



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Arlington, Virginia – April 28, 2020 - The League of Women Voters of Arlington supports the recently enabled option for ranked choice voting.

LWV-Arl supports implementation of a pilot program in Arlington elections to initiate ranked choice voting. This option has been enabled by the passage of HB 1103 Ranked Choice Voting Elections for Local Governing Bodies, Local Option Pilot Program.

As described at the Arlington County webpage on Elections - Ranked Choice Voting:

"RCV uses the majority approach to elections: the winning candidate(s) must receive a majority of the votes cast for the office. If one candidate is to be elected, as with our General Assembly offices this year, the winning candidate must receive more than 50% of the votes cast to be elected.

But the most notable feature about RCV is that voters rank the candidates by preference. In the simplest example, if there are three candidates on the ballot, you would rank them by your first, second, and third choice. If the initial tally shows no candidate received 50% of the vote, the third-place candidate is dropped, and that candidate's second-choice votes are allocated to the two

remaining candidates, based on voter selections. If there are multiple candidates, voting could continue through several rounds until the 50% majority is achieved."

The LWV-Arl finds many benefits to Ranked Choice Voting including:

- Requiring a candidate to have true majority support no matter how many candidates run in an election.
- Leading to more positive campaigns as candidates compete to be not just a first choice at the expense of all other candidates, but also second or third choices of each voter.
- Encouraging voters to research all candidates.
- Allowing voters to list their true preferences, as they do not have to worry about "wasting" their vote on a less-popular candidate.
 - If a voter's first choice can't win, the system will allocate their vote to their second or third choices.

In addition, ranked choice may persuade new types of candidates to enter races - perhaps people who want to appeal to broad, rather than narrow bases.

With some caveats, the General Assembly voted to allow RCV in Arlington providing that the County pays for it. In the age of Covid the County may not have the desire or ability to make that kind of outlay at this time, and the Department of Elections would have to formulate guidelines before this could proceed.

According to LWV of Arlington president Joan Porte, "Virginians were leaders in creating American democracy, and it's only fitting that we are now one of a handful of states updating our Democracy to include ranked-choice voting."

The League of Women of Arlington is committed to producing positive change in our communities. Current areas of focus for the Arlington LWV are voter registration, voter protection, affordable housing, and fair redistricting.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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