

RANKED CHOICE VOTING

An effective democracy depends on collaborative, accountable leadership that works for the greatest number of people. Under our current system, a candidate can win with less than 50% of the vote, even if the majority of the voters prefer other candidates.

Connecticut's current "pick-one" voting system allows candidates to win without majority support, which limits voter choice due to fear of "wasted" votes, and rewards negative campaigning. These dynamics fuel polarization, weaken accountability, and make progress on social and environmental reforms more difficult.

WHAT IS RANKED CHOICE VOTING?

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference (1st choice, 2nd choice, etc.). If a candidate receives more than 50% of first-choice votes, they win outright. However, if no candidate reaches a majority, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and the ballots of that candidate's voters now count for their next choices. This process continues until a candidate earns majority support.

RCV ensures that winners reflect the will of the majority while preserving voter choice and drastically reduces the spoiler effect.

POSITIVE IMPACTS

- RCV empowers voters to vote honestly for the candidates they support most without fear of wasting their vote.
- RCV encourages positive, inclusive campaigning by rewarding candidates who appeal to a broad range of voters for second and third-choice support.
- Cities using RCV have seen improved voter turnout, satisfaction, and engagement.
- RCV helps level the playing field for women, BIPOC, and first-time candidates.
- By increasing accountability and reducing polarization, RCV strengthens democracy and supports progress on social and environmental issues.
- Polling has shown that RCV voters believe the system is generally easy to understand and that voting instructions are clear. (Donovan, T., C. Tolbert & Harper, S. (2022))

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

- ***RCV for Party Conventions, Caucuses, and Primaries:***
The legislature should give political parties the option to use RCV in party elections, where crowded fields and vote-splitting are common and civility is especially important.
- ***RCV for Municipal Elections:***
The legislature should allow municipalities to opt into RCV for local elections, giving communities the flexibility to adopt systems that best reflect voter preferences.

2026 POLICY STATUS

In the 2025 legislative session, Ranked Choice Voting legislation advanced further than in previous years. SB 1536, which would have allowed political parties and municipalities to adopt RCV, passed through two committees before the session ended without a final vote.

Building on that momentum, CTLCV is working in the 2026 legislative session to pass legislation that allows political parties and municipalities the option to adopt Ranked Choice Voting in their elections.

MORE INFORMATION

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