

Why Vermont Needs Instant Runoff Voting (IRV)

IRV Solves Some Potentially Serious Problems With Our Election Laws

- ✓ *Majority rule* is a fundamental principle of democracy. But, whenever three or more candidates are running (which is increasingly common), the votes may split, such that no candidate gets a majority. Under existing election laws for most offices, a candidate with the highest vote count will win, even though the majority of voters might prefer one of the other candidates -- thus defeating majority rule.
- ✓ In the case of the Governor, Lt. Governor and Treasurer elections, the Vermont Constitution requires the winner to get more than half the votes, not a mere plurality. If no candidate gets a majority, the decision of who should be governor is taken away from the voters and given to the general assembly.
- ✓ **Instant runoff voting is a solution that eliminates the problem of "spoiler" candidates, and assures that the candidate preferred by a majority of the voters wins the election.**

IRV Works Like A Regular Runoff, But With Just One Election

- ✓ With IRV, voters mark their ballot with their first-choice candidate, the same as they do now, but also have the option of indicating their runoff choices. If no candidate gets a first-choice majority, the bottom vote-getters are eliminated. As in a regular runoff, voters who preferred a candidate who didn't make it into the runoff, have to select one of the remaining candidates. But, rather than calling the voters back for a second election (costly and often low-turnout), those voters have already indicated their alternate choices. The ballots simply need to be recounted, with each ballot counting as one vote for the highest-ranked candidate who is still in the running.

IRV Is Easy For Voters To Use

- ✓ **It's as easy as 1, 2, 3.** Voters just rank candidates in order of preference. But if some voters don't want to indicate a second or third choice, they don't have to: they can just mark a single candidate, as they do now.
- ✓ **With instant runoff voting, voters can confidently vote according to their true preferences without worrying about "spoiler" candidates, or wasting their vote.**

IRV Is A Proven System

- ✓ IRV was invented in America in 1870, and has been widely used for generations in countries like Australia and Ireland. **IRV is recommended in current editions of Robert's Rules of Order** (called "preferential voting").

IRV Is Gaining Broad Support

- ✓ IRV does not favor or hurt any particular party or political ideology. **Ruth Dwyer was a co-sponsor when she was a House member, and Governor Dean has testified in favor of IRV before a Senate committee.** Sponsors of the IRV bill last session included four Republicans, four Democrats and one Progressive.
- ✓ IRV has also been endorsed by the Vermont chapters of the League of Women Voters, the Grange, Common Cause, the American Association of University Women, VPIRG, and the Older Women's League. A citizens' commission established by the Vt. House of Representatives unanimously recommended IRV in 1999.