



MYTHS VS. FACTS ABOUT PROPOSITION 1

MYTH: Open Primaries & Ranked Choice Voting will be difficult or confusing for voters.

FACT: Voting in a Ranked Choice election will be as simple as counting to four. In general elections, voters will simply be allowed to rank up to four candidates by order of preference. A voter can rank just one candidate if they choose.

Utah recently held elections with Ranked Choice Voting in over a dozen cities. In a survey conducted after the elections, over 80% of the Utah voters surveyed said the election system was easy to understand. A 2022 Alaska survey found that 85% of Alaska voters viewed the process as “simple.”

MYTH: Ranked Choice Voting violates the principle of “one person, one vote.”

FACT: Ranked Choice elections give every voter a single vote and each vote counts equally.

Under the proposed initiative, a vote is initially counted for a voter’s first choice. If the voter’s first choice is eliminated in a subsequent round of tabulation, that single vote goes to the voter’s next choice.

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in 2011 that each ballot in an RCV election is counted as no more than one vote, and the Alaska Supreme Court ruled in 2022 that “there is no question that a ranked-choice vote is a single vote.”

MYTH: It will take 15 days to get election results.

FACT: Ranked Choice results can be ready and released just as quickly as other election results. In Utah, the results of Ranked Choice elections are announced on election night or the morning after. Some large states like Alaska choose to wait to release ANY election results simply to ensure they have all ballots returned by mail. This choice has nothing to do with ranked choice

voting. Most jurisdictions who administer Ranked Choice elections are able to release ranked results alongside other election results on the same timeline.

MYTH: Ranked Choice Voting is expensive to implement.

FACT: We've seen in states and localities across the country that the one-time cost of implementing ranked choice voting is minimal.

In the state of Maine, the cost of setting up ranked choice voting was \$441,804, or about 50 cents per voter.

In Utah, where RCV has been implemented in more than a dozen cities, RCV implementation only required a low-cost software upgrade. Former Utah County Clerk Josh Daniels, who oversaw the implementation of RCV, has recommended that Idaho adopt the same low-cost upgrades as Utah.

MYTH: Ranked Choice Voting will require Idaho to replace all of its voting machines

FACT: Idaho does not need to replace its existing voting machines to conduct RCV elections. With minimal software upgrades, our existing machines will facilitate ranked choice elections. In some of Idaho's rural counties, where ballots are counted by hand, counties could continue using hand counting. In Maine, some municipalities hand-count their ballots without machines and they've still been able to conduct RCV elections for several election cycles.

MYTH: The only machines that conduct Ranked Choice Voting elections are Dominion, which Idaho does not currently have.

FACT: Nearby Utah administered ranked choice voting using the same machine vendor as Idaho – ES&S. In fact, most major vendors across the country have the ability to conduct ranked choice voting.

MYTH: Idaho does not have access to the software necessary for tabulating results under Ranked Choice Voting.

FACT: Idaho uses the same nationally recognized systems that are used in other states to effectively administer ranked choice voting elections. For example, in Utah, many cities utilized ranked choice voting in their elections and many of the counties who administer those elections used the same vendor as Idaho (ES&S) and were able to administer ranked choice elections just fine. The state can use a widely available and affordable software tool called “RCTab” that enables states to run ranked choice election results from across multiple counties and multiple vendor systems.

MYTH: Ranked Choice Voting lacks transparency and involves complicated algorithms.

FACT: The “algorithms” involved in counting RCV results are simple addition and subtraction. It’s 3rd-grade math. RCV has been around since long before voting machines, let alone computers.

MYTH: Ranked Choice Voting elections can’t be audited.

FACT: RCV elections can and have been audited. A conventional RCV audit requires only a voting system that includes a verifiable paper trail, a voting system that can export a cast vote record (most do), and audit procedures. Risk-limiting audits (RLAs), the gold standard of post-election audits, can also be used with RCV elections. RLAs have been conducted on RCV city elections in Colorado, and for three RCV presidential primaries in 2020. In addition to auditing the machine’s reading of ballots, the round-by-round tally can also be audited via the publication of the cast vote record.

MYTH: With Ranked Choice Voting, it’s impossible to hand-count ballots.

FACT: RCV does not require electronic voting machines or computers; it can be counted or verified by hand count. RCV has been around since long before voting machines or computers.

Examples of hand-counting RCV elections:

- o St. Paul, MN and Telluride, CO
- o Nationwide elections in Australia, Ireland, and Northern Ireland

- o The Virginia GOP used paper ballots for RCV contests in 2020, 2021, and 2022, and hand-counted a GOP congressional nomination in 2022
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MYTH: RCV lowers voter turnout.

FACT: There is no hard evidence for the claim that RCV lowers turnout. Some research finds that RCV increases turnout while other research suggests it has little or no effect on turnout.¹

MYTH: With Ranked Choice Voting your ballot can be thrown out.

FACT: Ranked Choice Voting counts the ballot of every voter. Just because none of a voter's chosen candidates win or make it to the final round, it is false and deceptive to claim that their ballot is "thrown out." Under our current election system, voters routinely choose candidates who don't have a real shot at winning. We don't say those voters' ballots were "thrown out" just because they didn't vote for a competitive candidate.

MYTH: Idaho's election system is too decentralized to conduct Ranked Choice Voting elections.

Fact: Idaho currently compiles results from every county for statewide elections. This is no different for ranked choice elections. Local election administrators would transmit their results and the data of ranked choice elections to the state who would then similarly compile all those results together before determining the winner of the ranked choice contest in a statewide or multi-county election.

MYTH: "Ranked Choice Voting is prone to errors and fraud."

FACT: Ranked Choice Voting is every bit as secure as our current election system. Current methods of auditing election results—including manual comparisons of paper ballots with machine records—are entirely compatible with Ranked Choice Voting.

¹ See Rachel Hutchinson, "Ranked Choice Voting and Voter Turnout" (<https://fairvote.org/ranked-choice-voting-and-voter-turnout/>)