



# Advocating for Better Ways to Choose Our Elected Officials



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LWV of Boulder County

LWVCO Convention - May 31, 2019 Caucus

# Voting

A process for making a  
collective decision

# A Voting Method Defines ...

## Balloting instructions

- the form of the ballot
- what constitutes a valid vote

## Tallying of the votes

# Adopting Better Voting Methods

... is the best way to  
**defeat gerrymandering,  
eliminate the spoiler effect,  
attract better candidates and  
make every vote count.**

We want to vote for the greater good,  
instead of for the lesser evil.

# Our Caucus Plan

- 1) Single-winner **voting exercises**
- 2) **Guidelines for LWV positions**
- 3) Proposed **LWVUS concurrence**

# Let's Vote!

**Brownie**



**Chocolate Chip Cookie**



**Lemon Bar**



# Plurality Ballot

Vote for ONE.

brownie

chocolate chip cookie

lemon bar

# Approval Voting Ballot

Vote for ONE OR MORE.



brownie

chocolate chip cookie

lemon bar

# Score Voting Ballot

Rate EACH candidate.



No support = 0. Maximum support = 3.

brownie

0	1	2	3
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chocolate chip cookie

0	1	2	3
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lemon bar

0	1	2	3
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# Instant-Runoff (or Single-Winner RCV) Ballot

Rank EACH candidate.

	1 <sup>st</sup> choice	2 <sup>nd</sup> choice	3 <sup>rd</sup> choice
brownie	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
chocolate chip cookie	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
lemon bar	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

# No Voting Method is Perfect!

Arrow's Impossibility Theorem and  
Gibbard-Satterthwaite Theorem

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# Plurality – Characteristics

- **Choose-one voting**
- **Candidate with the most votes wins**

# Plurality Voting – Fall River, MA (March 2019)

Q1: Recall Mayor? Yes 61%

Q2: Replace with ...?

The Mayor 35.4%

# Approval – Characteristics



- Voters vote for **any number** of candidates
- Candidate with the **most votes** wins
- There may be more votes cast than ballots

# Approval – Fargo, ND

<b>CURRENT BALLOT</b> VOTE FOR <u>ONE</u> NAME	<b>APPROVAL BALLOT</b> VOTE FOR <u>ALL</u> THE NAMES <u>YOU APPROVE OF</u>
Superman <input type="radio"/>	Superman <input checked="" type="radio"/>
Batman <input checked="" type="radio"/>	Batman <input checked="" type="radio"/>
Wonder Woman <input type="radio"/>	Wonder Woman <input checked="" type="radio"/>
Green Lantern <input type="radio"/>	Green Lantern <input checked="" type="radio"/>
Lex Luthor <input type="radio"/>	Lex Luthor <input type="radio"/>

<https://reformfargo.org/>

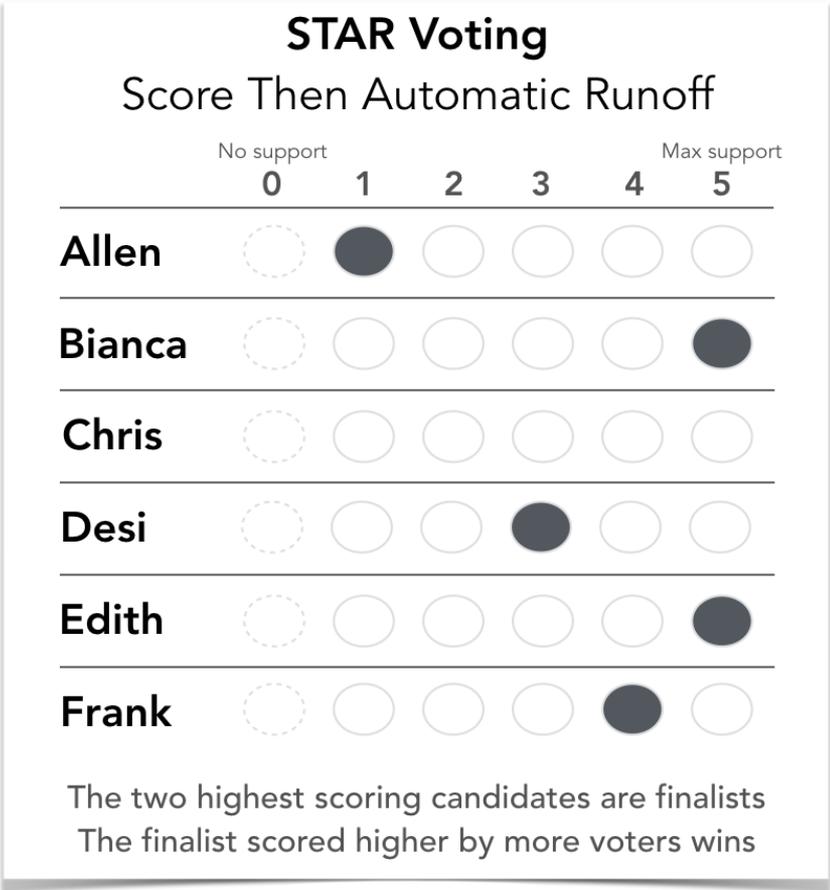
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# Score – Characteristics



- Voters may **rate every candidate**
- **Equal ratings** are allowed
- Candidate with the **highest total score** wins
- **Policy decision: range of scores**

# Score (STAR) – Oregon



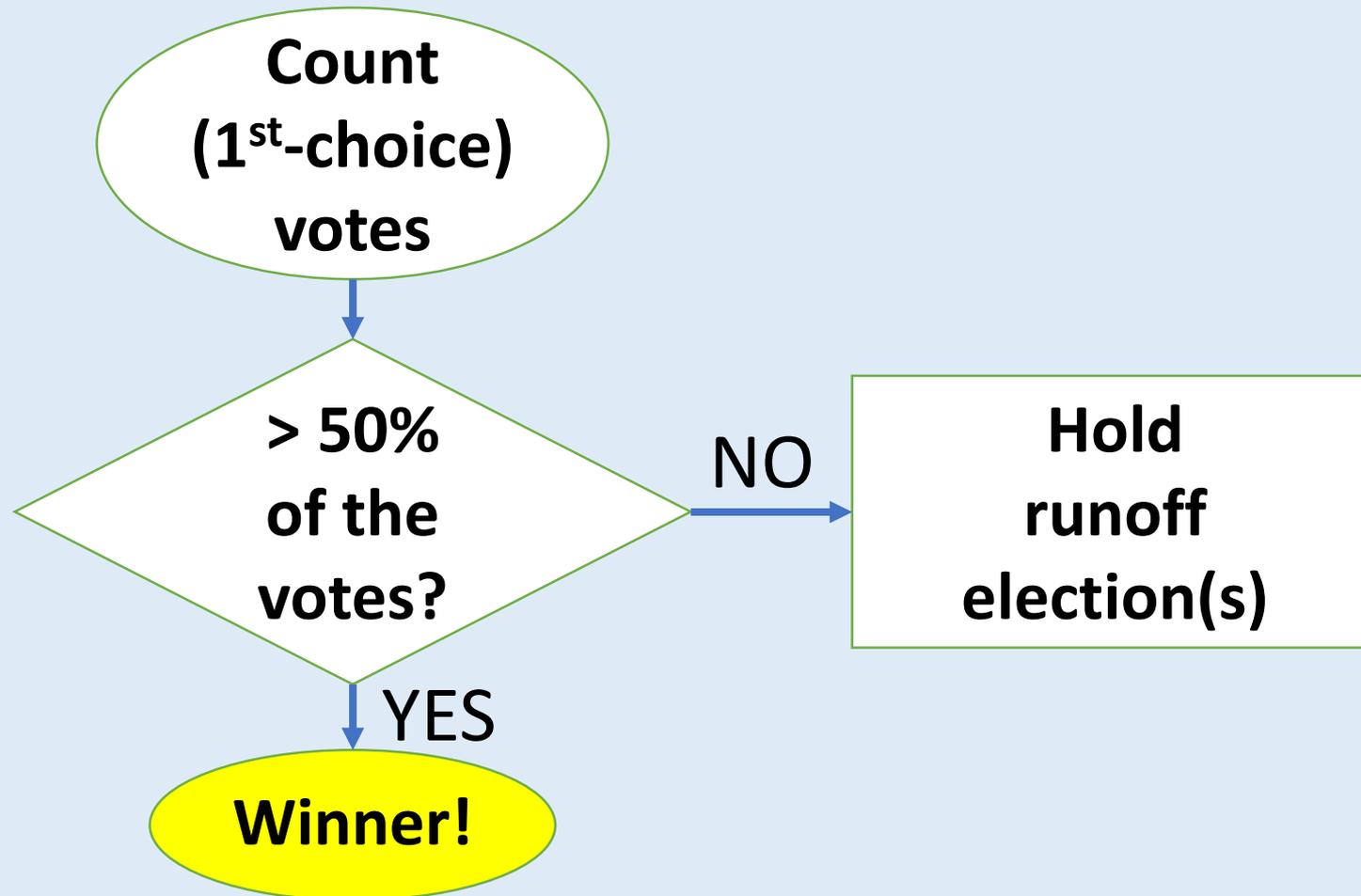
<https://www.equal.vote/>

# IRV – Characteristics

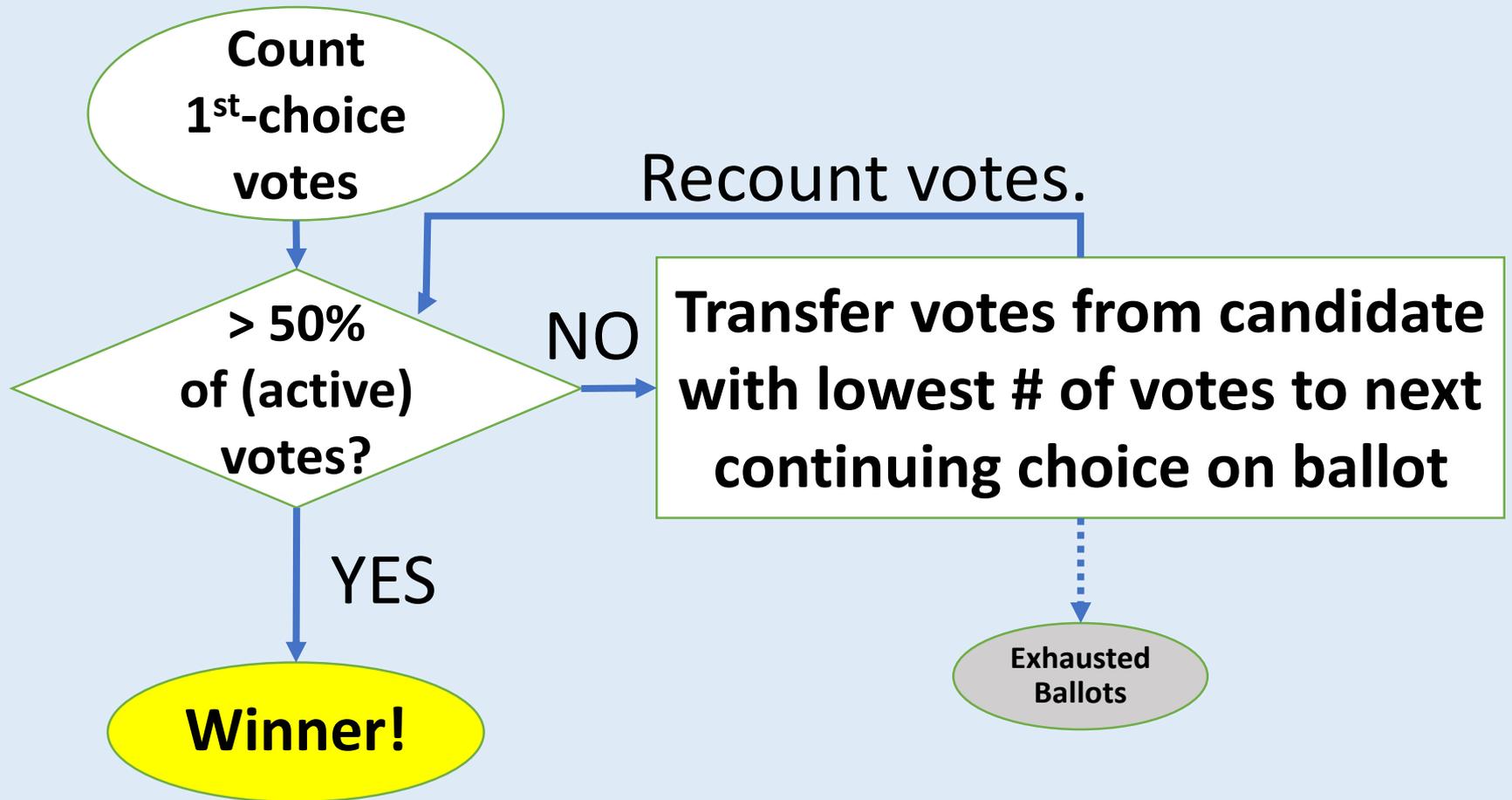
1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>

- Voters **rank** candidates
- Replaces **a later runoff**
- Most **well-known** alternative to plurality
- Sometimes called (single-winner) **Ranked Choice Voting or RCV**

# Triggering a Runoff



# IRV Flowchart



# IRV – Maine CD2 (Nov 2018)

## Round 1

<b>Bond, Tiffany L.</b>	<b>5.71%</b>
<b>Golden, Jared F.</b>	<b>45.58%</b>
<b>Hoar, William R. S.</b>	<b>2.37%</b>
<b>Poliquin, Bruce</b>	<b>46.33%</b>

# IRV – Maine CD2 (Nov 2018)

Round 2 - Final

**Golden, Jared F.** **50.62%**  
**(49.18% of valid ballots)**

**Poliquin, Bruce** **46.33%**  
**(47.97% of valid ballots)**



# **IRV – SF Mayor** (June 2018)

Six candidates eliminated in sequential rounds.

**Exhausted Ballots** **21,624**

**For the winner, London Breed,**

Percent of total ballots

$115,977 / 251,032 = 46.2\%$

# An Important Distinction

**Single-Winner:** mayor, ward member, member of Congress

**Versus**

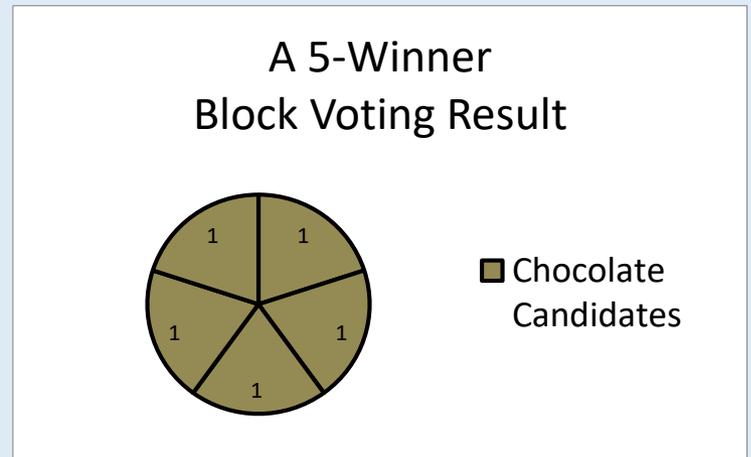
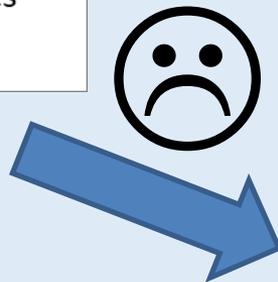
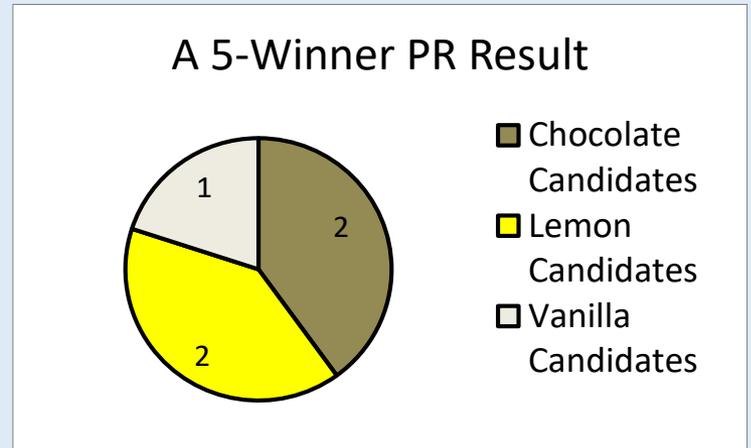
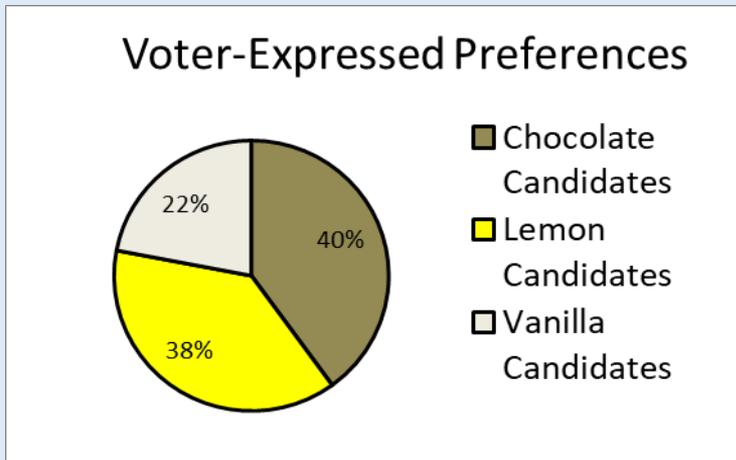
**Multi-Winner:** 2 or more seats filled in a single contest

**Bye-Bye, Gerrymandering!**

# Proportional Representation (PR)

- For **multi-member** bodies
- Elect candidates who **represent voters' interests** – ethnicity, gender, profession, political leanings, neighborhood, etc. – **in proportion to the electorate**

# Achieving Proportional Representation



# Our Caucus Plan

- 1) Single-winner **voting exercises**
- 2) **Guidelines for LWV positions**
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# LWVUS Positions

...broad and general

...guides for acting

- LWVUS *Impact on Issues 2018-20*, page 5



# Voting Methods Position

**Adopted 2017 –**

concurrency with LWV of  
Boulder County position

# LWVCO Position:

- **Express preferences** more effectively
- Encourage **honest voting**
- Gain **on-the-ground experience**
- Consider **ease of implementation**

# LWVCO Position Meets LWVUS Criteria

- LWVCO Voting Methods position is **broad and general**.
- It supports valued principles but no particular voting method.

# Using LWVCO Position as a Guide for Acting

- **Educate** on voting methods
- **Support adoption** of a well-vetted voting method

# Our Caucus Plan

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# League Mission

**Empowering Voters.**

**Defending Democracy.**



# Proposed 2020 LWVUS Concurrence

## Voter Representation / Election Process

Position in Brief:

Support **election methods ...**

# Proposed Concurrence

## For voters

- broadest **voter representation** possible
- positive effect on **voter participation**
- **expressive** of voter choices

# Proposed Concurrence

For election **administrators**

- verifiable and **auditable**
- compatible with acceptable ballot-casting methods, including **vote-by-mail**

# Proposed Concurrence

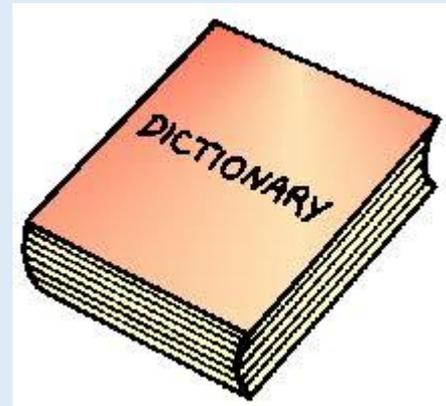
An item which deserves **closer consideration**:



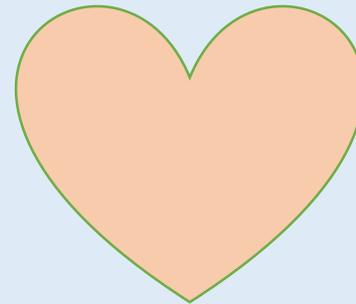
- Require the winner to receive a **majority of the votes** for executive and other single seat offices

# “Majority” Requirement

Definition?



Desirable?



# Best Candidate Can Lose

A 3-candidate election: D, R, and U

U beats D AND U beats R

**The Condorcet winner is U!**

... but under IRV or plurality U loses!

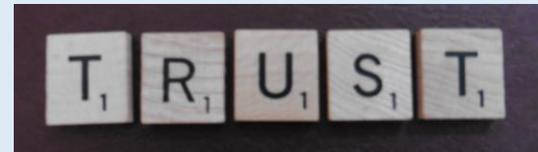
D = 35%    U = 30%    R = 35%

**The D or R candidate wins!**

# Majority Conundrum

**No voting method can  
guarantee a majority**  
when more than 2 candidates  
are vying for a single seat.

# Why Does “Majority” Language Matter?



- Impacts **LWV** reputation
- **Limits League** advocacy

**Not broad and general**

# Should LWVCO Support the Proposed Concurrence?

*Aye!* *Nay!*

- LWVCA Board: minus 3 bullet points
- 2017 LWVCO: added definitions

Colorado's **LWVUS delegates** could  
**concur with the proposal**  
**minus the majority bullet**

# Conclusion

We think it's important  
for the national League  
to advocate for better  
voting methods  
**with accuracy and integrity!**

# Resources

lwvbc.org → Teams At Work  
→ Voting Methods

Email us at  
[vmteam@lwvbc.org](mailto:vmteam@lwvbc.org)

# Election Results

**Plurality** – Choose one

**Approval** 

$\% \text{ Support} = \# \text{ votes} / \# \text{ ballots}$

**Score** - 

**Instant-Runoff (IRV)** – 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>