

Democracy is About Choices

Support HB 2761

HB 2761 gives cities and counties in Oregon a **choice**: whether or not to use Instant Runoff Voting for their local elections. **Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) is a better way to vote.** Also known as preference voting or ranked choice voting, IRV ensures that the winner of an election is supported by the majority of voters. *Under current Oregon law, a candidate can win an election without the support of a majority of voters.* With IRV, candidates would no longer be able to win with less than a majority vote. IRV protects the interests of the majority of Oregonians. HB 2761 gives cities and counties more choices for how to run their elections. HB 2761 gives voters more choices, too.

Other benefits of IRV:

- IRV encourages positive, issue-oriented campaigning
- IRV eliminates the “spoiler” dynamic in elections
- IRV gives voters more meaningful choices
- IRV means that no one who votes for a third party will cast a “wasted vote”
- IRV eliminates expensive, two-round runoff elections

Questions and Answers about using IRV in Oregon

Would HB 2761 require the use of IRV in Oregon?

No. HB 2761 would simply *allow* cities and counties to use IRV. This bill doesn't require anything; it is known as enabling legislation. Separate legislation would be required to implement IRV. Having this legislation on the books simply gives cities and counties the option to use IRV.

What would the cost be?

There would be no cost. This bill would simply allow the use of IRV.

Is IRV constitutional?

Yes. In fact, Oregon is the only state which has a preference voting provision in its Constitution (Article II, Section 16).

Is IRV used anywhere?

Yes, in lots of places: San Francisco uses IRV and Cambridge, Massachusetts has been using a variation of it for many years. IRV is used to elect the Mayor of London, Ireland's president and many officeholders in Australia. IRV is used by the Utah Republican party and the American Political Science Association. The Eugene Charter Review Committee recommended IRV for city elections in 2001. A number of colleges in Oregon use IRV for their student elections including Lane Community College, Reed and Lewis & Clark. In the recent November elections, Tacoma residents (Pierce County, Washington), along with the voters of Minneapolis, Oakland

and Davis, California, all approved IRV for local elections. Burlington, Vermont and Ferndale, Michigan also use IRV.

How does IRV work?

Instead of just voting for one candidate, voters rank candidates in order of preference: 1, 2, 3 and so on. It takes a majority to win. If anyone receives a majority of first choice votes, that candidate is elected. If not, the last place candidate is defeated, just as in a runoff election, and all ballots are counted again, taking into consideration the second choice votes on the ballots for the defeated candidate. The process of eliminating the last place candidate and recounting the ballots continues until one candidate receives a majority of the vote. With modern voting equipment, all of the counting and recounting takes place quickly and automatically.

How can I help support HB 2761?

Write and call the members of the House Elections, Ethics and Rules Committee, especially the Chair and Vice Chairs, and request a hearing for HB 2761. You can also call and write your own state representative and senator and ask them to co-sponsor and support HB 2761. You can reach them by calling the Oregon Capitol, toll-free at 800-332-2313. If you belong to an organization, have your group endorse this bill. Write letters to the editor supporting HB 2761 and election reform; use this fact sheet for “talking points” but write the letter in your own words.

Elections, Ethics, and Rules

Membership:

Diane Rosenbaum, Chair
Vicki Berger, Vice-Chair
Peter Buckley, Vice-Chair
Sal Esquivel
Dave Hunt
Arnie Roblan
Kim Thatcher

Staffing:

Jim Stembridge
Shauna Parker

For the Senate:

Rules

Membership:

Kate Brown, Chair
Ted Ferrioli, Vice-Chair
Betsy Johnson
Laurie Monnes Anderson
David Nelson

Staffing:

Marjorie Taylor
Krista Schuchard

To get contact information for your representative go to:

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/house/>

From there, you can also find information for your Senator.

Please contact ALL of these folks and tell them

- 1) You want them to support the Buckley-Dingfelder Instant Runoff Voting Bill
- 2) You support the right of cities and counties to choose the election method of their choice
- 3) IRV, or preference voting, has been part of the Oregon Constitution for almost 100 years
- 4) Please give the IRV bill a hearing ASAP and support it with a “do pass” recommendation.

Where can I learn more about IRV?

Visit www.irvoregon.org for information about current legislation on Oregon.

Fair Vote: The Center for Voting & Democracy is the nation’s leading voting rights organization focusing on more fair and democratic election methods. Their website, www.fairvote.org, is the best place to learn more about IRV and to find other resources, such as books and articles, about different election methods.

To connect with other citizens working for the rights of cities and counties to use the election method of their choice, consider joining the email list-serve below.

<<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FairVoteOR/>

Another way to subscribe to the list is to send a blank email message to the following address:

FairVoteOR-subscribe@yahoogroups.com