

Study Purpose – review alternative voting methodologies to identify those that may have the potential to improve the democratic process in Delaware. Study time frame July 2019-June 2021.

What’s wrong with Plurality Voting?

- ❖ Winners may not have majority support
- ❖ **Vote splitting** causes non-representative outcomes, and also discourages good candidates from running
- ❖ **Strategic voting** – the incentive is to vote for “the lesser of two evils” rather than for candidates we really prefer

What are the alternatives?




- Standard Runoff Voting (SRV) – If no candidate receives 50%, a second election is held between the top two candidates.
- Rank Choice Voting (RCV) – Voters rank candidates in order of preference (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.) If no candidate receives more than half the votes, then the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated. Voters who picked this candidate as #1, will have their votes count for their next choice. This continues until a candidate wins more than half the votes.
- Range Voting (Score) – Voters rate each candidate on a numeric scale, and the candidate with the highest average wins.

(plus several other voting methods that are outside of our study scope)

How can this improve elections in DE?

- ✚ Non plurality voting methods would be beneficial for primary elections in Delaware, where during the last four years several races were won by less than 30%.

When you can show your support for only one candidate....

-  1) You can't express your preferences as clearly as in other voting methods.
-  2) You might be inclined to vote for a candidate who is not your favorite, or you might be discouraged and not vote at all.
-  3) Two similar candidates may split the vote, resulting in the election of a third, less desirable candidate.

The plurality vote is pretty much the worst voting system there is. – UC-Irvine mathematician Donald Saari
<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/spoil-proofing-elections>

Graphic by LWV of Boulder County CO Voting Methods Team



Comparing the Voting Methods

Criterion	Plurality (current)	Standard runoff	RCV	Range/ Score
Simplicity of use for voter	High	Medium	Low	Low
Discourages negative campaigning	No	No	Yes	Yes
Resistant to spoilers	Low	Medium	High	Medium
PROS	Simple to understand. Inexpensive.	Winner has majority support.	Winner has majority support.	Every vote matters.
CONS	Lack of majority support.	Cost. Varied voter turnout for runoff.	Election more complicated and costly.	No past experience in govt. elections
Encourages 3 rd party candidates	Low	Medium	High	High
Cost to implement	Low	High	High	High
Where it is used	Most state and national elections	Gen: GA, LA Pr: AL, NC, AR, GA, OK, SC, SD & TX	Gen: Maine Pr: TX & VA Many local elections	
Prospects for adoption in US	High	High	Medium	Low

Further study...

The presentation slides included a list of online resources to consult for further information. Slides will be sent in PDF format to all attendees who reserved their seats using Eventbrite.

To have the presentation PDF sent an additional recipient, to get a copy of the study scope, or to explore joining the LWVDE study team, please contact Kim Wells or Jill Itzkowitz:

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