

Ranked Choice Voting

Ranked Choice Voting is a simple way to give Massachusetts voters more choice and promote positive, inclusive, and fair elections. Instead of picking just one candidate, voters rank the candidates on the ballot in order of preference. Ranked Choice Voting ensures that the winning candidate has majority support and that similar candidates can't split the vote or "spoil" the election. Plus, it encourages positive campaigning, eliminates "strategic" voting by allowing voters to select who they like best without fear of hurting their second choice, and encourages more candidates to run for office.

How does Ranked Choice Voting work?

It's simple! Voters rank candidates in order of preference. If a candidate receives more than half of the first choices, they win, just like any other election. If not, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and voters who picked that candidate as 'number 1' will have their votes count for their next choice. This process continues until a candidate wins with more than half of the votes, which is a majority.

Where has it been used?

The State of Maine uses Ranked Choice Voting. Five more states use it for military and overseas voters to participate in runoff elections and eighteen U.S. cities use RCV for their local elections, including Minneapolis St. Paul, San Francisco, Memphis, and Santa Fe. Plus, countries like Australia, Ireland, and the U.K. have used RCV in major elections for decades.

Which races does the initiative petition cover?

Advocates must collect approximately 120,000 signatures by November 21, 2019 to place a question on the November 2020 ballot asking voters whether they would like to adopt RCV for Massachusetts elections (like Governor and Attorney General), legislative offices (State Senate and State Representative), and federal congressional offices (U.S. Senate and U.S. Representative). Ranked Choice Voting for presidential, local municipal, or county commissioner elections, or regional district school committee member are not covered.

Benefits of Ranked Choice Voting

- ✓ **Winners with Broad Support**
Ranked Choice Voting ensures candidates win elections with the broadest possible support, upholding the principle of majority rule that legitimizes outcomes for voters and candidates.
- ✓ **Positive Campaigns**
Candidates are incentivized to work together to find common ground on issues in the hopes of earning voters' backup choices.
- ✓ **Promote Diverse Candidates**
RCV encourages more candidates to run for office without fear of vote-splitting.
- ✓ **Eliminates Strategic Voting & Spoiler Effects**
Voters are free to choose candidates they like best, without fear of wasting their vote and inadvertently helping elect the candidate they like the least. Similarly, voting for a lesser-known candidate does not take votes away from a similar leading candidate resulting in a candidate with opposite views being elected.