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Last month, several of YOU voted for the best way to vote. Which voting system won? Well, stay tuned to find out, buddy.

Who's wants their voice heard?
I'm Mr. Beat, I suppose

Here in the United States we mostly have plurality voting for elections, even though most Americans agree that it's absolutely not the best way to do elections.¹² (turns) Wait, what's that, you don't remember what plurality voting is?

Plurality voting is when a citizen only gets to vote for ONE candidate, and the candidate who gets the most votes, aka a plurality, wins the election. EVEN IF THEY DON'T GET THE MAJORITY OF VOTES.

If you want to learn more about why I think plurality voting sucks, check out this video here. I swear, all I do anymore is promote my own videos in my own videos. What is happening to me.

Anyway, organizations like The Center for Election Science, Fairvote, and The Equal Vote Coalition have been promoting better ways to vote for years. While all three organizations have talked trash about plurality voting, they all favor different solutions. The Center for Election Science tends to favor approval or score voting, Fairvote tends to favor ranked choice voting, and The Equal Vote Coalition is all about STAR voting.

Let's uh...briefly explain the difference before those four types of non-plurality voting, eh? And then after that, I'll share with you the results of four different elections that several of YOU voted in. (turns) Yep, you used all four voting methods to vote for the best voting method, and the results might surprise you a bit. (turns)

But before we get into it, sponsored content begins right....now.

Hey, did you know that I like to vote in my free time? Like, just for fun? And it's all thanks to YouGov.

YouGov is a great way to give your valuable opinions. Plus, THEY PAY YOU! It's free to join and an easy way to get extra cash. It's a win-win because you get paid to be heard. As a member, you'll earn points for doing short surveys and polls. I often do my surveys while I'm on the toilet. Hey, if you're looking for a great side hustle, this may be it. Just check out how easy this is. This is a survey I recently took answering questions about whether or not politicians lie.. Bah ha! And see, it's already done. Took me like 1 minute. Click my link in the description to take surveys to earn cash on YouGov!

Do you approve of us starting with approval voting?

¹ https://publicconsultation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/RCV_Report_0422.pdf

² <https://rangevoting.org/>

In an approval voting system, voters mark which candidates they approve of. If they don't find a candidate acceptable, they leave the space next to the candidate's name blank. If they do find the candidate acceptable, they mark it.

So say these are the five candidates on the ballot. You love Bobbi, and think Steve Bob and Tim Bob are also alright. However, you think Bobby Bobson, Jr. is a sociopath and Bob only cares about his corporate donors. Therefore, you vote for Bobbi, Steve Bob, and Tim Bob, and leave the spaces next to Bobby Bobson, Jr. and Bob blank.

So say these are the total results of a batch of ballots. All you do is total up the approvals for each candidate. Whichever candidate gets the most approvals, wins the election.
Congratulations Steve Bob!

-Why approval voting is awesome-

Approval voting is simple and easy to explain to newbies. It especially makes it difficult for newbies to mess up their ballots. It makes it easy to be honest. It also is highly compatible with what we've already got in place with existing election codes. It can also be used for multi-winner elections if there was proportional representation.

-Why approval voting is not as awesome as other voting methods-

Just because you approve of multiple candidates, doesn't mean you think the same way about all of them. Some of them you very reluctantly approve, while others you may very PASSIONATELY approve. Also, many voters may struggle with what they feel qualifies a candidate as someone they approve of. Not only that, a poll worker can more easily fill in extra bubbles before scanning a ballot and it would be hard to prove they did so.

Next up, in case you're keeping score already, let's look at score voting.

In a score voting system, sometimes called a range voting system, voters rate candidates on a numerical scale. Typically a score is between 0 and 5 or 0 and 10. Voters can rate as many choices as they want. If you don't have an opinion about a candidate, you just don't give them a score.

After ballots are all turned in, all the scores for every candidate are averaged. The candidate with the highest average score wins. So say there were only ten ballots and Bobby Bobson, Jr. had scores of 1,1,1,1,2,4,4,4,5, and 5, his average score would be 2.8. But Bobbi had scores of 1,2,3,3,3,4,4,5,5, and 5, so her average score would be 3.5. In this case, Bobbi would win.

Congratulations, Bobbi!

-Why score voting is awesome-

Your vote says so much more with score voting than just approval voting. It says that you not only approve of a candidate, but that you PREFER one candidate over another and you prefer

them by A QUANTITATIVE AMOUNT. Studies have shown that voters would feel most satisfied with their vote if they can score each candidate.³

-Why score voting is not as awesome as other voting methods-

Score voting doesn't account for head-to-head matchups. Almost always when we vote, we are voting for one candidate COMPARED to another candidate. Sure, most voters likely have clear scores in mind about candidates they hate and candidates they love, but it's much more difficult for them to come up with an independent score for everyone in between. Not only that, this method heavily depends on turnout for more accurate scores. What if turnout is extremely low and only extremists show up to the polls?

But you'll probably rank ranked-choice voting higher than approval or score voting.

In a ranked-choice voting system, sometimes called an instant-runoff voting system, voters rank candidates by preference on their ballots. So if there are five candidates, you rank them 1 through 5, with 1 being your favorite candidate and 5 being your least favorite candidate.

After the ballots are counted, if a candidate wins a majority of first-preference votes, they win the election. However, if NO candidate wins a majority of first-preference votes, there's automatically a recount. But the candidate with the fewest first-preference votes is eliminated from that recount, and every voter who ranked that person first now has their second-preference redistributed and added to the overall tally. If there is still no candidate who has won a majority of votes, the process repeats. The remaining candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and every person who voted for that person now has THEIR second-preference vote redistributed and added to the overall tally. This process keeps repeating until one candidate has a majority of votes.

Bobbi wins again!

-Why ranked-choice voting is awesome-

Ranked-choice voting does a better job than both approval and score voting at determining which candidate actually has the strongest support because it forces the voter to COMPARE candidates. It also makes elections more secure compared to approval voting, and isn't warped by low turnout like score voting can be.

-Why ranked-choice voting is not as awesome as other voting methods-

Ranked-choice voting is more complicated than both approval and score voting. Similar to score voting, most voters may struggle with ranking candidates and may even become overwhelmed by it. Not only that, theoretically the person with the most votes could end up losing the election. Also, in almost all cases, it would be more expensive for election offices to implement, at least in the beginning. And finally, it would take a bit longer to find out the results of the election.

In my opinion, the real star, though, is STAR voting.

³ <https://rangevoting.org/BayRegDum.html>

STAR voting is kind of a combination of score voting and ranked choice voting. STAR stands for Score Then Automatic Runoff. You would vote in a similar way you would for score voting. So you'd rate candidates on a numerical scale, typically between 0 and 5, with 5 representing "best" and 0 representing "worst."

However, what makes STAR voting different from score voting is how the votes are counted. There are two rounds of counting the votes. In the first round, or scoring round, all the scores for each candidate are added up and averaged. The two candidates with the highest scores are selected as finalists for the second round. In the second round, or automatic runoff round, the finalists face off on every single ballot. Whoever of the two have a higher score on each ballot gets a vote. If both of the two are tied, neither of the two get a vote. At the end of the second round, whichever finalist has the most ballots with a higher score than the other finalist wins!

Well Bobbi wins again. Hey what does that say about approval voting? Hmm?

-Why STAR voting is awesome-

STAR voting takes the best of all worlds. You get to score candidates, and they are compared in a second round. The Center for Election Science even has found it's the most accurate voting method. Unlike with ranked-choice voting, voters can give multiple candidates the same score.

-Why STAR voting is not as awesome as other voting methods-

STAR voting's biggest problem is not that it sucks, it's that people don't know about it. It's the least familiar of these four voting reforms, having not even been tried in the real world yet. Similar to ranked choice voting, it's more complicated than approval and score voting and would be more expensive for election offices to implement.

It's important to point out that ALL four of these non-plurality voting methods are way better than plurality voting. They promote consensus and coalitions. They fight political polarization and would make the country less politically divided. They make it so that our voices are more accurately heard. They all promote honesty over strategy. You're not voting against. You're voting FOR, without fear of "wasting your vote." ALL four make gerrymandering more difficult. They all encourage outsiders to run for office. They make voting more about issues and policies, not personalities.

But which voting method is the best?

Personally, I APPROVE all of them. But if I were to SCORE them, I'd score STAR voting as a 5, ranked choice voting as a 4, and approval and score voting as a 3. I'd rank them as STAR being the best, then ranked choice, then score, then approval. Using the STAR method, obviously STAR would come out on top.

But what did several of YOU think? Well, about a month ago, I posted on social media the following...

I'm making a video about all the better voting methods I've gone over and I need your help! Please vote for your favorite voting methods. However, you will vote for your favorite voting method using all of the four voting methods I've gone over, eh?

And you did just that, and here are the results.

318 of you voted using approval voting. 33.6% of you approved of score voting, 43.7% of you approved of STAR voting, just less than half of you approved of approval voting, and 90.6% of you approved of ranked choice voting, which is...amazing.

301 of you voted using score voting at least for one of them. Some of you left some unscored. Approval voting got a score of 2.3. Score voting got a score of 2.4. Score voting got the edge because more of you scored it 2 and more of you scored approval voting 1. STAR voting got a score of 2.7. Ranked choice voting got a score of 4.2 since almost 64% OF YOU SCORED IT A FIVE HOLY WOWZA.

I should note that less people participated in the approval voting and score voting ballots, probably since they had to enter an email address in order to do so.

591 of you voted using ranked-choice voting. Ranked choice was the majority winner after just one round, with approval voting edging out STAR voting for second place. In the second round, however, when accounting for second-choice picks and eliminating score voting, STAR tied up with approval voting for second place, with ranked choice voting getting a more commanding lead. In the third round, STAR voting became second place by itself after approval voting was eliminated, with ranked choice voting getting an even MORE commanding lead.

428 of you voted using STAR voting. In the scoring round, ranked choice voting got a score of 4.3. In second place, STAR voting, with a score of 2.8, followed by approval voting and score voting both getting a score of 2.6. In the automatic runoff round between ranked-choice and STAR, ranked-choice easily won.

So what's the takeaway from all this? Well, approval voting made it seem that approval voting was more popular, I think, than it actually was, and we only know this because most of the same people who voted with the other voting methods preferred STAR voting over it. That said, STAR voting seems to be the voting method that most people are least familiar with, as less people scored it using score voting.

Overwhelmingly, ranked choice voting was the most popular, and this is no surprise to me because this is the one that is already catching on. All of THESE states have ranked choice voting for at least some type of election and other states currently have proposed bills to introduce it.⁴

⁴ <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/big-year-states-push-ranked-choice-voting-rcna64945>

And while ranked choice voting may not be my FAVORITE voting method, I'm still quite happy with it. In fact, I rank it second. What do YOU rank it?

Seriously. If you didn't get a chance to participate in my elections, let me know in the comments which type of voting you prefer. Also, I do recognize there are OTHER types of better voting methods, like Condorcet (KAHN der set) methods, and of course mixed-member proportional representation, which is used around the world. Vote below in the comments. Vote with that like button. Vote by subscribing to my channel. Or don't vote at all. Whatever. What do I know?

Sources/additional reading:

<https://electionscience.org/voting-methods/an-assessment-of-six-single-winner-voting-methods/>