

## Problems with Plurality Voting

in Single-Winner Elections with  
3 or More Candidates

Because you can show  
your support  
for only one candidate....

1) You can't express your preferences  
as clearly as in other voting methods.



2) You might be inclined to vote for a  
candidate who is not your favorite,  
or you might be discouraged and not  
vote at all.



3) Two similar candidates may split the  
vote, resulting in the election of a third,  
less desirable candidate.



“The plurality vote is pretty much the  
worst voting system there is.” –

Dr. Donald Saari, UC-Irvine mathematician  
<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/spoil-proofing-elections>

## Some Notable Plurality Elections

in which Most Voters Did Not  
Support the Winning Candidate

2018 **Indiana: US Senate** (GOP nominee)  
**Mike Braun 41.2%**  
Todd Rokita 30.0%  
Luke Messer 28.8%

2018 **Ohio: 12<sup>th</sup> Cong Dist** (GOP nominee)  
**Troy Balderson 29%**  
Melanie Leneghan 28%  
7 more candidates

### Maine Governors (winning percentage)

2014 Paul LePage 48.2%  
2010 Paul LePage 37.6%  
2006 John Baldacci 38.1%  
2002 John Baldacci 47.2%  
1994 Angus King 35.4%

2002 **Colorado: 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District**  
**Bob Beauprez (81,789 votes – 47%)**  
Mike Feeley (81,668 votes – 47%)  
3 others: Chandler, Good, Martin

1998 **Minnesota Governor**  
**Jesse Ventura 37%**  
Norm Coleman 34%  
Hubert Humphrey III 28%

**MAKING**  
DEMOCRACY WORK®

LWV of Boulder County Voting Methods Team  
P.O. Box 21274, Boulder, CO 80308  
lwvbc.org, Teams at Work, Voting Methods  
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## Better Single-Winner Voting Methods

*The League supports authorizing and implementing **alternatives to plurality voting** that allow people to express their preferences more effectively. ... The League supports voting methods that can **improve the election experience**, that encourage honest voting rather than tactical voting, and that consider ease of implementation.*

- Excerpt of the LWV of Colorado position

**LWV** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF BOULDER COUNTY

See Inside for Examples of  
Better Voting Methods

## ADVANTAGES of Alternative Single-Winner Voting Methods

In rating methods, such as Approval and Score Voting, you don't have to choose between two candidates with similar ideologies who would split the vote in a plurality election. In Instant-Runoff Voting your vote transfers if your 1<sup>st</sup> choice is eliminated.

### Approval Voting –

**You can vote for more than one candidate.** The candidate with the most votes wins.

*Approval voting was adopted in 2018 for municipal elections in Fargo, ND. Approval voting has also been used in the University of Colorado – Boulder student government elections since 2013.*

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	brownie
<input type="checkbox"/>	banana split
<input type="checkbox"/>	sugar cookie
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	lemon bar

### Score Voting –

**You can rate every single candidate.**

The candidate with the highest total score wins. In the example below, the range is from 0 to 3 where 0 indicates no support and 3 indicates maximum support.

*Score or Range voting is familiar to those who use Yelp and Amazon ratings.*

*Voters in Lane County (Eugene), Oregon, narrowly rejected a version called STAR (Score Then Automatic Runoff) in 2018, but proponents plan to put it on the ballot again.*

brownie	0	1	2	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
banana split	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	1	2	3
sugar cookie	0	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	2	3
lemon bar	0	1	2	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

### Instant-Runoff Voting (IRV) –

**You rank the candidates:** 1 for your first choice, 2 for your second choice and so on. If a candidate receives a majority of 1st-choice votes, that candidate wins. Otherwise, the candidate with the fewest 1st-choice votes is eliminated. If your first choice gets eliminated, your vote will be transferred to your next-higher choice that has not yet been eliminated. The elimination process continues in sequential rounds until one candidate remains.

*IRV is also known as single-winner Ranked Choice Voting. IRV is the most widely used alternative voting method in government elections. In 2016 Maine voters adopted it for state elections.*

brownie	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	1	2	3
banana split	0	1	2	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
sugar cookie	0	1	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	3
lemon bar	0	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	2	3