

A black and white photograph of a young woman with her hair in a ponytail, wearing a denim jacket over a light-colored shirt and jeans. She has large white headphones around her neck and is looking down at a document she is holding. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a library or study area with bookshelves.

FAIRVOTE

**RANKED
CHOICE
VOTING in
2024**

A year in review



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of [ranked choice voting](#) (RCV) in 2024, including RCV elections, ballot measures, legislative progress, case studies, and new research.

Highlights include:

Several [new surveys](#) confirmed that once voters use RCV, they understand it, like it, and want to keep it.

[Portland, OR](#) elected a historically diverse City Council in the city's first use of [proportional RCV](#).

Alaska [used RCV](#) to vote for president, Congress, and state legislature. For the second time in a row, bipartisan majority coalitions formed to lead its legislature. Maine also gave voters more choice with RCV elections for president and Congress.

Despite the rise of a well-organized opposition, nearly 4 million voters across the nation voted for better elections with RCV on Election Day 2024.

RCV won majority support in [every city](#) where it was on the ballot, most notably with an overwhelming win in Washington, DC — 73%-27%.

California's Bay Area celebrated [20 years of RCV](#).

Alaska [voted to continue](#) using RCV and open primaries, though democracy reform ballot measures struggled at the statewide level elsewhere.

Major pieces of pro-RCV legislation, including the [Fair Representation Act](#), [Ranked Choice Voting Act](#), and [Voter Choice Act](#), were introduced or re-introduced in Congress in 2024.

RCV IN ACTION IN 2024

16 locations used RCV for elections in 2024, including two states, one territory, and 13 cities and counties.



Albany, CA
Berkeley, CA
Oakland, CA
San Francisco, CA
Arden, DE
Takoma Park, MD
Portland, ME

Westbrook, ME
Benton County, OR
Corvallis, OR
Portland, OR
Arlington, VA
Burlington, VT
U.S. Virgin Islands GOP

In 2024, the most powerful validation for ranked choice voting came from voters who got the chance to use it. As in years past, [voter surveys from across the nation showed that voters like and understand RCV](#). 2024 poll findings include:

84% of Alaska voters find RCV simple.

82% of Maine voters say RCV is easy, and 57% say they support ranking candidates.

88% of Arlington, VA voters say RCV is easy, and 67% would like to use it in future elections.

94% of Utah voters are satisfied with RCV elections, and 67% say they are more likely to vote for their favorite candidate.

91% of voters in Portland, OR understood how to fill out their ballot when using RCV for the first time.

70% of California Bay Area voters want to keep or expand RCV.

Below, we present case studies of how ranked choice voting improved elections around the country in 2024 — from the local level all the way to the presidential race.

CASE STUDY

Proportional RCV Delivers Better Representation and Better Campaigns in Portland, OR

Portland, OR voters [used RCV](#) for the first time as part of a charter reform package passed by voters in 2022.

The city adopted single-winner RCV for mayor and the [proportional form](#) of RCV for City Council — making Portland the largest American city with proportional representation.

Reporting from the Rose City before the election, FairVote Senior Fellow David Daley described reformers' hopes for the new system in a piece for [Salon](#):

“We’ll have more representation on day one than we’ve had in a hundred years.”

— Portland Councilor Candace Avalos

Ranked choice voting delivered on this promise. Voters elected a [historically diverse](#) and gender-balanced City Council.

Portland’s Council is half women and has five members of color, roughly matching the demographics of the city. The Council has three members who rent their homes, and members endorsed both by the local Chamber of Commerce and the Democratic Socialists of America — with ages ranging from 28 to 70.

Voters took advantage of their new power to rank candidates — [91% of voters](#) ranked multiple candidates for City Council. 84% ranked a winning councilor.

In addition, City Council races were [marked by](#) collaborative campaigning and less negativity between frontrunners. As expected in an RCV race, candidates recognized they would

benefit from a coalitional style of campaigning — finding areas of compromise with rival candidates, and asking for second-choice support from their rivals’ supporters. Many [community organizations](#) and [local media](#) outlets embraced RCV by endorsing multiple candidates.

In the mayor’s race, a whopping [84% of voters](#) were able to express their preference between Mayor Keith Wilson and his strongest competitor, Carmen Rubio — even though only 56% of voters picked one of those candidates as their first choice. This represents additional voting power for the [86,349 Portlanders](#) who were able to rank their favorite candidate first and still have their vote count between the two finalists.

CASE STUDY

RCV Continues to Deliver Better Governance in Alaska

After Alaska’s first RCV elections in 2022, the incoming legislature was [historically diverse](#), and bipartisan majority coalitions formed in both houses. Legislators had a productive, low-drama legislative session — working together to [pass bipartisan legislation](#) such as a “crime bill that addressed concerns with fentanyl overdose trends and victims’ rights, a plan for improving energy transmission in Alaska, and insurance coverage for 12-month birth control prescriptions.”

After Alaska’s 2024 elections, bipartisan coalitions quickly formed again — putting the needs of Alaska voters above partisan interests. For the [first time](#), the State House is majority-women; its three Alaska Native women legislators are the most in the chamber’s history.

In [an interview](#) with the Anchorage Daily News, State Senate President Cathy Giessel attributed the formation of the bipartisan coalitions to open primaries and ranked choice voting.





CASE STUDY

RCV Improves the Presidential Election

Ranked choice voting for presidential elections is no longer just a theory — it's in use in several states and territories, home to over 2 million people.

In February, the Virgin Islands GOP made history by becoming the first Republican Party in the nation to use RCV in its presidential primary. In doing so, the party avoided the “zombie votes” problem that affected many other GOP primaries, where [hundreds of thousands](#) of votes were effectively wasted on candidates who had already dropped out of the race. In March, Maine became the first state to use RCV in its government-run presidential primaries.

In November, Alaska and Maine both used RCV to vote for president — with Alaska doing so for the first time.

In an election where third-party and independent candidates were cast as “spoilers” and both Democrats and Republicans weaponized these campaigns, Alaska and Maine showed a better way forward. Voters were empowered to rank candidates in order of preference, instead of worrying about wasting their vote or feeling forced to choose the lesser of two evils.

In a year when [47% of Americans](#) say they picked the lesser of two evils in at least one election on their ballot, Alaska saw the [2nd-highest vote share](#) for third-party and independent candidates. Maine was also above the national average.

RCV ON THE BALLOT

On Election Day, RCV won majority support in every city where it was on the ballot. The reform has now won 31 of its last 32 city ballot measures, and grown from just 10 cities in 2016 to over 50 cities, counties, and states today. Today, eight times more Americans live in communities with RCV than did in 2016.

Despite losses at the statewide level, nearly 4 million voters across the nation voted for better elections with RCV.

In Washington, DC an overwhelming 73% of voters voted to adopt RCV. The initiative won in every ward and every precinct! The campaign was led by [Make All Votes Count DC](#).



Oak Park, IL residents supported RCV in a landslide, with 80% voting to adopt it. In Peoria, IL 67% of voters supported an advisory measure encouraging Illinois to adopt RCV for state and federal elections. The campaigns were led by [FairVote Illinois](#).



Bloomington, MN voted to continue using ranked choice voting in local elections, after opponents of reform placed a measure on the ballot to return to the previous system. This victory follows a [similar](#) win in Minnetonka, MN last year — affirming that once voters use RCV, they like it and want to keep it. These defense campaigns were led by [FairVote Minnesota](#).



For state ballot measures, the status quo largely won the day — with a ballot measure to implement RCV losing in Oregon, and ballot measures to implement open primaries and RCV losing in Colorado, Idaho, and Nevada. However,

Alaskans voted to continue using RCV and open primaries, after the reform's successful use in 2022 and 2024. This defense campaign was led by [No on 2](#).



As our CEO Meredith Sumpter said about the losses at the state level, “Changing the status quo is never easy. Entrenched interests — including several state parties and an increasingly well-organized national opposition — pushed back hard on 2024’s statewide ballot measures. But make no mistake: The future remains bright for ranked choice voting.”

A longer reflection on Election Day from Meredith and FairVote Senior Legal Fellow Michael Parsons is available on [Democracy Takes](#).

HOW 2024'S ELECTIONS MADE THE CASE FOR RCV

With plurality winners in primaries, turnout decline in runoff elections, and [“zombie votes”](#) in presidential primaries, the 2024 cycle saw a slew of flawed elections and unrepresentative outcomes. Below, we outline some of these results, and how RCV would allow for more meaningful participation and representation.

Presidential election

PROBLEM: For over a year, the 2024 presidential election was dominated by fear of a third-party “spoiler” — first No Labels, then Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., then Jill Stein and Cornel West. Both the Democratic and Republican parties spent millions shaming third-party candidates as [spoilers](#), or [weaponizing](#) them to hurt their major-party opponent.

SOLUTION: Ranked choice voting solves the spoiler problem in presidential elections. In 2024, Alaska and Maine used RCV to vote for president — allowing voters to vote freely, and ensuring outcomes reflected the majority of voters.

PROBLEM: In the 2024 presidential primaries, over [300,000 Republican voters cast ballots for candidates who left the race before the vote was counted](#) (“zombie votes”).

SOLUTION: Ranked choice voting gives voters backup choices in case their top choice drops out. Republicans in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and voters of both parties in Maine, used RCV in 2024’s presidential primaries — as did voters in five states in the 2020 Democratic primaries.



Congressional and state elections

PROBLEM: FairVote predicted the results of all 2024 U.S. House races with [98% accuracy](#) – two years in advance – in our biannual “[Monopoly Politics](#)” report. The accuracy of our predictions demonstrates that **most House elections are deeply uncompetitive, and that partisanship is the single most important factor in deciding election outcomes.**

SOLUTION: The **Fair Representation Act** would end “**monopoly politics**” by instituting [proportional ranked choice voting](#) and multi-member U.S. House districts.

PROBLEM: In 2024, [70 candidates](#) advanced from U.S. House, U.S. Senate, and statewide primary elections with less than 50% of votes. 28 million people live in states or districts where a plurality winner advanced to an election that the candidate was almost guaranteed to win, meaning those voters are now represented by someone who was effectively elected by a small portion of primary voters.

SOLUTION: Using RCV in primaries would at least **ensure nominees have majority support from their party’s primary voters.** In competitive seats, majority-supported nominees are more likely to win.

PROBLEM: 2024’s primary runoff elections had the [largest drop in turnout](#) since FairVote began tracking runoffs in 1994, with a median of 63% fewer voters participating in the runoff than in the initial primary. Federal primary runoffs cost taxpayers at least \$6.9 million in 2024, and likely \$9-12 million total.

SOLUTION: RCV is also called “instant runoff voting,” because it identifies a majority winner in a single election when turnout is highest and the electorate best reflects the public.

RCV TURNS 20 IN CALIFORNIA

San Francisco's 2004 election kicked off the modern era of RCV in the U.S.

Over the last 20 years, RCV in the Bay Area has increased the [racial and gender diversity](#) of elected officials, elected [consensus-building candidates](#), and provided a consistent proof point that voters [like and understand the reform](#).

In 2024, San Francisco elected a new mayor, Daniel Lurie, who ran a textbook RCV campaign by seeking voters' first-choice support, while also [asking](#) voters to rank him second if they preferred a different candidate.

RCV was used to elect over a dozen other local offices in Albany, Berkeley, Oakland, and San Francisco. As with Portland, each city released preliminary RCV results on election night – demonstrating that RCV results can be released on the same timeline as results in single-choice elections.

Across the Bay Area, candidates embraced RCV. Many of them [cross-endorsed](#) a competitor and/or [educated voters](#) about the process. Several local [community organizations](#) also provided ranked endorsements.





LEGISLATIVE PROGRESS

Federal Legislation

Four major pro-RCV bills were introduced or re-introduced in Congress in 2024:

- **MARCH:** Reps. Don Beyer (VA-8) and Jamie Raskin (MD-8) [introduced](#) the Fair Representation Act (FRA), which would implement multi-member districts and RCV for congressional elections. A group of leading academics across a variety of disciplines wrote an [open letter](#) in support of the FRA.
- **MAY:** The Voter Choice Act (VCA) was [introduced](#) in the House, following its 2023 introduction in the Senate. The VCA would provide \$40 million in federal matching grants, covering up to 50 percent of the cost, for local and state governments that choose to adopt RCV.
- **SEPTEMBER:** Beyer, Raskin, and Sen. Peter Welch (VT) [introduced](#) the Ranked Choice Voting Act, which would institute RCV for all primary and general elections for the U.S. House and Senate.
- **NOVEMBER:** Reps. Marie Glusenkamp Perez (WA-3) and Jared Golden (ME-2) [introduced](#) a bill to establish the Electoral Reform Select Committee, which would consider reforms like RCV, multi-member districts, and proportional representation. A group of “Scholars for Electoral Reform” wrote a [letter](#) of public support for this legislation.



The Fair Representation Act “is the way to produce a Congress made up of Members who prioritize pragmatic legislative results and solutions for the benefit of the American people.”

– [Rep. Don Beyer \(VA-8\)](#)



“[RCV] discourages extreme partisanship, incentivizes problem solving, and ensures that election winners better reflect the views of most voters.”

– [Rep. Dean Phillips \(MN\)](#)

State and Municipal Legislation

States and municipalities continue to be hubs for RCV legislation:

- **MAY:** The Minnesota Voting Rights Act (MNVRA) was [signed](#) into law by Gov. Tim Walz. Like other state voting rights acts, the MNVRA includes proportional RCV as a remedy for election systems that dilute minority representation.
- **SEPTEMBER:** The Charlottesville, VA City Council [passed](#) legislation to adopt ranked choice voting in local elections – making Charlottesville the second Virginia locality to do so. Voters will use RCV in the June 2025 City Council primary. Local leader Sally Hudson [said that](#) “Charlottesville can be proud we’re doing our part to make democracy better for the long haul.”
- **DECEMBER:** Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont’s Working Group on Ranked Choice Voting [released](#) a report recommending that legislators give cities the option to use RCV in local elections, and give political parties the option to use RCV in their primaries – [including presidential primaries](#).

A full list of state-level RCV legislation introduced in 2024 is available on the [FairVote website](#).



RESEARCH AND MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

FairVote's Research

In 2024, FairVote's research expanded the existing evidence base that RCV [improves representation](#) for women and people of color, gives voters greater say in their elections, and helps parties nominate stronger candidates.

[The Plurality Problem: Plurality Primary Victors Hurt Parties in General Elections](#) by FairVote's Rachel Hutchinson and Northwestern University Professor Laurel Harbridge-Yong. This paper finds that **candidates who win their primary with a minority of votes are 10.4 percentage points less likely to win the general election.** Parties can strengthen their nominees by using RCV to find majority winners.

[With Ranked Choice Voting, 17% More Votes Make a Difference](#) by FairVote's Deb Otis. This report analyzes the results from single-winner RCV elections in the United States since 2004, and finds that **RCV causes an average of 17% more votes to directly affect the outcome** between candidates who have a chance at winning – equivalent to millions more voters casting a meaningful vote. **In contests that actually go to an RCV tabulation, the average increase is 30%.**

[Ranked Choice Voting Elections Benefit Candidates and Voters of Color: 2024 Update](#) by FairVote's Deb Otis and Sabrina Laverty. This report builds on previous research showing that more people of color are elected in RCV contests. It finds that **candidates of color continue to benefit from the RCV counting process and pay no penalty when they run against other candidates of the same background.** It also confirms previous research that voters of color tend to rank more candidates than White voters.

[47% of voters feel like they voted for the "lesser of two evils" in 2024 elections,](#) according to a Citizen Data/FairVote poll. With RCV, voters can vote for their favorite candidate without "wasting" their vote or supporting a potential "spoiler."

Other Notable RCV Research

[Does Ranked Choice Voting Increase Voter Turnout and Mobilization?](#) by Eveline Dowling, Caroline Tolbert, Nathan Micatka, and Todd Donovan. This study finds that **voters in RCV jurisdictions are 17% more likely to turn out for municipal elections** than those in non-RCV jurisdictions. The study also finds that voters in RCV jurisdictions are more likely to be contacted by campaigns, an important measure of voter engagement.

[Deficiencies in Recent Research on Ranked Choice Voting Ballot Error Rates](#) by Utah Valley University professors Alan Parry and John Kidd. This report finds that **“relatively few ballots in RCV elections contain an error, and even fewer ballots are rejected,”** and “for most ballots containing an error, the voter’s intent is clear and the ballot is counted as intended.” Additionally, Parry and Kidd write that “if RCV and single-choice voting differ in terms of ballot error, that difference should be weighed against the fact that RCV makes more ballots count meaningfully.”

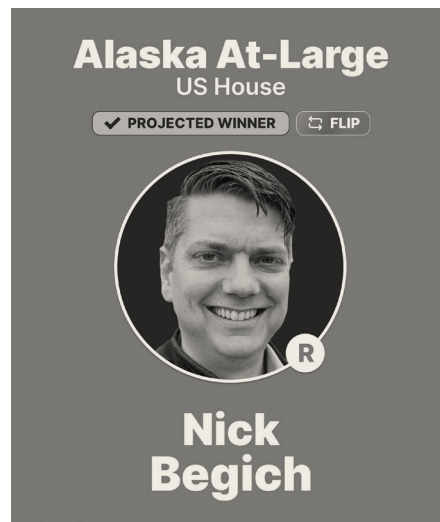


Image Credit: Decision Desk HQ

In November, Decision Desk HQ accurately projected the winners in [Alaska](#) and [Maine's](#) RCV House races prior to RCV tabulation — becoming the first major election projection desk to do so, and setting a positive example for other election analysts. FairVote’s analysis supported [both projections](#). In states like Alaska and Maine that delay RCV tabulation, analysts can safely make a call when (1) first-choice margins are large, and/or (2) there is sufficient data to support a projection. This is similar to how analysts make election night calls in states with large numbers of mail-in votes — even though mail ballots may continue to arrive for weeks afterwards.

Media Highlights

- Several major editorial boards endorsed RCV in 2024 — including the Washington Post, which published four pro-RCV editorials:

The Washington Post

“Candidates must attract people’s second- and third-place votes, giving them strong incentive to make broad-based appeals... For the same reason, ranked choice voting encourages everyone to campaign not on smears against their opponents or other negative angles but on more positive messages.”
— [Washington Post Editorial Board](#)

ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS

“For its own part, ranked choice voting has also been a success at providing an incentive for lawmakers to focus more on getting work done.”
— [Anchorage Daily News Editorial Board](#)

- FairVote continued to be a leading voice on RCV. Our work was featured in [CBS News](#), [The New York Times](#), [The Associated Press](#), and [The Hill](#), among other outlets. Here are three of our favorite features:

FairVote Senior Fellow David Daley wrote a long-form story about Portland, OR’s first election using proportional RCV in [Salon](#):

“Solutions going forward will be crafted with a wider range of voices; the council will need to hear each other out and find inclusive, common ground.”

FairVote Research and Policy Director Deb Otis joined the WBUR program [On Point](#), where she discussed the benefits of RCV:

“There is something in ranked choice voting for everyone. In particular... [voters] are really looking to be able to have more options on their ballot and to be able to vote their conscience without feeling like they’re stuck in a lesser-of-two-evils mindset.”

FairVote’s new CEO, Meredith Sumpter, sat down with Andrew Yang for the popular [Forward podcast](#), where she spoke about how RCV empowers voters:

“One thing I want to share with your listeners is just the word: agency. In a city or a state where you’ve got ranked choice voting, your vote counts and you have a responsive government.”

NEW SUPPORT FOR REFORM



“I don’t see [ranked choice voting] as weakening the parties as much as forcing the candidates to say, ‘We’ve got to appeal to a broad swath of the American electorate,’ and that to me is the benefit.”

– [Asa Hutchinson](#), former Arkansas governor and Republican presidential candidate



“[Ranked choice voting and open primaries] gives that person with the best ideas, the best character – the best quality of a human being you want to represent you in this democracy of ours – a chance.”

– [Joe Manchin](#), former U.S. senator from West Virginia



U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski (AK) [urged](#) Alaskans to “do what’s right for Alaska” and vote to keep RCV and open primaries in the Last Frontier.



“[RCV] is the most economical and... efficient way to really understand and have our leaders reflect our needs.”

– [Stacey Abrams](#), former minority leader of the Georgia House of Representatives

In September, the [Congressional Progressive Caucus](#) (CPC) voted to formally endorse the Fair Representation Act. The CPC’s policy agenda calls on Congress to “Create fairer, more efficient, and more representative elections by supporting ranked choice voting.”



“I’m a big believer in open primaries, and ranked choice voting is a nice little addendum to that... It allows someone who is trying to work beyond his or her narrow interest group for everyone to actually benefit, rather than being punished.”

– [Bill Cassidy](#), U.S. senator from Louisiana

LOOKING AHEAD TO RCV IN 2025

The presidential election has passed, but that doesn't mean 2025 is an "off year" for elections. On the contrary, 2025 will be one of the biggest years yet for ranked choice voting in American cities!

RCV will be used in the largest cities in five states, and will also be used for the first time in several cities. 11 million Americans live in cities and counties that will use RCV this year.

Here are some of the exciting uses of RCV — including new adoptions — on the horizon in 2025.

MARCH

- ▶ Burlington, VT and Redondo Beach, CA will kick off the year with RCV municipal elections. This will be the first use of RCV in Redondo Beach.

APRIL

- ▶ Oakland, CA will elect a new mayor using RCV in a special election.

JUNE

- ▶ New York City will hold RCV primary elections, including for mayor, with an already-crowded field for the Democratic nomination.
- ▶ Charlottesville, VA will use RCV for its municipal elections, becoming the second community in Virginia to use the reform.

NOVEMBER

- ▶ Approximately 15 cities and counties will use RCV, including for a hotly contested mayoral race in Minneapolis and a first-time use in Fort Collins, CO.

In 2025, FairVote and local partners will also work to advance [RCV legislation](#) in states across the country. Advocates in Washington, DC will work to defend their historic win on the ballot, since the DC City Council must fund the measure.



Conclusion

In 2024, RCV proved it is a mainstream policy idea — earning support from a historic number of voters and legislators. RCV received unprecedented coverage and praise from national media and thought leaders, and has attracted interest from a growing list of scholars across disciplines.

For more and more Americans, voting means ranking.

Though the path to reform isn't a straight line, RCV continues to grow quickly because it works — empowering voters and rewarding leaders who represent the majority of voters.

Those in the democracy reform movement have an opening in 2025 to re-organize and re-engage voters on what matters most to them: government that better represents and responds to the governed. With toxic politics continuing to spread, the promise of ranked choice voting for building a more representative and functional democracy remains as vital as ever.



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