Major Election Systems

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League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Phoenix

Election Reform Committee

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- Center for Voting and Democracy (CVD). Thanks for their reports, websites, articles and field representative, Dan Johnson-Weinberger
- LWV of Washington Education Fund, report entitled "An Evaluation of Major Election Methods and Selected State Election Laws" Fall 2000
- LWV of Santa Monica. Report entitled "A Study of Voting Systems Applicable to Santa Monica's Non-Partisan, At-large, Multi-Seat, Multi-Candidate Governing Bodies. January 2001
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IIDEA) and its related *Handbook of Electoral Systems Design* (1995, Stockholm)
- Illinois Assembly on Political Representation and Alternative electoral systems. Executive Summary , published by Institute of Government and Public Affairs, Spring 2001

The LWVMP Mission Statement. The mission of the LWV is to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government and to influence public policy through education and advocacy

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The League of Women Voters of Utah would like to thank the League of Women Voters of Metropolitans Phoenix for the use of their study. The section on the Election of the President, some discussions specific to Arizona, and schematic diagrams of election processes and ballots have been omitted for economy. The complete study may be obtained from the LWVMP Education Fund, 49 E. Thomas Road., Suite 102, Phoenix AZ 85012. for $5.00 E-Mail: lwvmp1@lwvaz.org.

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Goal of

Election System Reform -

To provide the MOST 'representative' Democracy

Scope

"A study of voting systems for electing representative bodies at all levels of government,

Introduction:

Ours is a representative democracy - a few are elected to make decisions for many. Voters feel well represented when their representatives vote as they would like. Conversely, voters who more closely identify with the losing candidate in their district may not feel represented at all under current "winner-take-all" systems. While geographical location used to bind people together in their views, such is no longer the case. Thus, amenable acceptance of 'winner-take-all" systems begs the question:

> *Would you rather have a representative from your neighborhood who shares none of your views, or*
>
> *Would you rather be represented by someone outside of your neighborhood, but who supports your views?*

Voters who feel their votes are "wasted" [1] (never electing a candidate) become so disaffected that they may cease to vote. We lose voters and citizens participating in their system. The LWV is concerned with the health of our democracy, with broad and meaningful participation in our political process and with ensuring the voting rights of all citizens.

Nationwide, our systems for electing representatives are seldom questioned, while many other world democracies are abandoning "winner-take-all" for alternative systems. Recently, in the face of voter apathy, government dissatisfaction and the imbroglio of the 2000 presidential election results, alternative election systems have become topics of discussion and analysis both state and nationwide. We feel that it is important to consider alternative systems as they might apply to Arizona and Maricopa County.

Not everyone will agree on the most desirable system. No one can deny, however, that the choice of an electoral system has considerable consequences for the way that citizens' votes are translated into representation.

NOTE: in this report, the terms "voting system" and "election system" refer to the method of casting and counting the votes in an election. It may also encompass the cultural and sociological issues that impinge on and shape election competition. The terms DO NOT refer to the "mechanics" of voting machinery, admittance to polls or voter registration.

"representative assembly…should be in miniature an exact portrait of the people at large. It should think, feel, reason, and act like them." John Adams,(Essay: Thoughts on Government 1776)

[1] The "wasted vote" in reference to election systems is a term not intended to be subjective or judgmental, but simply as a term to describe **"votes that do not elect."** The term applies to surplus votes as well as discarded votes. E.g. in a one seat race:

- Candidate A wins with 53% of the vote (a majority of 50% + 1 vote was necessary). The remaining, surplus 2% of votes were wasted.
- Candidate B receives 47% of the vote – 47% were "wasted."

PLURALITY VOTING

Winner Take All / First Past The Post

Description and Discussion

Plurality or 'Single Member Plurality' voting is currently the most commonly used legislative election system in the United States. It is one of the oldest methods for choosing leaders. Plurality systems are also known as *First Past the Post* and *Winner-Take-All*. It is used to elect one person per open seat, either in a single seat district or in an at-large election. In either case, voters have only as many votes as there are open seats. The candidate with the most votes (a plurality) wins, ***whether or not that candidate receives a majority*** *of the total votes*.

Some believe that this system is the simplest to understand and administer. Others think that it only seems like the simplest because of its familiarity to the American voter. It is the most traditional American system.

History

This system of choosing leaders goes back to Greek and Roman times, and came to the United States with the British colonists. The United States, Canada, India and a host of ex-colonies, territories and dominions inherited this system from Britain.

The U.S. Constitution discusses issues concerning the right to vote, and establishes the Electoral College, but it leaves the method of voting even for federal office up to the states. In general, the states have embraced the plurality method. According to Pippa Norris in her study "Choosing Electoral Systems," only 83 out of 150 countries were found to still use this 'First Past the Post' system. Most, but not all, of those countries have come under the influence of Great Britain at some time. Many of these nations are eliminating , modifying, or critically examining this system.

Pro

Two of the most often cited advantages of this system are its simplicity and its low administrative costs. It is also seen as a system that promotes close ties between legislator and constituency, in that the districts are relatively small and constituents know whom to contact in time of need. It promotes a two-party system, because third-party candidates rarely win -- sometimes considered a con, sometimes a pro point.

Unless a particular jurisdiction requires a runoff to obtain a majority, a runoff election is only needed in the event of a 'tie.'

Some argue that a vote for a losing candidate does not necessarily mean the voter has lost access or influence, for several reasons. **First**, most elected officials will listen to the views of citizens, especially those from their district. **Secondly**, the winning candidate does not know who voted for her, as the ballot is secret. Only when the voter has contributed money or actively campaigned for a candidate does her support become known. **Thirdly**, a strong showing by a losing candidate and her supporters can have a significant influence on subsequent legislative activity. **Fourthly**, many candidates who appear initially to hold clearly defined political positions and philosophies often discover, when they take office, that inclusiveness, compromise and conciliation are necessary to succeed in politics.

Con

Critics believe the major failing of a plurality system is that it over-represents those who vote for the winner and under-represents those who vote for the loser. To better visualize this concept, imagine a

three-person race in which the voting is close.

Candidate A - 35% of the vote [winner]

Candidate B - 33% of the vote

Candidate C - 32% of the vote

In this scenario, a small percentage of the voters elected the winner. While no candidate received votes close to a majority, a minority of voters named the winner because their candidate received more votes than the others. We have all learned "whoever gets the most votes wins" which is true in this election system. But we have also learned 'the majority rules' and that is NOT true in this system.

Such distortions in the relationship between votes cast and seats won frequently take place in this system. The President of the United States has been elected by a minority of the POPULAR vote in 11 of the last 23 elections.[2]

Many believe it is better to have representation by someone who shares your views but may not live in your neighborhood, than simply by someone who is in your 'neighborhood' (district), but does not share or support any of your views or concerns. Under this system, many of us are never really represented at all because 'our' candidate is not electable in our district. In addition, some elections are very close, with voters on the losing side representing as many as 49.9% of the votes cast. If the losing voters are considered to have no representation, do we have democracy for winners only? Some British scholars, critics of the Single Member Plurality system, have labeled this aspect of the system as "only half a democracy." This is the reason for referring to votes that do not elect a candidate as "wasted". When minor party supporters feel that they have no realistic hope of electing a candidate, many may lose their incentive to vote. Even major party supporters may feel disenfranchised if they live in one of Arizona's 26 (out of 30) "one party districts" where one party *generally* rules and the others have virtually no chance of winning. The point should be made that these districts are no more competitive than they were before independent re-districting.

Ethnic, racial minorities and women are usually underrepresented in Single Member Plurality systems. In 1992, U.S. women comprised 6% of the Senate and 10.8% of the House. The year before, in non-single member plurality countries women fared much better. [3] Among western democracies, the United States has one of the poorest track records for electing women to public office. It is possible that there are other explanations, such as tradition and cultural factors, for this "under representation" – aside from the plurality system. In Arizona, at this writing, there is a significant percentage of women holding statewide offices and seats in the house of representatives (50% or greater). The state senate has a far less impressive showing of female legislators. Compared to plurality systems, proportional representation systems in general tend to have a better track record in electing women, although there are notable exceptions.

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[2]

1876 Rutherford B Hayes1948
1880 James Garfield
1884 Grover Cleveland
1888 Benjamin Harrison
1892 Grover Cleveland
1912 Woodrow Wilson
1948 Harry S. Truman
1968 Richard Nixon
1992 Bill Clinton
1996 Bill Clinton
2000 George W. Bush

[3] Chart on page 5.

Because of the exaggerated results plurality elections can cause, this election method can be very unresponsive to modest shifts in public opinion. Unresponsiveness further increases public disenchantment with government.

The representativeness of policy-making bodies is one of the main claims by which democratic governments establish legitimacy and authority for their policies. When large segments of the population are severely under-represented, it erodes a perception of legitimacy.

Critics are quick to note that 'Winner Take All' / plurality wastes all the votes cast for the losing candidate(s) and denies representation to third parties. It also encourages gerrymandering, which in turn leads to a decline in competitive districts, often to the extent that there is only a single candidate from which to choose. In the 2000 elections, out of the 450 Congressional seats only 11% were competitive. 89% of these seats were won by a comfortable margin of 5% or more and 63 of the seats were uncontested by the other major party.

Where Used

Plurality voting has a strong hold in the United States, India, and Canada, all of whom inherited the system from the British. Great Britain still maintains some of its elections under plurality rule.

Supporters say

- Plurality voting provides a clear-cut choice for voters; they understand the 'you get one vote' concept.
- It excludes candidates from extremist parties from winning.
- It supports broad-based parties.
- It produces board-based governments.
- It provides for a stronger, more responsive government.
- It favors stability and decisiveness.
- It creates a link between the representative and the constituent.
- There are no costs for "new system" implementation.

Opponents say:

- Plurality is NOT majority rule.
- It excludes minority parties from participation and representation.
- It creates "wasted" votes.
- It is not responsive to public opinion.
- It over-represents those that vote for the winner and under-represents, or excludes, those that do not.
- It may result in a winning candidate getting only a small minority of the vote. (Some candidates win due to the "spoiler effect" and have less *overall* support than the second-place candidate.)

- It increases strategic voting for the lesser of two evils versus 'sincere voting' for one's favorite.
- It augments disenchantment with government.
- It is prone to the manipulations of gerrymandering (promoting 'one-party districts,' discouraging competitive districts).

Country	Election System	% of Women Elected to Legislature/Parliament 1991
Sweden	PR/List	41%
Norway	PR/List	39
Finland	PR/List	39
Denmark	PR/List	33
Netherlands	PR/List	31
Austria	PR/List	27
Germany	PR/Mixed-Member District	26
Great Britain	Single-Member District	17
Spain	PR/List	16
United States	Single Member District Plurality	11
France	Single Member District Plurality	10

From 1991 figures in Proportional Representation: The Case for a Better Election System, by Douglas Amy, 1997.

APPROVAL VOTING

Approval / Single Seat or Multi-Seat Plurality

Description and Discussion

Approval Voting is basically a 'yea' or 'nay' vote, in which you either 'approve' or 'disapprove' of each candidate in a multi-seat race, or in single seat races. Citizens can vote for, or approve of, as many candidates as they wish. Thus, if there are five candidates, running for three open seats, voters are not restricted to voting for or "approving" just three candidates. The voter may vote for as many candidates as she wants. However, only one vote can be cast for any 'approved' candidate. Votes cannot be cumulated nor can several votes be cast for one candidate. The winner(s) is simply the candidate(s) approved by the largest number of voters, and presumably most acceptable to the most voters. Whoever gets the most votes wins.

History

Approval voting is a relative newcomer to voting systems, conceived independently by at least five different sets of people in the late 1970s. The name Approval Voting was coined by Robert J. Weber, Professor of Decision Sciences at Kellogg Graduate School of Management, Northwestern University.

Where Used:

The Secretary-General of the United Nations is elected via Approval Voting. In 1990 the system was used in Oregon during a statewide advisory referendum on school financing. The National Academy of Sciences, and many colleges and universities use it from the departmental level to the school-wide level. Several different scientific and engineering societies use Approval Voting as well.

Confusion with Judicial "Yea or Nay" Voting

Approval voting should not be confused with a 'yea or nay' vote of merit selection and tenure programs used in Arizona for Supreme Court justices, appellate court judges and superior court judges. [4] This system is not exclusive to Arizona, and although each state may handle it a bit differently, the process of voting to retain judges is similar. [5] In this 'merit selection and tenure' program, judges are appointed for terms of specific length; at the end of their terms they may file their intent to be retained and then stand for a retention election. In the general election, the voters vote on the question "Should this judge be retained in office?" It is a Yes or No vote on each judge. Majority rules. [6]

At first blush, this may be interpreted as Approval voting, however there are two distinct differences:

1) the judges are unopposed
2) it is a majority vote, not plurality vote, as each judge must receive a 50% plus one approval rate to be retained. The 'ayes' must be more than 50%.

This yea or nay vote is less of an election and more of an affirmation. In candidate terms, the judge 'loses' if she gets less than a majority and is not retained. She 'wins' if she gets a majority approval rate.

Hypothetical Example for Use in Arizona

Approval voting is not now used to elect any governmental body in Arizona, but could be readily adapted to a variety of offices. Political parties, for instance, might use approval voting in their party primaries to determine which of their candidates will run in the general election. In the 2002 primaries there were many instances in which more than two intra-party rivals were seeking an office, thanks in part to clean elections. These included the governor, secretary of state, attorney general, state school superintendent, corporation commission, five state senate races, and all but five state representative races. Approval voting would enable a party to be certain they're running their strongest candidate in a closely contested race.

Supporters say:

- Approval Voting gives the voter more flexible options than traditional types of 'First Past the Post' (FPTP) Plurality.
- Approval Voting helps elect more strongly supported candidates than FPTP.
- It reduces negative campaigning (candidate does not want to alienate a voter, and risk losing a second-place preference by attacking the voter's first choice).
- It may increase voter turnout.
- It selects candidates with more widespread support among voters.
- It gives minority candidates a better chance to garner support.
- Approval Voting is easy to administer and explain.
- It can be used for both multi-seat or single-seat races.

Opponents say:

- Approval Voting does not allow ranking of candidates that other voting systems offer.
- Approval Voting could encourage a proliferation of candidates.
- It does not necessarily allow the majority to rule.

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[4] The "Merit selection and tenure" system is mandated in state courts, and in the courts of counties that have populations of more than 250,000 (Maricopa and Pima). Counties with less population have the option to adopt the system. To date none have.

[5] In Arizona, the Judicial Performance Review (JPR) Commission studies the collective data from distributed surveys on each judge (known only by an assigned number) and makes a recommendation to the voters as to whether it feels the judge meets its criteria for retention.

Information supplied by Skeet Blakeslee, a JPR commission member

[6] From Article 6 Sec. 38 B. and C. of the Arizona State Constitution.

Alternative Election System - Majority for Single Seats

A single member *majority* system is designed to ensure that the winning candidate is the one preferred by the majority of voters *OVERALL*. The winner must gain 50% plus 1 vote in a majority instead of "whoever gets the most votes wins" as the latter (plurality) may represent as little as 25, 30 or 35% of winning votes. Many cities in Arizona, and all those in Maricopa County require majority support for winning candidates, and this is achieved through a "delayed runoff" election for the top two vote getters. Since delayed runoffs are commonplace in America and ballots are no different from typically used ballots, there is no reason to detail delayed runoffs as a separate category. Arizona statewide offices, as well as the state Senate and House of Representatives are elected by a plurality, and do not require a majority vote.

INSTANT RUNOFF VOTING (IRV)

Description and Discussion

Instant Runoff Voting is an alternative way of obtaining majority support for a candidate without holding an additional election. The voters are asked to rank their preferences (1, 2, 3...). A computer scans and tabulates the ballots. If no candidate has a majority on the first count, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated and the votes for her are transferred to the voters' second choices. This counting proceeds by sequentially eliminating candidates with the least number of votes and redistributing them to that voter's next choice. The process is repeated until one candidate has a winning MAJORITY.

Instant Runoff Voting is an alternative Voting System, but strictly speaking, is not **proportional**, because it is used for single seat races, such as governor, mayor, sheriff, or president. It is *not* a type of proportional representation because you cannot divide one seat. But it is a majority system wherein a winner must receive 50% plus one (1). Instant Runoff Voting creates a clear winner in just one election. (See figure A - IRV Ballot Counting Flowchart.)

Plurality systems often result in a winner who has the *most* votes, but not necessarily 50% of the votes or the candidate with the most overall support. Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) elects a candidate with an overall majority of support.

IRV achieves in one step what is sometimes a two-stage process, especially in areas that *require* a majority result. In many elections, the two top winners, each with less than a majority of the votes after the general election, then face each other in a runoff election at a later date. Instant Runoff Voting simulates a series of runoff elections all in one. [For a similar system in multi-seat races, see 'Single Transferable Voting.']

The Cost Factor

Having to run a second election to determine the winner in a close race can be an unexpected and exceptional cost.[7] But Instant Runoff Voting is exactly that, an instant runoff where you "instantly"

[7] The **Arizona 1991** Gubernatorial runoff election cost AZ taxpayers $2.65 million. In addition, an estimated $2.2 million were spent in the 'runoff campaign' period for candidate and political party costs. This can be a significant financial burden for candidates. The two runoff candidates in the 2002 **Scottsdale** City Council election reported to this writing committee that the additional costs of the delayed runoff were a personal strain. It costs the taxpayers $108,900 (according to city records). In the same year, the taxpayers of Tempe paid $88,827 and Glendale $77,214. (For costs to 4 other Maricopa cities, see Appendix B). In early 2002, **San Francisco**, CA approved the Instant Runoff Voting system. This, after the 2001 runoff election for the City Attorney, saw a voter turnout of only 15%, and cost the San Francisco taxpayers $2 million dollars.

determine the first and second choices of the voters, so a 'delayed runoff' is not needed. Because tax dollars are already spread thin, IRV makes the expense of a second election needless.

Pro

Advocates of IRV believe that it has three notable advantages over First-Past-The-Post /plurality voting.

First, the winning candidate will have support of a majority of the voters, which increases her legitimacy. It allows the person with the MOST support *overall* to win.

Second, IRV lets you vote for your favorite candidate, knowing that your second or third choice will be noted if necessary. This eliminates the "spoiler effect" (ensuring that an independent or a third-party candidate will not play spoiler and throw the election to the major-party candidate, who in fact was not the electorate's *overall* first choice). This also encourages multi-party/ multi-candidate participation as well as diversity.

Third, it will save taxpayers' dollars, as noted above.

It is felt that these three things will establish a more representative, responsible and fiscally-sensitive government, which will in turn **encourage voter turn out**.

Con

The first thing most critics say of IRV is that the ballot is harder to mark than that for plurality voting, in which the voter just makes one 'X' or some equivalent one step process. [IRV offers voters the option of 'ranking' the candidates, but does not require it.] Any ballot that asks more of the voter, than the one step, can be problematic Dovetailing with this is that IRV is more administratively complex. Critics of IRV also express doubts about the ability of voters to form second or third choices easily, especially for the lower profile elected offices.

Several candidates have expressed the concern that 'delayed runoff' elections allow candidates a "second chance" to either "re-invent" themselves or to square off more directly against their opponent.

A vital criticism that cannot be ignored is that IRV (or any of the other alternative voting methods) is not easily done with older 'out-of-date' voting equipment. The cost of upgrading these systems can be substantial, although the cost of any voting discrepancies (as in the Florida 2000 presidential election) can run the risk of costing more than the upgrade, as well as facing possible lawsuit costs.

Arizona has five counties (including Maricopa) that use optical-scan voting, and 10 that still use punch card systems. According to the Secretary of State's office, the 10 now utilizing punch card systems "will be going to optical scan by the 2004 elections if the counties involved can get funding in their budgets." There is no information as to whether they will find that funding or not.

Where used

Instant runoff voting is used in many of the world's modern democracies and is being considered in numerous U.S. states.

In 1998, the Instant Runoff Vote was approved as a voting option for Santa Clara County, California and the following year as an option for City Council elections in Vancouver, Washington. In Louisiana it has been adopted for overseas ballots and in Utah it is now implemented by the Republican Party. (The League of Women Voters in both Washington state and various areas of California have studied IRV and reached positive consensus to support it.)

In early 2002, the voters in San Francisco ushered in IRV for all its city elections.

During early 2002, a total of 56 towns in Vermont voted on a NON-BINDING advisory question regarding majority rule and IRV elections.[8] This question passed in 53 of the 56 towns (95%) by huge margins. However, at this writing, the legislature has not taken action on the bill. Supporters there, including the LWV, plan to make the bill a campaign issue, and to push for adoption in the next session. [The bill (S.94) would cover ALL statewide elections from U.S. President down to Auditor of Accounts.] But to date, it is a victory of momentum and public awareness, but not of implementation. However, the Vermont Secretary of State, Deborah Markowitz, has developed IRV ballots for use in Vermont. In addition, she has prepared an on-line, short guide to IRV, which can be viewed at http:Vermont-elections.org/elections1/IRV.

In August 2002, as a result of an initiative, Alaskans voted on a statewide IRV system (Ballot Measure 1). It marked the first time that U.S. voters had a chance to implement an alternative voting system which would apply to all primary, regular and special elections for the election to the state legislature, for the offices of President and Vice-President and for members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. The initiative was defeated by 37% to 63%.

Interestingly, Arizona Senator John McCain supported the Alaskan ballot measure and made the following comments regarding IRV. [9]

I have worked to open up the political process for all Americans.

[IRV is a] fairer voting method.

[IRV would] create good government because it would help elect candidates with a majority of support from the voters.

Elected leaders would be more likely to listen to all [citizens].

IRV helps majority rule.

It is a big tax savings.

IRV is used most often in countries with parliamentary governments such as Ireland, New South Wales and Australia, where it is used in the Lower House. London has now elected a new mayor for the first time using a form of IRV, and provided a major upset by electing an Independent.

Hypothetical Example for Use in Arizona

Instant runoff voting could be used in any race for office contested by more than two candidates. Many of Arizona's municipalities already conduct runoff elections and would save money if they could determine a winner within a single election. Candidates for those offices would avoid the cost of having to run a second runoff campaign.

Arizonans have learned that runoff elections for statewide office can be expensive. In 1988 voters passed a referendum requiring runoff elections for state executive offices. But when the ensuing runoff for

[8] The question read as follows...
"Shall the legislature be urged to change Vermont's voting law for statewide elections, which currently can result in no candidate receiving a majority and thus the selection of a governor by the legislature instead of the voters; and replace it with a system that allows voters to rank their choices so that, without the need for a separate runoff election, the candidate preferred by a majority of voters is elected?"

[9] Senator McCain's comments can be heard on-line at www.fairvote.org the website of Center for Voting and Democracy.

governor in 1990 ran up a tab of $2,650,000. [10] Voters had second thoughts, and in 1992 repealed the measure.

If instant runoff voting had been used instead, Arizonans could have retained a system that ensured **majority** support for statewide officeholders without incurring exorbitant costs.

With the advent of public financing, state offices contested by just the two major parties have become something of a rarity. Without a runoff provision in place for these offices, the outcome of many races might be determined by the participation of third party or independent candidates as so-called spoilers.

Supporters say

- Instant Runoff Voting is more equitable in that it gives voters a chance to have a second or third choice candidate win, rather than just discarding their votes and having a candidate with a small percentage win.
- You are assured of having a candidate who is approved by 50% + of the voters - *OVERALL.*
- It gives third parties a chance to vote their first choice, rather than "spoil" the chances of their second choice.
- It saves money because it doesn't require a second election for ties.
- Instant Runoff Voting provides the option for municipalities or school boards to adopt the alternative voting system upon local approval.
- It promotes more issue-oriented campaigns because candidates will try to be 2nd or 3rd choice, if not first.
- It reduces the problem of voters splitting their votes between two very similar candidates.

Opponents say

- It is only used in single seat elections. (See 'Single Transferable Voting' for multi-seat races.)
- IRV does not allow the voter extended time to understand the candidates' positions.
- It would have to either be approved by the legislature or by voter initiative and with significant cooperation from the Secretary of State and County Recorders to put system in place.
- It would have an initial cost to establish and would be too difficult to implement with out-dated voting equipment.
- It is more complicated than Plurality Voting.
- It could aid in electing candidates outside the two major parties (seen as destabilizing).

Semi-Proportional and Proportional Systems

Semi-Proportional Systems

Cumulative and Limited Voting are examples of semi-proportional systems, variants of multi-member plurality elections. Semi-proportional systems are designed to enable minor parties and minority candidates or views to win some representation. Often these systems succeed in ensuring some representation for the second largest party, but do not allow a full range of minority political groups to be elected. In the United States, Cumulative Voting is discussed more than Limited Voting, the other form of

[10] Cost of election supplied by the AZ Research Library. Figures taken from the Joint Legislature Budget Committee, Appropriations Report/ Actual for fiscal year 1991 (time of runoff).

semi-proportional representation. They are considered semi-proportional because, while they are more **likely** to give a proportional outcome then 'winner take all' elections, they are not guaranteed to do so.

CUMULATIVE VOTING

Description and Discussion

Cumulative Voting is a semi-proportional system used in multi-member districts or at-large elections. Candidates run in multi-member districts and voters have as many votes as there are seats. Voters cast their votes for individual candidates and the winners are the ones with the most votes. The major difference between common plurality systems and CV is that voters can "cumulate" or combine their votes, instead of just having to cast one vote for one candidate. In other words, voters can distribute their votes among candidates in any way they prefer, which is unique to Cumulative Voting. Voters are generally given as many votes as there are seats. In a five-seat district they may choose to cast one vote for each of the 5 candidates, or all five votes for one, or any combination thereof.[11] Any candidate garnering **1/6th** of the votes gains a seat.

The cumulative vote is designed to make it difficult for one party to win all the seats in an election district, and. therefore reduces the power of the dominant party. ***To be successful in electing a particular candidate, strategic planning is required by the candidates and voters***. For example, if a minority group has enough support to win two seats, but casts most of its votes for the same favored candidate, they may win only one seat. Another possible scenario could be that although they only have enough support to elect one candidate, they may not elect any if they split their votes among several rivals. Thus, if they don't vote strategically, voters can end up either under- or over-represented. One of the main purposes of this system is to elect minority candidates in a situation where that may not be possible with plurality voting.

History

Cumulative voting has some history in the United States. The State of Illinois used cumulative voting for 110 years to elect its House of Representatives. In a move to economize, voters passed a measure in 1980 that reduced the size of the legislature and at the same time formed single member districts. A campaign is currently underway to restore the old system. In recent years it has been seen as a solution to racially gerrymandered districts that are now finding disfavor in the courts.

Pro

Proponents of Cumulative Voting see it as an especially effective way to ensure minor party representation. Many also believe that it can increase the chances for racial and ethnic minorities to win representation and thus see it as the best alternative to race- and ethnic-conscious districting. CV also discourages all forms of gerrymandering.

[11] For example, in an election with five (*5)* open seats, the voter may divide her five votes as she pleases, giving all to one candidate or giving *2.5* to two, or 3 to one candidate and two to another or any other way she wishes, depending on the number of candidates she chooses to support. Some CV elections do not allow fractional votes, but only whole number votes, in this case, a vote of 2.5 would not be allowed. Whole number elections would demand 3 votes to one candidate and 2 to the other candidate, who is assumed to be your lesser choice.

Con

A large number of candidates, especially in the primary election, can overwhelm citizens' ability to make rational choices. Critics of cumulative voting argue that, in areas where CV has been used, party control over candidate selection can be greater than meets the eye. They also contend that the actual act of voting is too complicated for many voters.

Where Used

Today Cumulative Voting is used in at least 17 cities, counties or school districts. In 1987 a group in Alamogordo, New Mexico went to court citing violation of the Voting Rights Act, asking for cumulative voting instead of plurality.[12] Texas currently leads the nation with the use of CV in 52 school districts, cities, county commissions or hospital districts. [13] Other cities in Alabama have also used CV with apparently successful results in getting minorities elected. It currently is not used in any country outside the United States.

Hypothetical Example for Use in Arizona

Arizona currently utilizes 30 two-member districts to elect its 60 state representatives, and also elects a single state senator from these same districts. The entire legislature serves for two-year terms. In the 2001-2002 legislature, only six of these districts were shared between a Democrat and Republican representative; the remaining 24 were single-party districts. The system gives a powerful edge to the dominant party in a district, and isolates many voters into all Democrat, mostly urban, or all Republican, mostly rural or suburban districts.

Cumulative voting could not really be applied to these house districts as currently drawn, but would prove an interesting adaptation if the districts were hypothetically parried into 20 three-member districts (or 15 four-member districts). Under this setup a voter would cast three (or in the latter example four) votes, equal to the number of seats to be filled, just as they now cast two in our current system. The difference with cumulative voting is that a voter may cast all of her/his votes for a single candidate, or spread them among the candidates.

The likely effect of this cumulative vote would be to produce a legislature less weighted toward the largest party. Voters in this system would also be more likely to live in a district where at least one of the house members represented their views. A four-member district cumulative system would probably be able to elect at least some third party or independent representatives in some locales.

Supporters say

- Cumulative Voting is a semi-proportional system that meets most court ordered requirements where a current voting system has been ruled in violation of the Voting Rights Act.
- It has been successful in electing minority candidates.

[12] The intent was to provide minorities an opportunity to be elected by eliminating single seat districting, and allowing minority voters to cumulate their votes for minority candidates.

[13] A recent example of CV being the result of court orders or settlements of civil rights suits came in Amarillo, Texas. The Amarillo Independent School District, despite a sizable minority population, had not elected an Hispanic since 1984, and had never elected a Black to its board. Using cumulative voting for the first time in May 2000, to settle a pending lawsuit, two of the four board positions were filled by racial minorities, one Black, one Hispanic. The election also dramatically increased voter participation from 3.4% in 1998 to 12.7%, supporting the contention that increasing voter choices stimulates more voter participation.

- It is a fairly simple system.
- It is usable in an at-large election.
- It will give more diverse representation than plurality.
- It will give voters more flexibility in selecting candidates.

Opponents say

- It allows for block voting, which can be viewed as "stacking the deck."
- It may be viewed as unfair by some voters, in that 'strategic' voting can be seen as manipulative.
- It tends toward divisiveness among candidates.
- It wastes more votes than other proportional systems.
- It's like affirmative action for voting.
- It is prone to a skewed outcome when groups run the wrong number of candidates.
- It is not free from possible distortions of the spoiler effect.

LIMITED VOTING

Description and Discussion

Limited Voting is another semi-proportional system that uses multi-member districts or at-large districts. In this system the voter is "limited" as to the number of votes she may cast –allowed fewer than the number of seats being contested. For example, in a race where there are five open seats, the voter may be allotted only three votes.) [14] Unlike its semi-proportional relative, Cumulative Voting, voters may not cast more than one vote per candidate. Ballots are counted in the same way as plurality voting – whoever gets the most votes wins.

The system is designed to keep the dominant party or group from capturing all the seats in an at-large election. Another variant of this system used in partisan elections is to limit the number of candidates running, i.e. a party must run fewer candidates than there are open seats. In either case the outcome is the same: the system makes it impossible for the largest party or interest group to elect all the representatives.

The greater the difference between the number of votes allotted and the number of seats, the greater the opportunities for more diverse representation.

History

In the United States, this system grew out of the Civil War, when it was feared that one party would dominate the elections. It was used in Spain and Portugal in the 19th and early 20th centuries and in parts of the United Kingdom in the 19th century.

[14] As an actual example: in the Pennsylvania election of three (3) county commissioners, two (2) votes are allowed. In the election of the seven (7) members of the Philadelphia City Council, voters are allowed five (5) votes.

Pro

As in cumulative voting, Limited Voting's strongest attribute is that it is easy to explain. Local governments tend to feel less threatened by the system since it usually reinforces the two party system.

Con

Limited Voting would have a weakening effect on slate politics, as one voter could not simply cast votes for a full slate of candidates. This might encourage voting across a diverse spectrum of candidates.

Limited Voting is only semi-proportional in that it is not immune to distorted results when votes are split among close rivals. Like Cumulative Voting, it requires the same kind of strategic voting and strategic managing of the number of candidates running to ensure a proportional outcome.

Where Used

In Connecticut, all local governments elected at large use Limited Voting. It's also used in Washington DC, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Alabama, Georgia, New York, and North Carolina [15]

Hypothetical Example for Use in Arizona

Many of Maricopa County's cities use nonpartisan at-large elections, including Gilbert, Chandler, Scottsdale, Paradise Valley, and Tempe. Phoenix, Glendale, Mesa, and Peoria use districts. All but Phoenix elect six council members to staggered, 4-year terms. Phoenix elects eight.

As an example, if Chandler wanted to use limited voting for its city council races, it could simply instruct its voters to cast one vote for city council instead of three for the three seats open. The three candidates who receive the most votes win, just as happens now. But the system would better enable a minority grouping to gain a seat. In this particular example, any candidate who can garner more than 25% of the votes can be elected to office.

Supporters say

- Limited Voting is a simple, easily understood system, and close to Plurality in method.
- Cost to implement would be small, as it is counted basically in the same way as Plurality.
- It offers minorities a better chance to get elected.
- It offers more proportionality than plurality.
- It can be used in multi-member/at-large elections.
- It has enjoyed very broad use in United States.

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[15] The Federal Court ordered Limited Voting in McGhee v. Granville County, (the county in North Carolina proposed a Single Member District solution). However, in Thomburg v. Gingles, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the district courts and ordered the acceptance of Single Member Districts and held that the County's proposed remedy, which "provided the maximum remedy possible by redistricting" was a legally adequate remedy.
A similar decision was reached by the 7th Circuit's decision in McNeil v Springfield, Illinois, which held that minority plaintiffs have no claim unless they are sufficiently numerous and compact to constitute the majority of the electorate in a single-member district. More lately, according to one League study, courts have steered away from Single Member Districts and been more in favor of Cumulative or Limited Voting.

Opponents say

- LV encourages bullet voting, which can be perceived as unfair and manipulative.
- It is an imperfect system for securing minority representation and doesn't guarantee that each group or party will be fully represented in proportion to its voting strength.
- Voters may be dissatisfied in being "limited" in their votes compared to the number of open seats.

Basis of Proportional Representation (PR)

Proportional Representation (PR) is a democratic system in which groups of voters with similar interests gain representation in "proportion" to their voting strength.

The rationale underpinning all proportional voting systems is to give all people a voice in their government based on their proportion of the voting population. It translates the share of votes from a group with similar interests and views into a corresponding proportion of seats in a House of Representatives, Council or Board. This group may (but need not necessarily) be represented as a 'party.' Any group winning 30% of the votes would win approximately 30% of the seats.

There are several methods of conducting these elections. We will describe the three major ones: Party List, Mixed Member and Single Transferable Vote. All apply to multi-member elected bodies rather than single member (single seat) offices. The greater the number of seats, the more accurately the election outcome will mirror the political makeup of the community.

PR systems generally tend to be friendlier than other systems to minority parties. They also waste fewer votes and afford better representation of racial, ethnic, and gender minorities. The districts tend to be more competitive, and representation of diverse interests in the legislature is relatively good. PR systems also reduce gerrymandering and encourage greater discussion of issues in campaigns.

Among advanced western democracies, proportional representation (PR) has become the predominant system. In Western Europe, for example, 21 of the 28 countries use PR. These include Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

The social, economic and political context for the adoption of PR is critical for understanding its electoral outcomes in American cities. The idea of proportional representation is rooted in late eighteenth century debates about democracy. In both the United States and France, revolution was in the air, and ideas about voting and representation emerged from resistance to reigning oligarchies. Popular demands for participation in governance stimulated fears that majority tyranny would replace the tyranny of the minority. French political theorists and mathematicians such as Mirabeau, Condorcet, and Saint Just [16] supported voting systems to combat tyranny. Saint Just understood that suffrage was the key to democracy, and that different methods of casting votes would have different consequences. They developed a variety of electoral systems that would produce majority rule but would also ensure minority representation.

[16] Barber, Kathleen L. **"The True Experience of PR in American Cities"** (Also author of "**A Right to Representation: Proportional Election Systems for the 21st Century**.)

PARTY-LIST VOTING

Description and Discussion

As a 'fully' proportional representation system, Party List Voting differs from the previously discussed 'semi' proportional systems. In Party-List voting, legislators are elected in large, multi-member districts. Each political party develops a slate of candidates equal to the number of seats the party expects to fill. [In countries where this is currently used, independent candidates can also run, and they are listed separately on the ballot as if they were their own party.] On the ballot, voters indicate their preference for a particular party and the parties then receive seats in proportion to their share of the vote. So, if a political party (or group) wins 30 percent of the vote, it should receive 30 percent of the seats. In a five-member district, if the Democrats win 40 percent of the vote, they would win two of five seats.

There are two types: "Closed List" and "Open List." They determine whether or not the voter may change the order of the candidates on the party-developed list. The Open-List simply means the voter is 'open' to choosing their favorite candidate on the slate, and thus perhaps not the first choice of the party members. This option is 'closed' to voters in a Closed-List system. That is, winning candidates are selected in the exact order that the parties put them on the list. [In some countries, the voters help determine the order of the 'closed list' during primary elections.] The Closed-List system maximizes party control that results in strong candidate adherence to party platforms and positions.

If the Open List is used, when ballots are counted, the most popular candidates will move up to the top of the party list, increasing the likelihood of their winning a seat — which still depends on the percent of the vote their party received. For example, if the Democrats win two of five seats, and Joe and Mary receive the most Democratic votes, Joe and Mary are elected.

History

Party List systems have roots in Western European countries where they were established as a way to implement a proportional representation system. Since proportional representation operates on a simple principle that the number of seats a political party or group wins should be in proportion to the support it garnered among voters, smaller interest groups could garner some representation.

Some countries require a party to receive a minimum percentage of the vote in order to win any seats (generally between 1.5% - 10%), but other countries do not require any minimum. No minimum encourages the largest number of parties; higher minimums are intended to discourage radical or fringe parties.

Pro

This system minimizes election costs, for both the candidates and the administrators and causes campaigns to focus more on policy issues and less on individual personalities. Parties usually construct their candidate lists to represent the broad electorate (including women and minority groups) in order to assure their slate has the widest possible appeal.

Voters are often willing to vote for a party 'platform' even if the party does not include their favorite candidate. The Party List system makes for strong and stable parties, as well as greater party distinctiveness from one another. Supporters feel that both open and closed lists have an advantage; Closed Lists encourage parties to select diverse candidates, while Open Lists give more power to voters. In response to critics who say it weakens the relationship between local legislators and constituency, supporters say it is better to have someone who represents your ideas but doesn't live in your area, than to

have a neighborhood representative who does not represent your ideas at all.

Con

On the other hand, the Party List method can encourage a multi-party system, which is unwelcome to those who support and favor the 'two-party system.' Some critics feel that with a multi-party (and multi-member district) system, which allows seats to go to smaller parties, these small parties can have too much power and get too many concessions. This is particularly true of parliamentary-style governments (without a separate executive branch). If the multi-member districts become too large, it weakens the relationship between legislators and their constituency. 'Open lists' also can become highly complicated and can intensify intra-party rivalries, since candidates often end up campaigning against other candidates of the same party. Unwieldy Party List systems can foster unstable legislative coalitions and manipulative gridlock.

Where used

Many European countries such as Norway, France, Spain, Belgium, Denmark and Israel use the Party List as well as some African countries, most recently South Africa.

Most European democracies now use the open list form of party voting.

Hypothetical Example for Use in Arizona

Party list systems, while popular abroad, have less adaptability here in the United States. A party list system could potentially be applied to the state senate. Such a system might retain house elections as is, but instead of a direct senate vote, merely ask voters electing house representatives to indicate party preference for the senate. This could be an interesting way to provide balance for an arguably redundant house-senate system that is currently weighted toward the dominant party, and would give smaller parties a proportional share of senate seats.

Supporters say

- Party List Voting is the easiest of the Proportional Representation systems to explain (based on the idea that it is so common in European countries).
- It makes for stable party control and adherence to party platforms.
- It allows smaller parties to garner some representation.
- It reduces campaigning costs.
- It encourages a focus on issues.
- It is easy to administer.
- It encourages diversification within parties in order to enjoy the widest public appeal.

Opponents say

- If there is no minimum percentage on how many votes a party must receive, there could be too many parties to deal with and a less stable government.
- Party List gives parties too much control over the political process (especially 'Closed-List' type).

- It encourages too strict of an adherence to the party platform.
- It encourages a multi-party system, which some critics view as unstable.
- It discourages independent candidates.
- Fringe or extreme parties can get too much control.
- It works better in multi-member districts, and as such would involve a good deal of effort to implement.
- It can encourage intra-party squabbles.
- It weakens the relationship between legislators and constituency.

MIXED MEMBER SYSTEM

Description and Discussion

The Mixed Member system is also a proportional representation system. It is an interesting modification on the straight party lists that most European nations use.[17] It is used to elect members to a large representative body in a relatively proportional manner while at the same time preserving the concept of a local representative. This hybrid ballot allows you to vote your favorite candidate to win your district, but it also lets you designate your party preference.

Say, for instance, that your elected body is 100 seats. A certain percentage, e.g. 60%, has been designated to be elected directly in single member districts; the remaining 40 seats will be filled from the party lists to make the final outcome proportional.

The 'MIXED' description comes from the two parts of the vote. The election for the candidate in your area is basically a single-member plurality vote. This is then 'mixed' or balanced by a party list election, which is then used to restore proportionality. [18]

History

Generally attributed to Germany.

Pro

The Mixed Member system uses qualities from both the single member plurality simplicity and the proportional representation benefits from the Party List system. This allows parties too small to win in district-based elections, to win their share of the seats. This is particularly important to groups who have a large, but geographically dispersed population. (See other PROs similar to those listed under Party List and Plurality systems.)

Con

Critics say that while the ballot may be easy enough to understand, the tabulation of votes is not. Because of this, it may have the appearance of manipulation by parties. Using plurality voting for the candidate-

[17] Also called the Additional Member System, or the German System. It is sometimes described as a combination of the Single Member Plurality and Party List.

[18] In this example there are 100 seats open for a fictional legislature. (We used 100 to make the number of votes and percentages the same, and easier to understand calculations.) 50 seats will be elected from single member districts (local candidates), the other 50 seats will be from the Party List.

elected seats can still leave some feeling unrepresented in their own locales. (See other CONs similar to those listed under Party List and Plurality systems.)

Where Used

Germany uses this mixed-member system. New Zealand adopted this system in 1996. It is also used in Bolivia, Mexico, Venezuela, Hungary, Italy and in Japan. The Italian system is not very proportional since only 25% of the seats come from a party list. The most recent adopters of this system were Scotland and Wales.

Hypothetical Example for Use in Arizona

Arizona could use a mixed member proportional system in conjunction with the 30 legislative districts it currently has. Each district already has two house seats. If the first seat was elected by whomever gets the most votes in a district, the second seat could be reserved to obtain overall statewide party proportionality.

Voters would choose 30 legislators directly, and then indicate their party preference. Thus if Libertarians won no local district seats, but obtained 5% of the party preference vote, three house seats would be awarded to Libertarian candidates. If Democrats won only 20 district seats, but comprised 40% of the party tally, they would be awarded four more seats for a total of 40%.

Supporters say

- Mixed Member combines advantages of two different systems; offering local and party representation.
- It maintains a relationship between local legislator and constituency.
- It promotes representation to populations large in size, but geographically dispersed.
- It maintains strong parties and encourages adherence to party platforms.
- It allows smaller parties to garner some representation.
- It reduces campaigning costs.
- It encourages a focus on issues.
- It encourages party diversification to enjoy widest public appeal.

Opponents say

- While the ballot is easy, explanation and calculations of Mixed Member vote allocation is not.
- It is difficult to administer.
- If there is no minimum percentage on how many votes a party must receive, there could be too many parties to deal with and a less stable government might result.
- Smaller parties can get too much control.
- It can encourage intra-party squabbles, although less problematic than Party List Systems.
- It relies too heavily on plurality election of local candidates.

SINGLE TRANSFERABLE VOTE (STV) [19]

Description and Discussion

The Single Transferable Voting (STV) System is also known as Preference voting, or Choice Voting and is credited as being one of the purest types of Proportional Representation. The steps for completing the STV ballot are identical to the ones for Instant Runoff Voting (IRV). You pick your first, second and following choices, if desired. As with IRV, the votes are transferable, hence the name Single Transferable Vote. While the ballot looks similar to the voter, the tabulation of votes is slightly different. STV is not used for single member districts (like IRV), but instead designed for multi-seat races, such as city councils, legislature, school boards, or any election for more than one seat.

STV is a Proportional system, which attempts to elect a legislative body that reflects the general voting population. The greater the number of seats open, the more diverse the elected body.

First developed in the 1800s, today Single Transferable Voting is not a single system but rather a variety of closely related systems. The basic design is that the voter marks the ballot with her preferences in numerical order (number 1 as first choice, 2 as second and so on). It is easy to vote, but a bit more difficult to describe the counting process.

The Counting Process

Historically STV elections have been the most arduous to administer. Computer programs have reduced the time necessary for counting the ballots from days to minutes. The exact number of votes necessary for a candidate to win a seat (the threshold) will depend on how many people vote and how many candidates are to be elected. The more seats that are open, the smaller a percentage of votes each candidate will need to win.[20]

The counting process takes place in several steps. Any candidate whose votes reach or exceed the threshold is elected. As with IRV tabulation, the system relies on sequential elimination of the least successful candidates and the recasting of those votes toward those voters' next preference. Votes in excess o f the threshold for winning candidates are also recast to ensure proportionality. [21]

There are several different ways the vote transfer can occur.[22]

History

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[19] Also. known as Choice or Preference voting.

[20] For example, candidates running in a four-seat district will need a little less than l/4 of the vote to win a seat. Candidates in a nine-seat district will need a little less than 1/9 of the vote to win.

[21] Votes labeled as excess or 'surplus' are the votes *beyond* what the winner needed to win. While these are considered 'wasted' votes, this latter term more often refers to votes wasted on a candidate with no chance of winning a seat.

[22]

System 1. Top to bottom: votes from candidates who are declared elected are redistributed to the remaining candidates according to their second choice.

a) "surplus" votes (i.e. over and above quota) are transferred, or
b) all of winners' votes are distributed proportionally, over and above what was needed.

System 2. Bottom up: In this case the candidate with the fewest number of votes is declared a loser, and her votes are redistributed up. This continues until all seats are filled.

System 3. Alternating: first recount goes from the winning candidate's surplus, next from the losing candidate's wasted votes.

The Single Transferable Vote is a system of preference voting first developed by Thomas Hare in 19th century England. In the first half of the 20th century century, there was a wave of interest in proportional representation in the U.S., and nearly two dozen cities from New York to Sacramento adopted STV for many years. STV elections were used in 22 cities in the United States. Most of these reverted to Single Member Plurality systems since the 1940s, for several reasons. In a curious case of omission and neglect their history was lost for decades. The reasons for the defeat of STV would be viewed as dubious today. Only in Cambridge, Massachusetts have council elections by PR survived.

In the segregated America of the 1940s, minority representation in cities using STV was increasing to the point where a black mayor was about to be elected in Cincinnati, and racial prejudice was key to the systems defeat there. Meanwhile, in New York City, STV helped elect two Communist Party members to city government and the red baiting of the McCarthy era led to its demise there. In both cases there was strong opposition from the Democrat and Republican parties who under STV lost power, particularly in the nomination process. Previously, several of the cities had adopted STV along with the City Manager form of government in the 1920s-1930s. When these cities later changed to a Mayor-Council form of government, STV was dropped without much thought.

Pro

Of the various forms of Proportional Representation, Single Transferable Voting (STV) is considered the purest. STV is one of the most sophisticated electoral systems in use today. It can be used for partisan or non-partisan elections. It ensures that the elected body is as diverse as the electorate. It most closely mirrors the wishes of the total population, and thus preserves majority rule. As "districts" do not influence the outcome, it is free from the taint of gerrymandering, allowing voters to choose their own philosophically-based "districts." Since the focus is on the candidate rather than a party, Independent candidacies are treated with an even hand. STV frees voters to vote for their favorite choice, eliminates the spoiler effect, encourages multi-party/multi-candidate participation, as well as voter participation.

Con

Critics say STV and its counting systems are too difficult to explain to the common voter, that this will discourage their interest. It is also said that the ballots are generally longer and potentially more daunting for the voter to use. After the Florida problems in the 2000 presidential election, this writing committee has been told repeatedly, "If they can't make one mark on a butterfly ballot correctly, how are they going to rank candidates?"

Even, if we discount the argument that the electorate is unable to adapt to such a system -- many other countries in the world have done so -- there are still problems. The system is hard to implement without computerized election machinery. Because of this it would be very difficult to administer. In addition, political parties tend to dislike it due to loss of power.

Where Used

The STV type of voting has been used successfully in Cambridge, Massachusetts for 60 years and is still used there today. Historically it has been used in nearly two dozen cities, including: New York City from 1936-1949 (their school boards still use it), Cincinnati (1926-1957), Boulder (1917-1949), Cleveland (1925-1933), and Toledo (1935-1951).

Elsewhere in the world, the Republic of Ireland has used the single transferable vote since 1922 (over 80 years). Northern Ireland used the system for local elections beginning in 1973. In 1998 the British government required Northern Ireland to use STV for its Regional Parliament as part of its new constitution. Britain now elects its representatives to the European Union using STV and while the British

Isles are home to the First Past the Post system (single member plurality), discontent seems to be mounting and some predict support for STV will become more widespread there. Canadian parliament members are beginning to talk about STV. The system is also used currently in Malta and the upper house in Australia.

Hypothetical Example for Use in Arizona

The Single Transferable Vote (STV) could be utilized for many partisan and non-partisan offices in the state. For instance, our Corporation Commission was recently expanded from three to five persons, on staggered 4-year terms. Every other year an alternating two or three will be up for election. In the 2002 cycle, eight candidates competed for 3 seats.

In a STV scheme, we could eliminate a primary and place all eight contenders on a ballot asking voters to choose and rank their top three or four. The least popular candidates would be eliminated one by one, and any votes for the eliminees would be recast according to the ranking expressed by the voter.

The same system could be applied to local races such as the county board of supervisors, school boards or city councils.

Supporters say

- Single Transferable Voting assures that nearly all voters elect someone they choose to represent them - if not their first choice, then at least their second or third.
- It ensures that all parties and other groups have an opportunity to receive their fair share of seats - minorities as well as majorities.
- It allows a geographically dispersed minority to elect a candidate.
- It produces a governing body that represents all segments of the electorate.
- It is more representative and democratic than the results of single-member districts and traditional at-large systems.
- STV enhances the opportunity of all candidates to be elected, especially women and minorities.
- It frees candidates to develop sincere platforms based on the ideals of their natural constituency.
- It assures majority rule, but provides for minority representation.
- It has the potential to provide a higher voter turnout.
- It results in fewer “wasted” votes.

Opponents say

- It is complicated, time-consuming and potentially costly to administer and count.
- It promotes instability by allowing minor parties and candidates to win seats.
- It is difficult to explain to voters, who may be suspicious and suspect manipulation by a system they do not understand.
- It is highly impractical to consider for any area without computerized voting machinery.
- It takes power away from political parties, particularly the most dominant one.

GLOSSARY FOR VOTING SYSTEMS REPORT

Approval Voting	A system where by a voter may simply check as many of the candidates as she would approve of for the office. It is a plurality-type system because who ever gets the most votes wins.
At-Large	Refers to a non-districted group of constituents all voting for same candidates (vote is not divided by districts).
Bullet/Block Voting	Ballots on which voters cast all of their available votes for one candidate. For example, in a multi-seat election, they cast all their votes for one candidate. It's a concentration of a voter's vote associated with cumulative and limited voting.
Citizens Clean Elections Act	A campaign finance reform measure initiated by Arizona citizens and passed by voters in 1998. The Act creates a new campaign finance system that provides full public funding to qualified statewide and legislative candidates who agree to abide by strict spending and contribution limits.
Cumulative Voting	The capacity to cast more than one vote for a favored candidate in a multi-seat election.
Droop Quota	Used in Single Transferable Vote systems to determine how votes are awarded. The "droop" formula or quota being the total vote divided by the number of seats plus one, and then one is added to the quotient.
First Past The Post (FPTP)	The simplest form of plurality voting. The winning candidate(s) being the one(s) with the most, but not necessarily the majority, of votes.
Limited Vote	A semi-proportional system used in multi-member seats wherein the voter has fewer votes than the number of seats.
Mixed Member	A proportional system in which a voter votes once for her favorite district candidate, and once for her preferred party.
Party List (closed)	Proportional system in which the voter casts her vote for the 'list' her favorite party has provided. Seats are filled in proportion to the votes that each party wins.
Party List (open)	Similar to above, except that the voter casts vote for their favorite candidate within party list. Voters' choice will determine the makeup of the party list order.
Plurality	Traditional system in America, in which whoever gets the most votes wins – even if she does not reach a majority. Also called FPTP.
Proportional System	Any system that consciously attempts to reduce the disparity between a group's share of the total vote and its share of the winning seats. For example, if a group wins 40% of the vote, it should gain 40% of the seats.
Semi-Proportional Systems	Electoral systems that usually provide proportional results but are not certain to do so.
Single Member District	A district where only one candidate is elected to office.
Single Transferable Vote (STV)	A preferential proportional representation system used in multimember districts. To gain election, a candidate must surpass a specified quota of first-preference votes. Voters' preferences are reallocated to other continuing candidates when an unsuccessful candidate is excluded, or if an elected candidate has a surplus.
Wasted Votes	Votes that do not ultimately count towards the election of a particular candidate or party, whether because they were cast for the loser or were excess votes for the winner.

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The following discussion questions were prepared by the Salt Lake League for their discussion and consensus.

LWV-SL Discussion Questions

1. Clarify the purpose and mechanics of a majority vote requirement and the Instant Runoff election.
2. Discuss how proportional representation systems address party representation. How much effect would such a system have on our current two party power structure? How much geographical (local representation) representation are you willing to sacrifice for a chance to elect someone who matches your political views? For background for this discussion turn to

Consensus Questions

- **Do you agree or disagree that a majority system is preferable to a plurality system?**

  Discussion: What are the problems you see with changing to a majority system? If your unit favors this change what is the most compelling reason for so doing.
  Advice to the board: Would you like the LWVUT work toward an IRV or some other instantly re countable ranking system?

- **Would a proportional election system contribute to League goals of representation of diversity of all kinds and robust and meaningful political discussion and participation?** (See the article in the January Salt Lake Voter for more details.)

  Discussion: Give your most important reasons for your response. Specify if each is based on a League goal or is a practical consideration?
  Advice to the board: If you feel the current winner take all plurality system is working reasonably well, are there changes other than those discussed in this study that could improve it? Describe briefly. Would you like the League to study them?

Consensus on majority elections for single seat offices and proportional representation for legislatures and multi-member bodies

*I*n 2004-2005 the League of Women Voters of Utah undertook a study of alternative elections systems. The Salt Lake League began by identifying faults in the current political process: the dominance of big money, poor media coverage, voter apathy, inadequate public debate, noncompetitive voting districts, and voter frustration with candidates and parties. We agreed that any changes in election systems should address these issues.

The LWVSL believes a majority vote should be required to elect a candidate to a single seat position. We think that using instant run-off system to select a majority candidate would support League goals of a more robust political debate, higher voter turn-out, and fewer wasted votes. (However, this preference does not preclude the League from supporting other means of achieving a majority where appropriate.)

The LWVSL supports experimentation with proportional representational systems to achieve League goals of improving the tenor of political debate, accountable elected officials, competitive elections, legislative bodies which reasonably mirror the electorate, and a higher level of citizen participation