

# Ranked ● Choice Voting

**RESOURCE CENTER**

## Presentation to Government Operations Committee

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KAREN BRINSON BELL, PMP

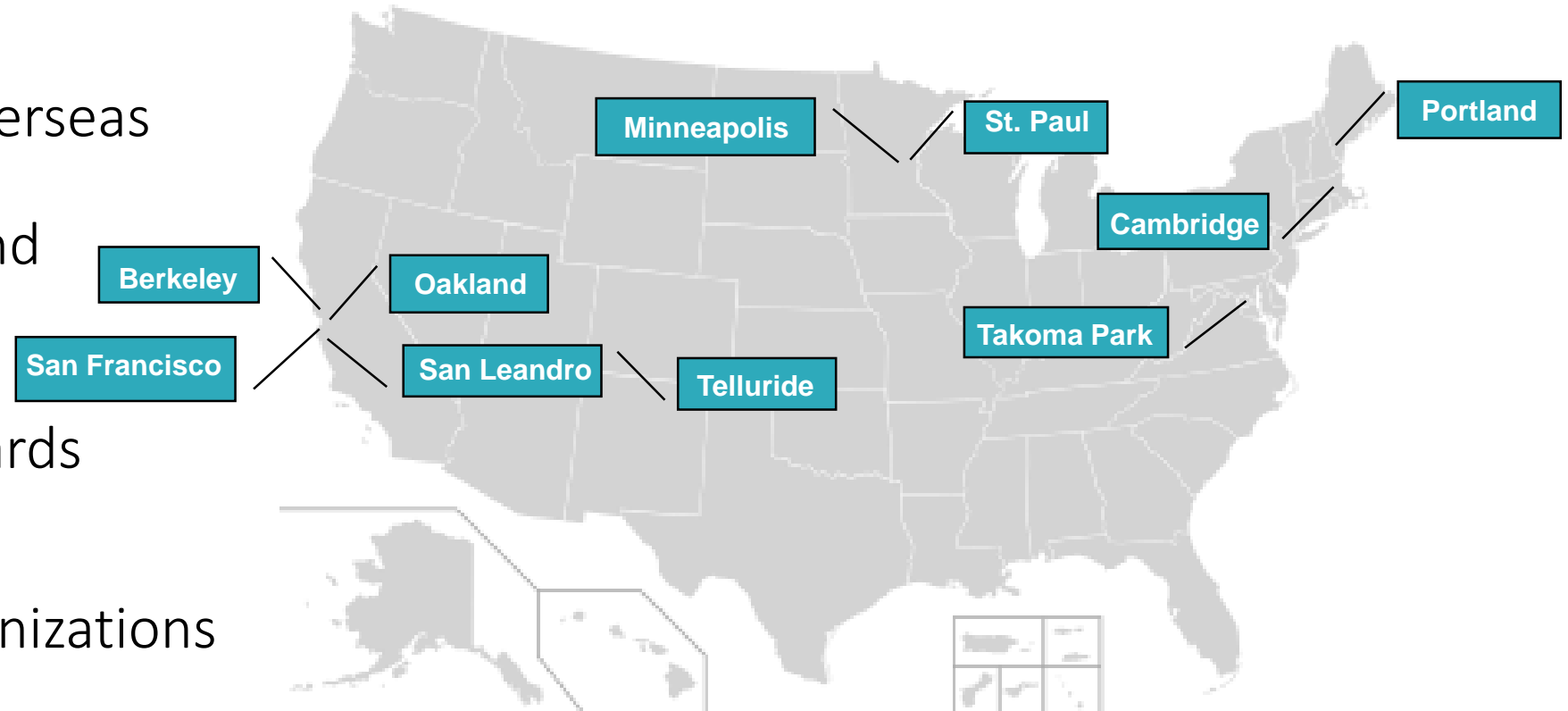
FORMER NC ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATOR

# History of Ranked Choice Voting

- Proven voting method.
- Used in United States and other countries since the early 1900s.
  - U.S. primary elections in 1912
  - Australia in 1919
- Sometimes referred to as “instant runoff voting” and “preferential voting.”
- Recognized in Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised.

# Where RCV Is Used?

- 10 U.S. cities
- By military and overseas voters
- By U.S. colleges and universities
- Internationally
- The Academy Awards Organization
- Numerous Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)



# Where RCV Is Used?

- Military and Overseas Voting
  - Arkansas, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Springfield, IL
- Pending
  - State of Maine (passed 2016; begins 2018)
  - Benton County, Oregon (passed 2016; begins 2018)
  - 8 other county or city jurisdictions including Ferndale, MI and Santa Fe, NM

# Why Is RCV Used?

- **Ensure broad support** in an election rather than relying simply on plurality in which only a small portion of the electorate determines a winner.
- **Combine a second primary or runoff election** into a single election.
- **Achieve fair representation** when voting to fill multiple seats for a governing body.

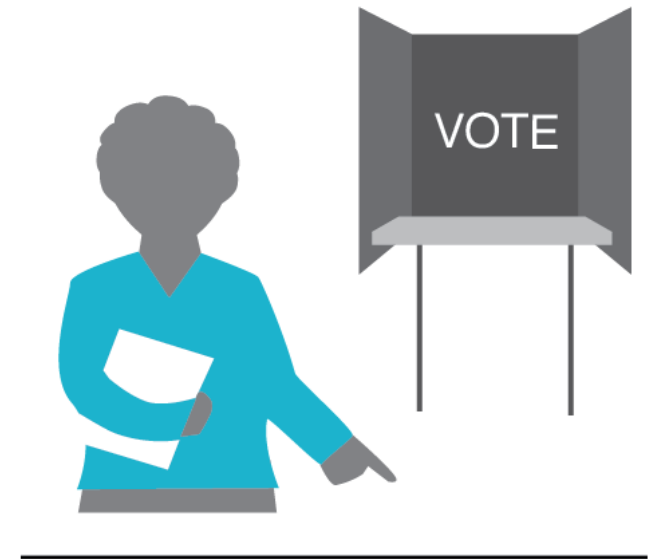


# Benefits of RCV

- Ensures that a voter's preference continues to count for their next choice if their earlier choice is eliminated without having to return to the polls.
  - Greater voter participation
  - Addresses significant drop-off seen in runoffs or 2<sup>nd</sup> primaries
- Winning candidate achieves a majority or threshold of votes – leads to broader support.
- Eliminates the “spoiler” effect.
- Allows overseas and military voters to fully participate in electoral process.
- Candidates may conduct a more civil campaign.
- With only one election, campaign costs are reduced.
- Saves taxpayers' dollars by eliminating costs of additional elections.

# Implementing RCV


- Options for RCV-ready or capable voting systems
- Address through RFP
- Compliments vote-by-mail
  - RCV yields issue oriented campaigns; voters have more time to review
  - Proven through use for military and overseas citizens
- Mixed ballot design options
- Proven not just pending



# North Carolina Experience – RCV in 86 Days

- 3 RCV municipal elections: 2007 – Cary and Hendersonville; 2009 – Hendersonville
- 2010: 4 judicial vacancies conducted using RCV
- NC Court of Appeals vacancy election – first statewide RCV election in United States since 1930s
  - 6+ million registered voters
  - 100 counties with voter registrations ranging from less than 3,000 to more than 600,000
  - 13 candidates filed

**NOVEMBER 2, 2010 GENERAL ELECTION**



## NC Utilizes Instant Runoff Voting in Judicial Contests

North Carolina voters will select a Court of Appeals Judge by instant runoff voting (IRV) on November 2, 2010. IRV will also be used to select three Superior Court Judges in Buncombe, Cumberland, and Rowan Counties. This method of voting combines the Primary and Election Day into one election. Voters will select their 1<sup>st</sup> choice for IRV contests like every other contest on the ballot, but they will also rank their 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> choices in the event the initial results produce no clear winner.

**How It Works**

► **First Round of Counting**  
Voters select their 1<sup>st</sup> choice for an office just as they have done in previous elections. Additionally, voters may select their 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> choices. The voters' 1<sup>st</sup> choices are tallied and are reported unofficially on Election Night. If a candidate gets enough 1<sup>st</sup> choice votes to win (more than 50%), then they are certified as the winner at Canvass and no further counting is necessary.

► **Second Round of Counting**  
If no candidate receives enough 1<sup>st</sup> choice votes to reach the majority threshold (more than 50%), the top two candidates move to the instant runoff. The winner is then determined by adding any 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> choice votes to their initial vote totals. The candidate with the most votes in the second round wins the election.

**Court of Appeals Judge**

Fill in only one oval per choice. Your 2nd and 3rd choices will not count against your 1st choice. They will only be counted in a runoff if your 1st choice is not in the runoff.

| 1st<br>↓<br>Mark your 1st choice here     | 2nd<br>↓<br>Mark your 2nd choice here     | 3rd<br>↓<br>Mark your 3rd choice here     |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> John F. Bloss       | <input type="radio"/> John F. Bloss       | <input type="radio"/> John F. Bloss       |
| <input type="radio"/> J. Wesley Casten    | <input type="radio"/> J. Wesley Casten    | <input type="radio"/> J. Wesley Casten    |
| <input type="radio"/> Chris Dillon        | <input type="radio"/> Chris Dillon        | <input type="radio"/> Chris Dillon        |
| <input type="radio"/> Jewel Ann Farlow    | <input type="radio"/> Jewel Ann Farlow    | <input type="radio"/> Jewel Ann Farlow    |
| <input type="radio"/> Daniel E. Garner    | <input type="radio"/> Daniel E. Garner    | <input type="radio"/> Daniel E. Garner    |
| <input type="radio"/> Stan Hammer         | <input type="radio"/> Stan Hammer         | <input type="radio"/> Stan Hammer         |
| <input type="radio"/> Mark E. Klass       | <input type="radio"/> Mark E. Klass       | <input type="radio"/> Mark E. Klass       |
| <input type="radio"/> Doug McCullough     | <input type="radio"/> Doug McCullough     | <input type="radio"/> Doug McCullough     |
| <input type="radio"/> Anne Middleton      | <input type="radio"/> Anne Middleton      | <input type="radio"/> Anne Middleton      |
| <input type="radio"/> Harry E. Payne, Jr. | <input type="radio"/> Harry E. Payne, Jr. | <input type="radio"/> Harry E. Payne, Jr. |
| <input type="radio"/> John Sullivan       | <input type="radio"/> John Sullivan       | <input type="radio"/> John Sullivan       |
| <input type="radio"/> Cressie Thigpen     | <input type="radio"/> Cressie Thigpen     | <input type="radio"/> Cressie Thigpen     |
| <input type="radio"/> Pamela M. Vesper    | <input type="radio"/> Pamela M. Vesper    | <input type="radio"/> Pamela M. Vesper    |

For more information, contact:  
NC State Board of Elections  
(919) 733-7173  
[www.sboe.state.nc.us](http://www.sboe.state.nc.us)  
or your county board of elections.



# North Carolina Experience – RCV in 86 Days

- No budgeted funds at state or county level
- Education efforts:
  - Election officials
  - Voters
- Combined ballot of traditional and RCV offices
- Followed election procedures already in place
- Added procedures to tabulate RCV totals using existing voting equipment
- NC State Board ordered a standalone canvass for transparency and observation
  - Also ordered a recount of a qualifying candidate
  - No election protests; no letters of complaint to the State Board

## HOW TO FILL OUT YOUR IRV BALLOT

- Mark your first choice in the first column, then mark your 2nd and 3rd choices in the appropriate columns.
- Select a different candidate for each choice.
- Your 2nd and 3rd choices will not count against your first choice; they will only be considered in a runoff if your 1st choice is not in the runoff.

| Fill in only one oval per choice                   | Your 2nd and 3rd choices will not count against your 1st choice<br>They will only be considered in a runoff if your 1st choice is not in the runoff |  |
|--|---|--|
| 1st<br>↓<br>Mark your<br>1st choice here           | 2nd<br>↓<br>Mark your<br>2nd choice here  | 3rd<br>↓<br>Mark your<br>3rd choice here |
| <input type="radio"/> John Adams                   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> John Adams   | <input type="radio"/> Thomas Jefferson   |
| <input type="radio"/> Thomas Jefferson             | <input type="radio"/> Thomas Jefferson  | <input type="radio"/> James Madison      |
| <input type="radio"/> James Madison                | <input type="radio"/> James Madison   | <input type="radio"/> James Madison      |
| <input type="radio"/> James Monroe                 | <input type="radio"/> James Monroe  | <input type="radio"/> James Monroe       |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> George Washington | <input type="radio"/> George Washington   | <input type="radio"/> George Washington  |

For more information about Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) in North Carolina:  
State Board of Elections, 919-733-7173 • [www.sboe.state.nc.us](http://www.sboe.state.nc.us) • Your County Board of Elections

# North Carolina Experience – RCV in 86 Days

Exit polls in 2007 of more than 2,400 voters:

- Very easy to somewhat easy to understand
  - 95% Cary, 86% Hendersonville
- More than 60% of voters in both municipalities ranked additional candidates
- Do you prefer ranking candidates?
  - 68% yes in Cary, 67% in Hendersonville

Q2. Was the option of ranking candidates easy/hard for you to understand or hard/easy for you to understand?

| City           |                             | Percentage |
|----------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| Town of Cary   | Very Easy to Understand     | 81%        |
|                | Somewhat Easy to Understand | 14%        |
|                | Somewhat Hard to Understand | 4%         |
|                | Very Hard to Understand     | 1%         |
| Hendersonville | Very Easy to Understand     | 60%        |
|                | Somewhat Easy to Understand | 26%        |
|                | Somewhat Hard to Understand | 12%        |
|                | Very Hard to Understand     | 3%         |

Note: Cary N > 1,600; Hendersonville N > 800

# Contact Us

Website:

[www.rankedchoicevoting.org](http://www.rankedchoicevoting.org)

General email:

[info@rankedchoicevoting.org](mailto:info@rankedchoicevoting.org)

Project Team:

- **Gary Bartlett, Project Leader** Former Executive Director, State Board of Elections, NC
- **George Gilbert, Deputy Project Leader** Former Director, Guilford County, NC
- **Karen Brinson Bell** Former Director, Transylvania County, NC; Former District Election Technician, State Board of Elections, NC
- **Roman Montoya** Former Deputy County Clerk, Bernalillo County, NM; Former City Clerk, Rio Rancho, NM
- **Connie Schmidt** Former Election Commissioner, Johnson County, KS; Former EAC Senior Technical Editor/Writer
- **Beverly York** Former Deputy Director, Wayne County, NC; Former District Election Technician, State Board of Elections, NC