well voters understand, engage, and feel politically empowered by it. **Recent surveys from NYC and Utah have suggested that RCV is not only easy to use for voters, but that it is well-liked.**

IS RCV NEW/USED ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD?

RCV (also known as Instant-runoff Voting, Alternative Vote or Preferential Voting) has been used internationally **since the early 1900s** and was initially used in America in 1915. **It is not a modern or untested voting system.**

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT RCV?

RepresentWomen has studied the effects of RCV elections on women since 2010. Our research includes two reports (2016 and 2020), live tracking of 2021 RCV data, case studies, and more. To see all our data, please visit **www.representwomen.org**.

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