

# FAIRVOTE

## Ranked Choice Voting:

## Overview & Lessons Learned

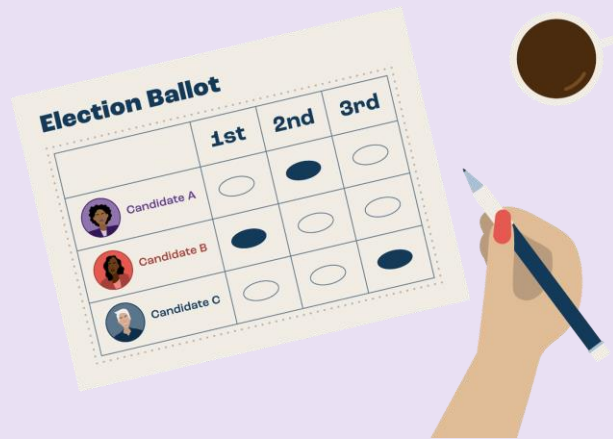
▶ Deb Otis, FairVote Director of Policy and Research



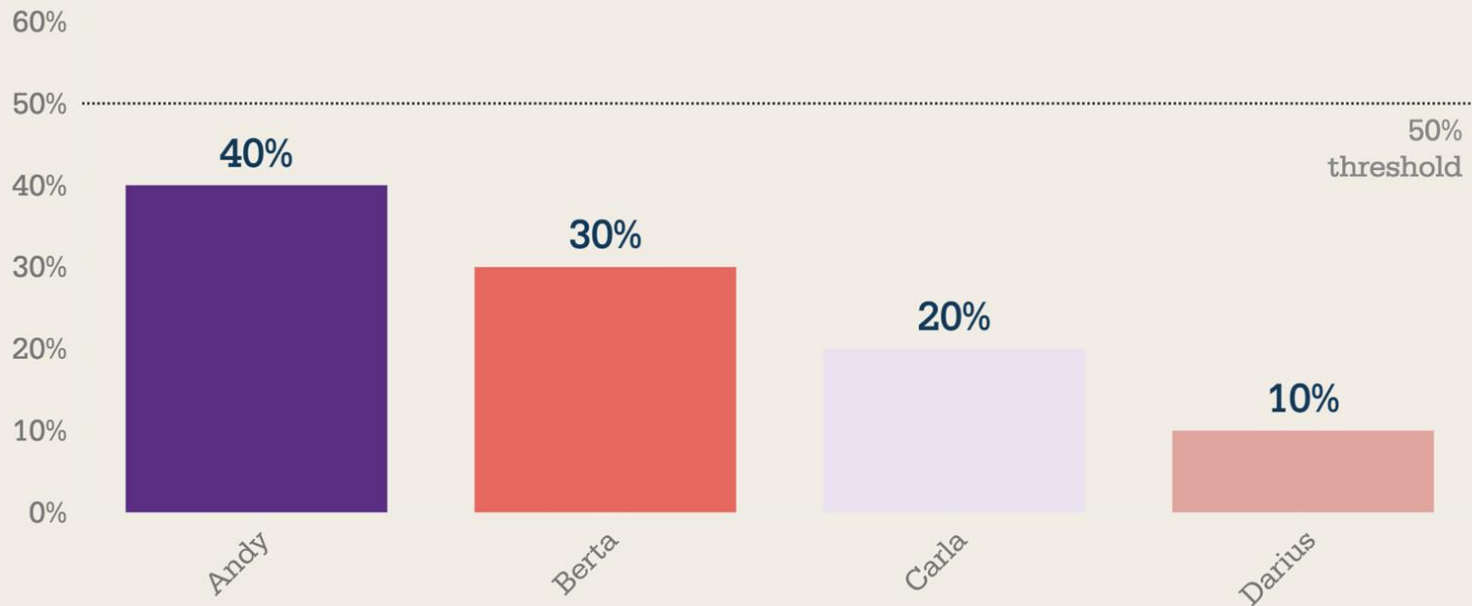
# WHAT IS RANKED CHOICE VOTING



- ▶ Voters have the option to **rank candidates** in order of their preference.
- ▶ RCV **promotes majority winners**. If no candidate has a majority of first-choice preferences, candidates are eliminated one-by-one in an “**instant runoff**” until there is a majority winner.
- ▶ It’s a **simple change** with **powerful impacts** for our democracy.



# ROUND 1



No candidate has more than half of 1st choices. The last-place candidate will be eliminated.

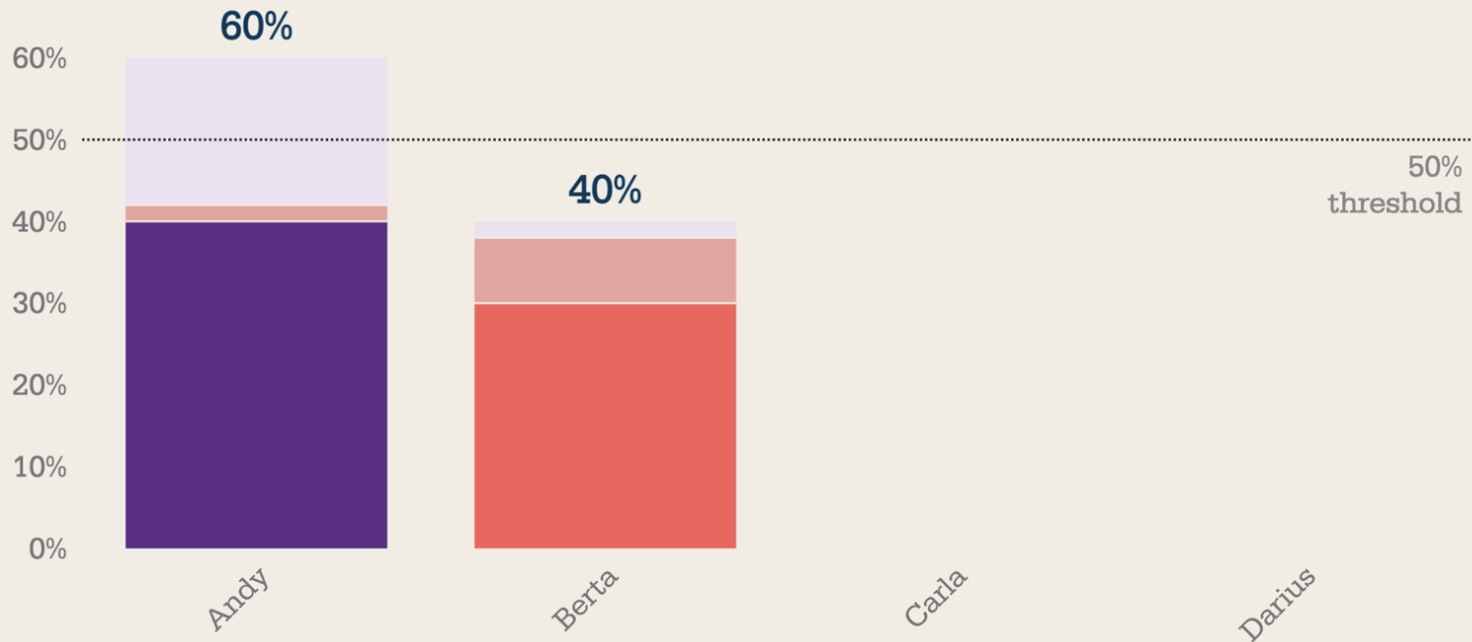
# ROUND 2



Darius is eliminated. Those ballots count for the voters' 2nd choices.

# ROUND 3

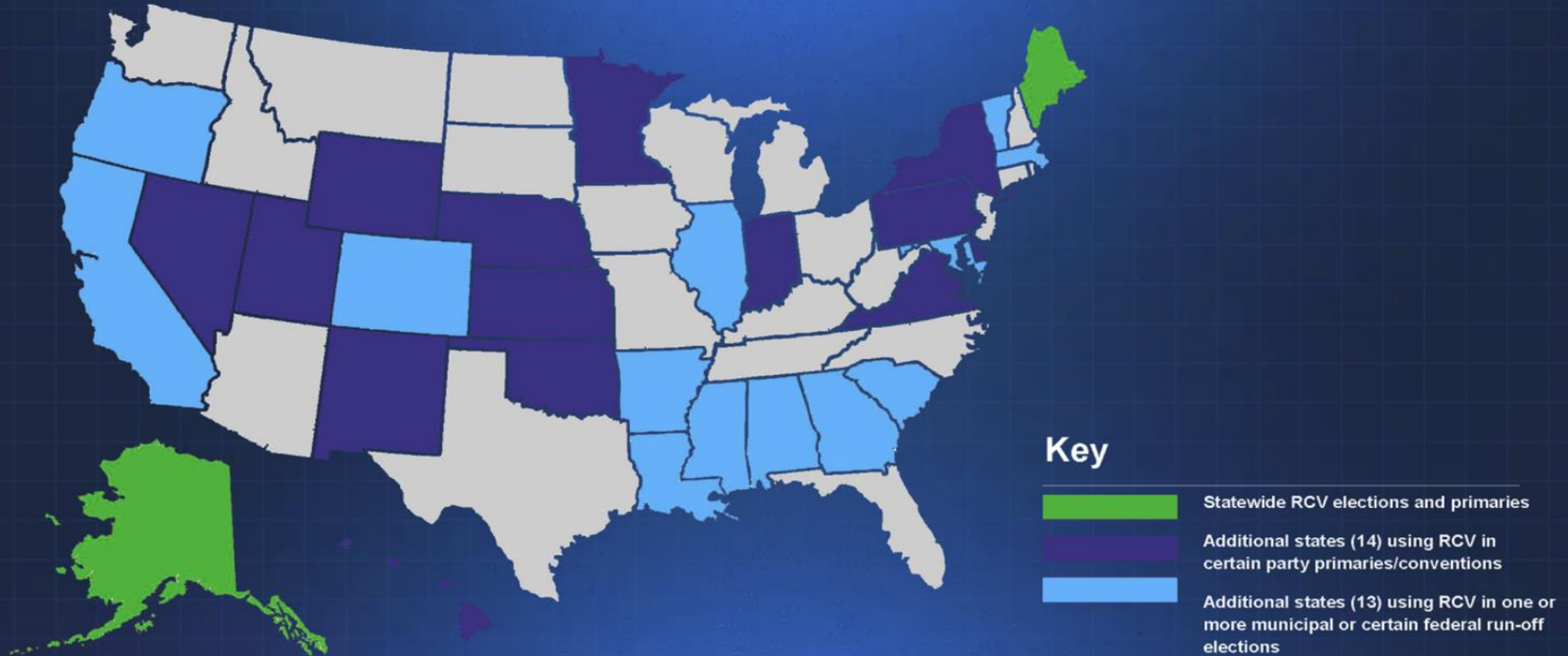
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Carla is eliminated. Those ballots count for the voters' next choices.  
Andy wins the election.

# WHERE IS RCV USED?

14 MILLION VOTERS IN 29 RED AND BLUE STATES USE RCV



# HOW RCV TRANSFORMS ELECTIONS



- ▶ Promotes **voter choice**
- ▶ **No more vote-splitting** & strategic voting
- ▶ Promotes **majority winners**
- ▶ Improves **campaign civility**
- ▶ Improved **representation** for women & people of color
- ▶ Creates incentives for **broader engagement** with voters

# HOW DOES RCV WORK IN PRACTICE?



## Voters like RCV & use rankings

- 77% in NYC
- 62% in Utah
- 94% in Santa Fe
- 71% of voters rank 2+ candidates (more in competitive races!)

## RCV encourages “sincere voting”

- In Utah, voters said they were more likely to vote for their honest favorite by a 30-to-1 margin

## RCV elects winners with broad support

- All winners have majority of final-round votes
- 73% of voters ranked the winner in their top 3



# HOW DOES RCV WORK IN PRACTICE?



## RCV improves the tone of campaigns

- Less mudslinging, more “issues” campaigning
- Candidates must appeal to a broader group of voters
- Evidence is available from exit surveys and campaign analysis

## RCV improves representation

- Over the last decade, women won half of municipal RCV races
- NYC has most diverse city council in history
- Voters of color tend to use more rankings

## RCV improves voter engagement

- Voters in RCV cities are more likely to be contacted by campaigns
- 73% of RCV voters elect one of their top 3 choices

# WHERE IS THE RESEARCH MORE MIXED?



## **Unclear impact on voter turnout.**

- Other factors drive turnout, like election timing, competitiveness, etc.
- Ballot style doesn't appear to have a strong impact.
- One recent paper finds RCV boosted turnout in odd-year municipal elections.

## **Unclear impact on voter trust.**

- Voters who have used RCV report that they like it and trust the outcome.
- Voters who have not used RCV are sometimes skeptical.

# RCV IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS



- ▶ Party primaries
  - RCV is helpful in crowded races
  - Important in “safe districts” where the primary matters most
  - Helps parties advance stronger nominees
- ▶ Presidential primaries
  - RCV protects early voters and mail-in voters when candidates drop out: 3M wasted votes in 2020!
  - Tweak to the formula: Democratic presidential primaries award delegates to multiple candidates
- ▶ Municipal races

# SAMPLE BALLOT

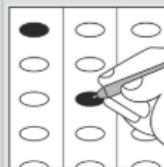
## Instructions for marking a Ranked Choice Ballot

To rank your candidates, fill in the oval:

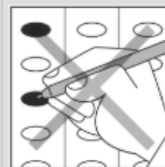
- In the 1st column for your 1st choice.
- In the 2nd column for your 2nd choice.
- In the 3rd column for your 3rd choice.

**Making selections:**

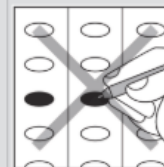
Rank candidates in the order of your choice.  
You may rank as many or as few candidates as you wish, up to 5 choices.



Fill in the oval completely.



No more than one oval in a column.



No more than one oval for a candidate.

## For the Democratic Nomination for President of the United States

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice
	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Joseph R. Biden	<input type="radio"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>4</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>5</sup>
Tom Steyer	<input type="radio"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>4</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>5</sup>
Bernie Sanders	<input type="radio"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>4</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>5</sup>
Amy Klobuchar	<input type="radio"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>4</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>5</sup>
Tulsi Gabbard	<input type="radio"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>4</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>5</sup>
Elizabeth Warren	<input type="radio"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>4</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>5</sup>
Michael R. Bloomberg	<input type="radio"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>4</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>5</sup>
Pete Buttigieg	<input type="radio"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>4</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>5</sup>
(undeclared)	<input type="radio"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>4</sup>	<input type="radio"/> <sup>5</sup>

# Questions?



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