

Federal Legislation Regarding Ranked Choice Voting

The Fair Representation Act (HB3863) would put in place proportional RCV for House of Representatives elections

The Voter Choice Act (HR 5500/S2939) would supply federal grants to local and state governments to assist them in transitioning to RCV and/or proportional RCV (Because the share of votes determines who wins, and not the district lines, proportional ranked choice voting makes gerrymandering all but impossible. Large legislative bodies can elect from multi-winner districts).

The Freedom to Vote Act (S2747) defines the administering of RCV as eligible for funding.

The For the People Act (HB1/SB1) has two provisions regarding RCV: one requires all new voting equipment bought with federal money be compatible with RCV elections and the other establishes a GAO (Government Accountability Office a nonpartisan agency) study of RCV. (Of course HR1 passed in the House.)

The Congress Commission Act (HB996) would create a commission to study the idea of electing the House of Representatives with a proportional voting system.

Yet another act (HB2358) would also include a study of the impact and implementation of RCV.

Finally, the Puerto Rico Self-Determination Act (HB2070/SB865) includes a provision to vote on statehood using RCV.

Forty cities now use RCV. Many believe it encourages voters to think of policy over party. Alaska voted narrowly last November to use RCV in 2022 for state and federal offices. In Maine, a Democrat running against a Republican incumbent lost the first round, but won on the second. In NYC a co-chair of the Black, Latino and Asian Caucus feared

that RCV would diminish the power of those groups due to lack of education about it, but in Minnesota people supported it in 2006 overwhelmingly.

A bit of history: The idea of RCV originated in Europe in the 1850s, also by an MIT professor in the 1860s. In the 1900s many US cities began using it. NYC joined them in 1936 for school boards and city council elections. By the 1940s and 50s the political climate turned against RCV and it was repealed in all but one city, Cambridge, MA.

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