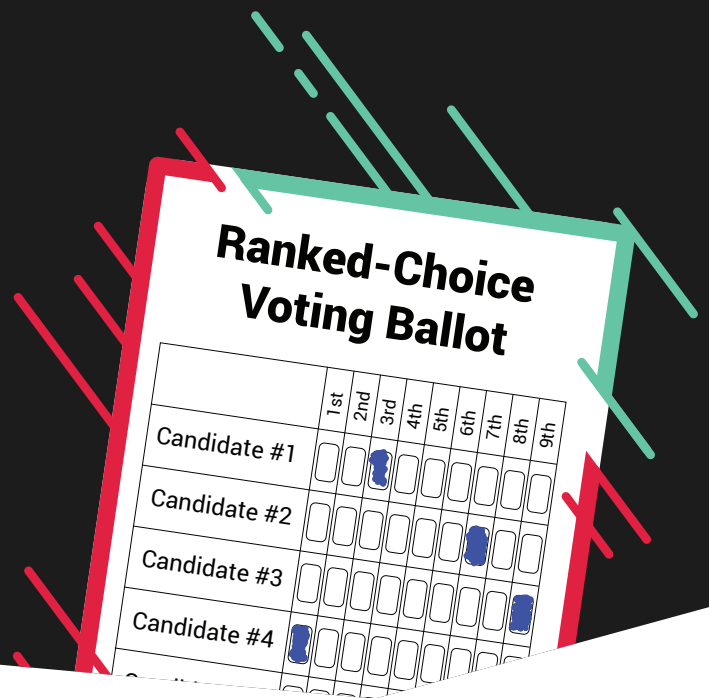


# STOP RCV

## WHAT IS RANKED-CHOICE VOTING?



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In an RCV election, voters can rank multiple candidates, and vote counting can go through many rounds of adjusting and recounting before declaring a winner. When no candidate has a majority of first-preference votes, then the candidate with the fewest first-preference votes is eliminated. Ballots where an eliminated candidate was ranked first are now either adjusted or discarded. If there is a next-ranked candidate, that candidate is “moved up” and treated as the first-ranked candidate on that ballot for the next round. If the voter did not rank another candidate, the ballot is discarded (this is called “ballot exhaustion”).

### WHERE DID RCV COME FROM?

In the 1850s, an English politician proposed an election system with votes transferred among candidates based on mathematical calculations. About two decades later, that system was modified by American academic W. R. Ware, and what was originally called “Ware’s System” is now known as RCV. In the early twentieth century, some American cities adopted RCV for council elections, often as part of larger populist or progressive reform packages. All of these cities repealed RCV, often within less than a decade.

### WHO WANTS RCV AND WHY?

The leading proponent of RCV is FairVote, supported by George Soros’s Open Society Foundations, several other Soros-connected foundations, the Arnold Foundation, and the Tides Foundation. Another group advocating for RCV is Unite America. One of Unite America’s top funders is Kathryn Murdoch, who donates almost exclusively to Democratic candidates and campaign committees. Another major funder of RCV campaigns is Katherine Gehl, who advocates a more comprehensive—and radical—change to elections called “final-five voting.” Gehl has worked for Chicago Mayor Richard Daley and was an Obama appointee.

### RCV BENEFITS ELITES, DAMAGES DEMOCRACY

The simple fact is that RCV makes it harder to vote. This is ironic since much of its support comes from people who claim any voter ID requirement is such a burden that it violates basic civil rights. In fact, RCV might function like the literacy tests once used to keep immigrants and other “undesirables” away from the polls.

### **NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR ERRORS AND SUSPICION**

RCV makes it harder to vote while creating new possibilities for voter errors. RCV ballots are longer than normal ballots. Every additional bubble makes voting take longer and creates new opportunities for a stray mark, a missed vote, or a double vote (called an “overvote”). Such mistakes can result in a vote not counting or even an entire ballot being invalidated. This also means longer lines at polling places and more challenges for polling place workers. This is why places that adopt RCV often spend millions to reeducate voters and retrain election staff.

### **RCV HURTS VULNERABLE VOTERS**

Every problem for voters created by RCV is likely to fall hardest on vulnerable voters. This is ironic, since many of those pushing RCV also criticize routine election safeguards, claiming harms to vulnerable voters. For example, how can obtaining and presenting identification—something almost everyone does anyway—be “Jim Crow 2.0,” while learning a new voting process and using a much more complicated and longer ballot is no problem?

### **AN ELECTION ADMINISTRATION NIGHTMARE**

RCV’s multiple rounds of counting, adjusting vote totals, and eliminating ballots all create additional work for election staff, and they also necessitate a new set of arbitrary election rules. Will low-performing candidates be eliminated one by one, or in batches? Will an overvote in one preference position cancel just that preference vote, or all preference votes in the race? How many rankings are allowed? How are write-in candidates dealt with? RCV creates some of these issues and makes others more complex.

### **RCV: RISE OF THE MACHINES**

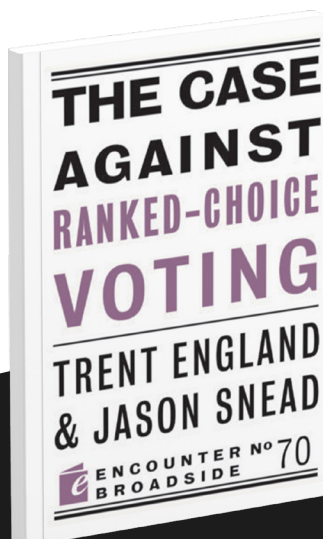
What computers do in normal elections is pretty simple: scan votes and add them up. In addition to normal vote counting, RCV requires reallocating certain votes, eliminating other votes, and then doing it all over again. The number of rounds is limited only by the number of candidates. Ordinary people—voters but also election observers and poll workers—cannot easily verify the results of a computer after multiple rounds of RCV adjustments.

### **RECOUNTS ANYONE?**

The Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center, a project of FairVote, admits that hand counting RCV ballots “is more complicated and time consuming than the counting for a simple plurality election.” In fact, conducting a hand recount would present a massive logistical problem in any large RCV election.

### **THE END OF TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN ELECTIONS**

Mistakes are toxic to democracy because they raise reasonable suspicions that election results may not accurately reflect voter decisions. RCV creates new possibilities for mistakes while making them harder to detect. This lack of transparency threatens public trust in the democratic process.



**BASED ON THE BOOK.**

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