

Statement Before The
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Thursday, March 3, 2022
10:10 AM
Conference Room 211 and Videoconference

in consideration of
SB 2162
RELATING TO RANKED CHOICE VOTING.

Chair DELA CRUZ, Vice Chair KEITH-AGARAN, and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee

Common Cause Hawaii supports SB 2162, which establishes ranked choice voting (RCV) for special federal elections and special elections of vacant county council seats.

Common Cause Hawaii is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to reforming government and strengthening democracy through voting modernization efforts such as adopting RCV.

RCV is a simple electoral reform that ensures fair and efficient elections. In a traditional election, the candidate with the most votes wins, even if they do not receive a majority of the votes. This means voters often feel disengaged and are left to choose between the “lesser of two evils,” or vote for the candidate they feel has the best chance of winning, rather than supporting their favorite candidates.

RCV promotes positive, inclusive and fair elections, which encourages a diversity of candidates. The Hawaii Democratic Party’s Party-Run Presidential Primary employed RCV in 2020. There are approximately 50 jurisdictions that are using or have adopted some form of RCV. [See \[https://www.fairvote.org/data_on_rcv#research_snapshot\]\(https://www.fairvote.org/data_on_rcv#research_snapshot\)](https://www.fairvote.org/data_on_rcv#research_snapshot) (retrieved Jan. 29, 2022).

With RCV, voters rank candidates from favorite to least favorite. On Election Night, first choice votes are counted to determine who voters like the best. If a candidate receives a majority of votes, they win. If no candidate receives a majority, the candidate with the fewest first-choice rankings is eliminated. If your favorite candidate is eliminated, your vote is instantly counted for your next choice. This repeats until one candidate reaches a majority and wins.

In RCV elections, you always get to vote for your favorite candidate, even if they do not have a good chance of winning. If your favorite candidate gets eliminated, then your vote immediately counts for your next choice. You can truly vote your conscience without worrying about wasting your vote. Ranking your 2nd, 3rd, and 4th choices will never hurt your favorite candidate. It simply amplifies your voice in the process.

Cities that have RCV elections have seen a steady increase in voter turnout. When voters feel their vote will matter, they turn out in greater numbers.

In RCV elections, candidates often need 2nd and 3rd choice votes to win a majority of the vote. As such, they will ask for your first-choice vote, but if another candidate is your favorite, they will also ask for your second and

third choices. Candidates are not likely to get your second or third choice vote if they have been engaging in negative “mudslinging” personal attacks against your favorite candidate.

RCV will require voter education to implement successfully. Common Cause Hawaii hopes that the Office of Elections and Clerks’ Offices are provided with sufficient public education tools to implement RCV and will work cooperatively with the community to disseminate information about RCV.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of 2162, and Common Cause Hawaii respectfully urges the committee members to pass SB 2162 out of your Committee with an effective date upon its approval. If you have further questions of me, please contact me at sma@commoncause.org.

Very respectfully yours,

Sandy Ma
Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii



49 South Hotel Street, Room 314 | Honolulu, HI 96813
www.lwv-hawaii.com | 808.531.7448 | voters@lwv-hawaii.com | @LWVHawaii on Facebook

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Thursday, March 2, 2022, 10:00 a.m., Conference Room 211 and Via Videoconference
SB 2162, RELATING TO RANKED CHOICE VOTING

TESTIMONY

Janet Mason, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee Members:

The League now supports this bill, which I would establish ranked choice voting for special federal elections and special elections of vacant county council seats. The limited scope of this bill (for special Federal elections and for special elections of vacant County Council seats) is appropriate, since this method has not been used before in Hawaii.

Ranked choice voting is appropriate where there are more than two candidates. The method allows voters to choose their candidates in order of preference, by marking candidates as their first, second, third, and subsequent choices, followed by tabulation of votes in rounds, with the lowest-ranked candidates eliminated in each round until there is a candidate who receives the majority of the votes (more than 50%) in a final round and is declared the winner.

Where there are many candidates in the same race and the race is competitive, ranked choice voting has the potential for producing a more representative result where the winner actually receives the majority of votes. However, we hasten to add that for races where this method is not used – even close races – receiving a plurality of votes (rather than a majority of votes) remains a legal and well accepted approach.¹

However, now we are encouraged by survey and exit poll results that have indicated voters find ranked choice voting easy to do and a positive experience.² Each ranked choice ballot should provide clear instructions to voters, as required under this bill. The ballot must be simple and easy to understand for both the voter and election officials.

¹ For example In the 2018 Democratic primary race for Lieutenant Governor, there were five candidates, and the winner was Josh Green with 30.2%, followed by Jill Tokuda with 27.5%, Bernard Carvalho with 18.5%, Kim Coco Iwamoto with 13.8% and Will Espero with 6.2%: Source: <https://elections.hawaii.gov/election-results/>.

² Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center: <https://www.rcvresources.org/faq>



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The League is aware of the use of Ranked Choice Voting by the Hawaii Democratic Party in its 2020 Presidential Primary³, the adoption of it for state and federal races in Alaska last fall,⁴ the adoption of it for Presidential and U.S. Senate seats in Maine's 2020 elections⁵ and a rise in its use in municipal elections throughout the country.⁶ In the past four years Hawaii legislators have also introduced similar proposals to change our electoral system for certain races.

We note that there were seven parties represented in Hawaii's 2020 general election and think ranked choice voting might help our emerging parties gain a foothold. Do we need to consider the effect on rights of political parties for an election that uses the ranked choice method? We note that Maine's ranked choice voting provides that the number of votes cast for a party's candidate is defined as the number of votes credited to that candidate after the initial counting in the first round of tabulation.⁷

We defer to the Office of Elections and the County Clerks about any additional cost of using method tis method for the elections specified in this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

³ Shikina, Rob. "Joe Biden Wins Hawaii Democratic Presidential Primary With 63% of Ranked-Choice Votes". *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, 23 May 2020. <https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/05/23/breaking-news/joe-biden-wins-hawaii-democratic-presidential-primary-with-63-of-ranked-choice-votes/>, accessed 19 February 2021.

⁴ Bohrer, Becky, "Alaska Voters Narrowly Approve Initiative Changing Elections." Associated Press. <https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-alaska-legislature-state-elections-general-elections-387ba5f6b3ab79bb841bc5c29c8bceee>, accessed 19 February 2021. Of note, Alaska now joins Maine as the second state to adopt RCV at this level of elections.

⁵ <https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-senate-elections-voting-maine-united-states-355f2859cf5dabf25bb0bb953f9c66bd>

⁶ "Ranked Choice Voting." National Conference of State Legislatures. <https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/ranked-choice-voting636934215.aspx>, accessed 19 February 2021.

⁷ https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/bills_127th/billtexts?B000201.asp

Rob Richie
President and CEO, FairVote Action
6930 Carroll Avenue, Suite 240
Takoma Park, MD 20912
301-270-4616

Testimony from:
Rob Richie

In SUPPORT of Senate Bill 2162

March 1, 2022

Hawaii Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Testimony in favor of SB2162, March 2022

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing to express FairVote Action's support for Senate Bill 2162, which establishes ranked choice voting in special federal and county council elections. This bill will improve Hawaii's democracy by ensuring fairer, more representative outcomes in crowded special elections. Further, ranked choice voting will 1) offer voters more choices on their ballots, 2) promote positive, issues-focused campaigns that reward candidates for engaging with voters, and 3) level the playing field for female candidates and candidates of color.

FairVote Action is a national nonpartisan organization that educates and advocates for electoral system reforms that improve our elections. We are seen as a leading national resource on ranked choice voting (RCV). I have led FairVote as Executive Director since 1992 and now I am President and CEO of FairVote and FairVote Action.

Approximately ten million voters in 55 jurisdictions across the U.S. vote using ranked choice voting. It has become the fastest-growing and most bipartisan electoral reform in the country. Just in the past two years:

- New York City held the largest citywide RCV races in U.S. history and conducted a successful voter education campaign which resulted in high voter participation and a low error rate.
- Hawaii was one of five states to use RCV ballots for its 2020 Democratic presidential primaries.
- Voters approved RCV ballot initiatives in all ten cities that voted on RCV in 2020 and 2021.
- State legislatures in Utah, Virginia, and Colorado passed local options legislation to allow municipalities to begin using RCV. In 2021, twenty Utah cities used RCV in municipal elections, 19 of them for the first time. These cities opted in after the state enacted local options legislation.

- The Virginia Republican Party used RCV to nominate candidates for statewide office and went on to win the offices of governor, lieutenant governor, and attorney general.

Ranked choice voting is particularly well-suited for crowded fields, such as those often seen in special elections to fill vacancies. RCV ensures that elections are won with majorities without the need for costly, inefficient runoff elections. In RCV elections, voters rank candidates in order of choice: their first choice, with an option to rank backup preferences as a second choice, third choice and so on. If a candidate receives more than half of the first choices, they win, just like any other election. If not, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and voters who picked that candidate as ‘number 1’ will have their votes count for their next choice. The process continues until two candidates remain.

Winners in RCV elections always have a majority of the vote when matched head-to-head against their final opponent, and most RCV victors have even more than majority support. Most RCV winners are ranked in the top 3 choices by two-thirds of voters or more, demonstrating a measure of broad consensus among voters. Winners of RCV races usually earn the most first choices as well.

RCV addresses the problems of “vote-splitting” and “spoiler” candidates. Under our current system, a majority of voters may support a particular ideology, but split their votes among candidates who support that ideology – resulting in a winner whose views reflect the minority of voters. For example, Green Party candidates Jill Stein and Ralph Nader won enough votes to affect the outcomes in key swing states in the 2016 and 2000 presidential elections.¹² In ranked choice voting elections, voters could rank the Green candidate 1st and then rank either the Democratic or Republican candidate as their 2nd choice. Their votes would not be “wasted.” Instead, they would be counted in the final tally and would count for the next candidate who best represents the voter’s values, rather than accidentally helping elect the candidate they want least.

One of the most powerful aspects of RCV is that it offers voters greater choice, creating space for both voters and candidates to express a wide range of views. Voters may rank as many or as few candidates as they like but, in practice, most voters choose to use multiple rankings in order to express their full preferences. Typically, over 70% of voters choose to rank multiple candidates.³ In highly competitive or highly publicized elections, the rate is even higher. For example, 89% of New York City voters ranked multiple candidates for mayor in 2021.

Voters like and understand RCV. Exit polling results find that voters in RCV cities overwhelmingly report that they like RCV and prefer it to their previous voting method.⁴ Exit polling in Utah found that 81% of first-time RCV voters found RCV easy to use and 88% were satisfied with the method they used to cast their ballot.⁵ In New York City, 95% of poll respondents found the ballot simple and 77% want to keep

¹ Presidential election in Michigan, 2016. Ballotpedia.

https://ballotpedia.org/Presidential_election_in_Michigan,_2016

² November 7, 2000 General Election. Florida Department of State. Division of Elections.

<https://results.elections.myflorida.com/SummaryRpt.asp?ElectionDate=11/7/2000&Race=PRE&DATAMODE=>

³ Data on Ranked Choice Voting. FairVote. (2021). https://www.fairvote.org/data_on_rcv#research_ballotuse

⁴ FairVote. 2020. Exit Surveys: Voters Evaluate Ranked Choice Voting.

<https://fairvote.app.box.com/s/hlzeu53uw0nrw9yzhbjk4flx2uf9x4fg>

⁵ Survey shows positive response to ranked choice voting. The Daily Herald. (2021).

<https://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/2021/nov/18/survey-shows-ranked-choice-voting-got-positive-response-in-pilot-test/>

using RCV.⁶ Understanding of RCV is comparable to plurality voting and better than the “top-two” voting used in California and Washington.⁷ Researchers have found no evidence of racial or ethnic differences in understanding of RCV.⁸

Research shows that RCV decreases negative campaigning because candidates need to reach beyond a single base in order to win. Sometimes, this means appealing to be the second or third choice of voters who support a different candidate as their first choice. Studies have found that candidates use more positive language in debates⁹, voters in RCV cities perceived less negativity compared to voters in non-RCV cities^{10,11}, and newspaper articles in RCV cities are more positive than in non-RCV cities.¹²

Recent research has found that RCV tends to result in greater election rates for women and candidates of color.^{13,14} A recent FairVote report also found that voters of color are more likely to rank multiple candidates on their ballots.¹⁵ The Department of Justice recently settled on a form of RCV to resolve a voting rights case in Michigan.¹⁶

RCV’s simplicity, representative outcomes, and positive experience for voters have made it an increasingly popular election method. Recommended by Robert’s Rules of Order and used in hundreds of private association elections, RCV is fully constitutional, having been twice upheld in federal courts, including in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in 2011 and in federal district courts in Maine in 2018 and 2020.

⁶ Rank the Vote NYC Releases Edison Research Exit Poll on the Election. Rank the Vote NYC. (2021). http://readme.readmedia.com/RANK-THE-VOTE-NYC-RELEASES-EDISON-RESEARCH-EXIT-POLL-ON-THE-ELECTION/17989282?utm_source=newswire&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=media_pr_emails

⁷ 2014 Eagleton Poll California RCV Survey Results. FairVote. (2021). <https://www.fairvote.org/2014-survey-results>.

⁸ Self-Reported Understanding of Ranked-Choice Voting. Donovan, T., Tolbert, C. and Gracey, K. (2019), Social Science Quarterly, 100: 1768-1776. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12651>.

⁹ Effect of Instant Run-off Voting on Participation and Civility. McGinn, E. (2020). http://eamonmcginn.com.s3-website-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/papers/IRV_in_Minneapolis.pdf

¹⁰ Socioeconomic and Demographic Perspectives on Ranked Choice Voting in the Bay Area. John, S. & Tolbert, C. (2015). <https://fairvote.app.box.com/v/perspectives-on-rcv-bay-area>

¹¹ Santa Fe Voters Support Ranked Choice Voting and Have High Confidence in City Elections. FairVote. (2018). <https://fairvote.app.box.com/v/SantaFeExitReport>

¹² Using Campaign Communications to Analyze Civility in Ranked Choice Voting Elections. Kropf, M. (2021). <https://www.cogitatiopress.com/politicsandgovernance/article/view/4293>

¹³ In Ranked Choice Elections, Women Win, RCV in the United States: A Decade in Review. Represent Women. (2020). https://www.representwomen.org/research_voting_reforms.

¹⁴ The alternative vote: Do changes in single-member voting systems affect descriptive representation of women and minorities? John, S., Smith, H., & Zack, E. (2018). <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0261379417304006>

¹⁵ Ranked Choice Voting Elections Benefit Candidates and Voters of Color. Otis, D., Dell, N., Zawora, C., & Danaf, O. (2021) https://www.fairvote.org/report_rcv_benefits_candidates_and_voters_of_color

¹⁶ Justice Department Reaches Agreement with City of Eastpointe, Michigan, Under the Voting Rights Act. U.S. Justice Department. (2019) <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-reaches-agreement-city-eastpointe-michigan-under-voting-rights-act>

The issue of RCV has come before the Hawaii Legislature in previous years. However, the evidence has never been so strong that voters like RCV and engage with the ranked ballot, parties can produce strong nominees with RCV, and implementation is a smooth process.¹⁷

For example, 20 cities in Utah used RCV in 2021, 19 of them for the first time. This included large cities like Salt Lake City and smaller towns of only a few hundred voters. After a voter education campaign partially funded by the lieutenant governor's office, county clerks efficiently administered the RCV elections. Administrators released RCV results on election night alongside results from non-RCV races, including visualizations of the round-by-round results.

Importantly, many voters in Hawaii already have experience with RCV. In 2020, the Hawaii Democratic Party used RCV for its presidential primary. Hawaii voters took advantage of the opportunity to rank multiple candidates, made very few ballot errors, and turned out in large numbers. In a year when nearly 3 million early voters in states without RCV cast ballots for presidential candidates who had already withdrawn by the time ballots were counted, RCV made more votes count – in Hawaii and the four other states using RCV in their presidential primaries.¹⁸

FairVote is available to answer any other questions from the committee or provide additional data. FairVote can also advise the legislature as it deems fit and be a resource for RCV implementation. You can reach me at rr@fairvoteaction.org and my FairVote Action colleagues at info@fairvoteaction.org.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Rob Richie
President and CEO of FairVote Action

¹⁷ Additional resources on RCV implementation are available from the Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center at www.RCVResources.org.

¹⁸ Ranked Choice Voting in 2020 Presidential Primary Elections. FairVote. (2020). Available at https://www.fairvote.org/ranked_choice_voting_in_2020_presidential_primary_elections

Ranked Choice Voting Ballot: Maine Democratic 2018 Primary for Governor

Here is the ballot used in Maine for its Democratic primary election in the governor’s race in 2018 that resulted in the nomination of Janet Mills. Turnout hit an all-time high.

| Governor | 1st Choice | 2nd Choice | 3rd Choice | 4th Choice | 5th Choice | 6th Choice | 7th Choice | 8th Choice |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Cote, Adam Roland Sanford | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dion, Donna J. Biddeford | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dion, Mark N. Portland | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Eves, Mark W. North Berwick | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mills, Janet T. Farmington | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Russell, Diane Marie Portland | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sweet, Elizabeth A. Hallowell | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Write-in | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

RCV Election Example: Maine Congressional Elections, 2018

| Maine, 2nd U.S. House District | | | |
|---|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Ranked choice Voting Election, November 2018 | | | |
| Candidate | Round 1 | Round 2 | Round 3 |
| Jared Golden Democrat | 45.5% | 46.2% | 50.5% |
| | 128,999 votes | 130,182 votes | 139,231 votes |
| Bruce Poliquin Republican | 46.4% | 47.1% | 49.5% |
| | 131,631 votes | 132,505 votes | 136,326 votes |
| Tiffany Bond Independent | 5.7% | 6.7% | <i>Defeated</i> |
| | 16,260 votes | 18,831 votes | |
| Will Hoar Independent | 2.4% | <i>Defeated</i> | |
| | 6,753 votes | | |



HAWAII

AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION

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MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 23404
Honolulu
Hawaii 96823

February 28, 2022

TO: Chair Dela Cruz & Members of WAM Committee

RE: SB 2162 Relating to Ranked Choice Voting

Support for a Hearing on March 3

Americans for Democratic Action is an organization founded in the 1950s by leading supporters of the New Deal and led by Patsy Mink in the 1970s. We are devoted to the promotion of progressive public policies.

Americans for Democratic Action Hawaii supports this bill as it would as it would establish ranked-choice voting for special federal elections and special elections of vacant county council seats. First-past-the post elections where there are a number of candidates from one Party and only one candidate from a second Party give the advantage to the minority Party candidate; this is not democratic. This bill sets up a more democratic system.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Bickel, President

SB2162

The Green Party of Hawai'i would like to add our support for the growing call for Ranked Choice Voting (RCV), in the state of Hawai'i. The Green Party of the United States has Instant Run Off Voting (IRV) in its platform under electoral reform. We encourage grassroots democracy and policies that put the power in the hands of the governed. RCV is a step in the correct direction and the passage of SB2162 will begin correcting the imbalance of power we currently have within our government at every level.

Mahalo,

Green Party of Hawai'i

Co-Chair GPH Susan Roberts Emery



LATE

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Thursday, March 3rd, 2022, 9:30a.m.

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action Supports: SB2162

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) I am submitting testimony in support of SB2162.

SB2162 establishes Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) for special federal elections and special elections of vacant county council seats.

HAPA supports this measure and all attempts to make our government more accountable, transparent, open and representative of the people.

RCV is a simple electoral reform that ensures fair and efficient elections. In a traditional election, the candidate with the most votes wins, even if they do not receive a majority of the votes. This means voters often feel disengaged and are left to choose between the "lesser of two evils," or vote for the candidate they feel has the best chance of winning, rather than supporting their favorite candidates.

RCV promotes positive, inclusive and fair elections, which encourages a diversity of candidates. In RCV elections, you always get to vote for your favorite candidate, even if they do not have a good chance of winning.

If your favorite candidate gets eliminated, then your vote immediately counts for your next choice. With RCV you can truly vote your conscience without worrying about wasting your vote. Ranking your 2nd, 3rd, and 4th choices will never hurt your favorite candidate. It simply amplifies your voice in the process.

The Hawaii Democratic Party's Party-Run Presidential Primary employed RCV in 2020. There are approximately 50 jurisdictions that are using or have adopted some form of RCV¹. Cities that have RCV elections have seen a steady increase in voter turnout. When voters feel their vote will matter, they turn out in greater numbers.

¹ https://www.fairvote.org/data_on_rcv#research_snapshot (retrieved Jan. 29, 2022)

Please pass SB2162 and help take measures to restore faith in our democracy.

Mahalo for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', with a stylized, cursive script.

Anne Frederick
Executive Director

SB-2162

Submitted on: 2/28/2022 3:51:05 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/3/2022 10:10:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Remote Testimony Requested |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Michael Press | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

My name is Michael Press. I am a teacher at Ilima Intermediate in Ewa Beach on Oahu. I support this bill. I ask that you do the same.

SB-2162

Submitted on: 2/28/2022 4:24:19 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/3/2022 10:10:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Remote Testimony Requested |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Benjamin Reilly | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

I write in support of this bill, as an Australian political scientist currently resident in Hawaii. I believe there is abundant evidence to show that RCV is superior to the current plurality voting system.

First, RCV guarantees that any elected member will be chosen by a majority of the community, either outright or after all rankings are counted, rather than the minority victories and split-votes that can and often do occur under plurality voting.

In 2010, Hawaii faced this issue when Republican Charles Djou won a special federal election with only 39% of the vote after Colleen Hanabusa and Ed Case split the almost 60% Democratic vote between them. The same year, a vacant county council special election saw a Tea Party Republican, Tom Berg, win with just 18 percent of the vote in a 14-candidate split field.

Similar majority-denying outcomes spurred Australia's introduction of RCV a century ago, while in Maine and Alaska, split votes leading to the election of unpopular and unrepresentative Governors from the minority party (Democrats in one state, Republicans another) were a key factor in the adoption by initiative poll of RCV. In both cases, voters rebelled at being represented by politicians clearly at odds with most of their constituents.

Such unrepresentative results are not possible under RCV. Instead, if no candidate has a majority of first rankings, successive rounds sees the candidate with the lowest support eliminated and their ballots transferred according to the next candidate ranked, until one has achieved an absolute majority. Politicians elected this way can thus claim a true majority mandate for their victory.

This majority mandate is key to a second advantage: less polarized politics. There is no room under RCV for narrow or extremist positions at odds with majority of the electorate. This is one reason why Australian politics has remained relatively centrist, without the polarization seen in the United States and other Western democracies in recent years. Big parties seek to win not only their own first-choice votes, but pick up preference flows from smaller parties too.

The centre-left Labor Party, for instance, relies on voters for the smaller Green Party choosing it as a 'second best' option, and has shifted its policies to incorporate environmental issues accordingly.

The main centre-right Coalition similarly uses RCV to encourage its supporters to rank both its constituent Liberal and National parties when they complete their ballot.

This process has generated a third benefit: RCV encourages politicians to cut deals with other candidates, not just their allies but sometimes their competitors too, in the course of election campaigns. These deals can be the basis for negotiation and cooperation once in government.

While RCV does not make politicians embrace their opponents or be nice to their enemies, it does give them a reason to at least talk – in stark contrast to the situation in Washington DC today, where Democrats and Republicans are no longer on speaking terms

The biggest beneficiaries of RCV, however, are ordinary voters who are not committed supporters of any party. Such voters can choose to vote for a party of their choice with the first rank, and then give a second or third-choice vote for others, without worrying that their vote is going to be ‘wasted’.

I therefore support this bill as an important first step towards introducing RCV in Hawaii.

SB-2162

Submitted on: 2/28/2022 4:25:31 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/3/2022 10:10:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Remote Testimony Requested |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Meizhu Lui | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

Dear Ways and Means Committee,

A democracy is not static; it evolves, as we find ways to further ensure the principle that "every vote counts," and counts equally.

Ranked choice voting is such a reform. It gives the public confidence that the candidate with the most support won, unlike a "winner-take-all" system where a public servant can be elected with far less than a majority of voters. Even if a voter's favorite candidate doesn't win, it's easier to accept when their first, second and third choices are part of the equation. While having run-off elections may be more time-consuming, the benefit in voter confidence far outweighs the logistical difficulties.

Moreover, the person who is finally elected has a better sense of where the public stands, since they can see what candidates with what platforms received the most and least support; this can help guide them as they engage in making policy for everyone in their constituency.

By passing SB 2162, you will be taking a bold step toward expanding democracy, and encouraging more citizens to participate in the electoral process. Thank you!

Meizhu Lui

District 1, Hamakua Coast, Hawaii Island

SB-2162

Submitted on: 2/28/2022 4:59:13 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/3/2022 10:10:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Remote Testimony Requested |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Mike Golojuch, Sr. | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

I support SB2162. This is the first step for rank choice voting.

Mike Golojuch, Sr.

SB-2162

Submitted on: 2/28/2022 5:00:58 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/3/2022 10:10:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Remote Testimony Requested |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Briana Harmon | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

Testimony In Support Of:
SB2162

Submitted by:
Briana Harmon
64-5162C Kamamalu Street
Kamuela, HI 96743

Position: Strong support of SB2162

Aloha,

Thank you for allowing me to testify on behalf of SB2162, on ranked choice voting. This bill proposes to implement ranked choice voting for special federal elections and vacant county council seats. Ranked choice voting (RCV) is a voting method in which voters elect candidates based on personal preference. Then if after the votes are counted, no candidate wins over 50% of the votes, the candidate with the least amount of votes is eliminated from the election, and anyone who voted for the eliminated candidate has their votes transferred to their second choice. This process repeats until one candidate wins over 50% of the vote.

I support ranked choice voting because I have researched its use in other states, and have noted the benefits of this voting method. New York City has implemented RCV on a large scale, and they have reported a multitude of benefits. The New York City Civic Engagement Commission have reported that RCV campaigns included less mudslinging, and more attempts to appeal directly to voters. Additionally more women and people of color were elected, and therefore elected officials were more representative of their communities.

The idea of making elected officials more representative of the communities that elected them is especially important in Hawaii. Hawaii's voter turnout has decreased by 54% since Hawaii first gained statehood, and some of the communities that have the lowest voter turnout are Native Hawaiian communities. In 2020 the Office of Hawaiian Affairs surveyed just over 2,000 Native Hawaiians, and found that 50% of the people they surveyed were not even aware of Hawaii's implementation of an all-mail-in-voting process for primary and general elections. A plausible reason that Native Hawaiian communities are not voting is because they don't feel like they can vote for anyone who is really going to represent them, so there is no point in

voting. Implementing RCV has proven to allow for elected officials to be more representative of their districts, making RCV a realistic solution to Hawaii's low voter turnout problem, especially within the Native Hawaiian community.

This issue is particularly important to me as a young citizen of Hawaii. The people we elect in these upcoming elections are the people who are going to be the leaders of my future. I want my leaders to be representative of the beliefs of myself and my peers, and not representative of a voting system that elects people based on their electability. So while I know this bill only implements RCV on a small scale, I believe it can be a segue to a future of leaders who truly are for the people, a future of ranked choice voting.

Ultimately, it is clear that Hawaii struggles to incentivize people to vote, and that change must be made in Hawaii's voting culture. A simple solution to this problem is RCV. RCV will make people able to legitimately use their voice, and to elect someone who they truly believe will represent them. I would love to see Hawaii adopt RCV, so that I can vote in a way that truly represents my beliefs. That is why I support RCV, and you should too.

Thank you,
Briana Harmon

SB-2162

Submitted on: 2/28/2022 7:33:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/3/2022 10:10:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Remote Testimony Requested |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| tlaloc tokuda | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

Aloha WAM Chair and Committee,

I am a member of Common Cause Hawaii and i usually agree with CCHI philosophy and direction. I lived in Australia for over 20 years

I support [SB2162](#) for the following reasons:

- Ranked Choice Voting is a simple electoral reform that ensures fair and efficient elections.
- In a traditional election, the candidate with the most votes wins, even if they do not receive a majority of the votes.
- This means voters often feel disengaged and are left to choose between the “lesser of two evils,” or vote for the candidate they feel has the best chance of winning, rather than supporting their favorite candidates.
- RCV promotes positive, inclusive and fair elections, which encourages a diversity of candidates.
- The Hawaii Democratic Party’s Party-Run Presidential Primary employed RCV in 2020. There are approximately 50 jurisdictions that are using or have adopted some form of RCV. See https://www.fairvote.org/data_on_rcv#research_snapshot (retrieved Jan. 29, 2022).
- In RCV elections, you always get to vote for your favorite candidate, even if they do not have a good chance of winning.
- If your favorite candidate gets eliminated, then your vote immediately counts for your next choice.
- You can truly vote your conscience without worrying about wasting your vote. Ranking your 2nd, 3rd, and 4th choices will never hurt your favorite candidate. It simply amplifies your voice in the process.
- Cities that have RCV elections have seen a steady increase in voter turnout. When voters feel their vote will matter, they turn out in greater numbers.

Mahalo for your consideration

Tlaloc Tokuda

Kailua Kona, HI 96740

SB-2162

Submitted on: 2/28/2022 10:08:04 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/3/2022 10:10:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Remote Testimony Requested |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Barbara J. Service | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Nakashima and committee members,

I am a resident of SD8 and HD19 and I am writing regarding ranked choice voting.

Please pass this bill which will establish ranked choice voting in certain special elections and/or to fill vacancies.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Barbara J. Service. MSW (ret.)

Kupuna advocate

SB-2162

Submitted on: 2/28/2022 11:11:12 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/3/2022 10:10:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Remote Testimony Requested |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Amy Brinker | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

Support

SB-2162

Submitted on: 3/1/2022 1:19:51 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/3/2022 10:10:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Remote Testimony Requested |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| David Anderson | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

Ranked Choice Voting is a simple electoral reform that ensures fair and efficient elections.

In a traditional election, the candidate with the most votes wins, even if they do not receive a majority of the votes.

This means voters often feel disengaged and are left to choose between the “lesser of two evils,” or vote for the candidate they feel has the best chance of winning, rather than supporting their favorite candidates.

RCV promotes positive, inclusive and fair elections, which encourages a diversity of candidates.

The Hawaii Democratic Party’s Party-Run Presidential Primary employed RCV in 2020. There are approximately 50 jurisdictions that are using or have adopted some form of RCV.

In RCV elections, you always get to vote for your favorite candidate, even if they do not have a good chance of winning.

If your favorite candidate gets eliminated, then your vote immediately counts for your next choice.

You can truly vote your conscience without worrying about wasting your vote. Ranking your 2nd, 3rd, and 4th choices will never hurt your favorite candidate. It simply amplifies your voice in the process.

Cities that have RCV elections have seen a steady increase in voter turnout. When voters feel their vote will matter, they turn out in greater numbers.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

SB-2162

Submitted on: 3/1/2022 9:53:04 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/3/2022 10:10:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Remote Testimony Requested |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Lisa Huynh Eller | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

Ranked Choice Voting is a simple electoral reform that ensures fair and efficient elections.

In a traditional election, the candidate with the most votes wins, even if they do not receive a majority of the votes.

This means voters often feel disengaged and are left to choose between the “lesser of two evils,” or vote for the candidate they feel has the best chance of winning, rather than supporting their favorite candidates.

Therefore, I support this bill to give voters a sense that their vote matters.

SB-2162

Submitted on: 3/1/2022 6:11:50 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/3/2022 10:10:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Remote Testimony Requested |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| laurie boyle | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

Aloha,

I support SB2162 for many reasons, including requiring the winner to be a Majority winner, providing an easy way for people to vote for the best candidate, rather than voting for someone because they are likely to win. Every vote matters and Ranked Choice provides a much more representative count.

Mahalo for your time.