Alternative Voting Systems: Study and Consensus

At the 2009 Biennial League of Women Voters of Michigan Convention, the delegates approved a study of Alternate Voting Systems.

The Study Committee determined that the LWV of Minnesota already had done an in-depth study and we were given permission to use their comprehensive reports as the foundation for Michigan’s study. Because Michigan’s election laws are different, we made an effort to determine if there were any issues related to the possible implementation of alternative voting systems in Michigan.

Study Materials include:

- Alternative Voting Systems: Study and Consensus p. 1
- Issues Related to Alternative Voting Systems for the State of Michigan p. 2
- Summary, Issues and Questions, Glossary and Bibliography pp. 3-4
- Alternative Voting Systems: Facts and Issues pp. 5-21
- Glossary and Bibliography pp. 22-26
- Alternative Voting Systems: Consensus Questions p. 27
Issues Related to Alternative Voting Systems for the State of Michigan

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to provide background material about the most frequently discussed alternative voting systems for reference, discussion, and debate. For this study, a voting system is defined as a collection of rules and procedures that establishes how an election will be conducted, including how the ballots are marked, how the votes are tabulated, how many votes are necessary to win, and other election administration procedures. The scope of this study is limited to single-seat Michigan elections. Voting systems being studied include plurality, approval voting, and instant runoff voting (IRV).

Plurality Voting System Concerns

The only voting system used in Michigan at this time is the Plurality Voting System, in which the candidate with the most votes wins, regardless of whether or not he or she received a majority of the votes cast. If only two candidates are running, plurality is also a majority. But, if multiple candidates are running, the plurality outcome could be far less than a majority. Since Michigan does not have strong third parties at this time, this is most likely to occur in primary elections.

ELECTING candiDATES WITH LESS THAN A MAJORITY does happen in Michigan primaries. According to preliminary results of Michigan’s 2010 primary (as posted on the Secretary of State’s website), nominees for Governor, four Congressional District races, eleven State Senate races, and forty State House races were selected by less than a majority.

History of Alternative Voting Systems and Runoff Primaries

In the 1970s, mayoral elections in Ann Arbor, Michigan were conducted using IRV.

Legality

There are no apparent constitutional barriers to alternative voting systems in Michigan. However, elections laws may have to be changed.

MCLA Section 168.576a Primary elections; electors, number of votes, currently states, “In all partisan and nonpartisan primary elections, the voter shall be entitled to vote for a number of candidates for each office equal to the number of persons to be elected for that office.”

Section 168.580 Counting ballots; candidates considered to have received votes; rejection of ballot states, “In counting the ballots after the closing of the polls, only those candidates having crosses or check marks marked in the squares to the left of their names shall be considered to have received votes, and any ballot upon which more votes have been recorded for candidates for any office than may, by law, be elected to that office shall be rejected as to all names appearing on the ballot for that office only.”
Summary, Issues and Questions

Summary

Voting Systems

Each of the voting systems in the study raises issues that vary depending on what people value and what they want to accomplish. This list summarizes the most frequently cited pro and con statements made regarding each system.

Plurality Voting System

(Voters select one candidate: candidate with most votes wins)
- Is easy for voters to understand.
- Preserves tradition.
- Requires no legislative change.
- Does not ensure majority rule when more than two candidates are running.
- Votes for third party candidates may be "wasted."
- Is vulnerable to "spoiler" candidates.
- Is vulnerable to manipulation.

Approval Voting System

(Voters select as many candidates as they wish; candidate with most votes wins)
- Is easy for voters to understand.
- Expands voters’ choices because they can vote for more than one candidate.
- Might eliminate "wasted" votes, and "spoiler" candidates in some cases.
- Measures only whether or not a candidate is acceptable; does not distinguish between intense and weak approval.
- Could lead to defeat of a candidate whom a majority support as their first choice
- Is vulnerable to manipulation.

Instant Runoff Voting System

(Voters rank candidates; votes for candidate with fewest first-choice votes are redistributed according to their second choices until one candidate achieves a majority)
- Ensures majority rule.
- Allows voters to express preferences among candidates.
- Eliminates problems of spoiler candidates knocking off major candidates.
- Eliminates need for run-off elections.
- Does not meet mathematical requirement for monotonicity.
Issues and Questions

The issues that have emerged in this study of election systems produce the following questions:

1. **Majority Rule**: Is the fact that someone may be elected with less than 50 percent of the vote important enough to change to a different election system? If it happens too frequently, will it reduce the legitimacy of Michigan’s elected officials? How important are voting paradoxes that are found in all of the systems being discussed?

2. **“Sincere Voting” vs. Strategic Voting**: How important is it for an election system to encourage citizens to vote for their true favorite rather than for someone who has a better chance of winning? Is an “insincere” or strategic vote “gaming the system” or making a compromise? Might an “insincere” or strategic vote for a candidate reduce the ability of the winner to interpret the will of the people?

3. **“Wasted” votes**: Does it matter that a vote for a third party candidate under the Plurality system might be considered “wasted” because it cannot lead to the election of the voter’s preferred candidate?

4. **Intensity vs. Breadth of Support**: Should a voting system balance intensity of support with breadth of support? What kind of impact does the type of support have on the winner’s ability to govern?

5. **Preferences**: Are there benefits to allowing voters to express their preferences by approving or ranking multiple candidates?

6. **Legality of Alternative Systems**: Are the benefits of alternative methods sufficient to warrant a change in Michigan Statutes?

7. **Political Parties**: Would alternative voting systems that encourage third parties upset the traditional two-party system? In the Plurality system, how important is it that third party candidates can take votes from one major party candidate, perhaps enabling the candidate from the other major party to win?

8. **Voter Education**: Is the fact that some voting systems require complex tabulation sufficient reason to reject them? How important is it that the voters understand how votes are tabulated? Would the additional costs of a new system be too much of a burden on Michigan election districts in terms of educating voters and election officials?

9. **Change**: Who benefits from changing to an alternative system? Who is disadvantaged? Is it possible to reduce the impact of the unintended consequences that almost always follow any institutional change?

Most of the answers to these questions will be based on values judgments and speculation. No one can really predict the outcome of changes in our voting system, but the more we know about the issues, the less likely we are to make choices that we regret. We hope that the information in this report helps League members to understand some of the most widely discussed alternative voting systems, to sort out the claims made by supporters and critics, and to identify which of these voting methods they feel are beneficial and appropriate for use in state and/or local elections.
Alternative Voting Systems: Facts and Issues

Introduction

The 2000 Presidential election challenged Americans’ complacency about the accuracy and fairness of our voting system as never before. With the outcome still in doubt three weeks after Election Day, the combination of a close race, multiple candidates, antiquated voting equipment, and confusing recount procedures created a perfect storm that left voters across the country frustrated and angry.

While some saw the disputes in Florida as an entertaining diversion, others began to wonder about their own state’s equipment and procedures, and, for the first time in many years, some started to question seriously the fundamental structure of a winner-take-all plurality election system.

When only two major party candidates are on the ballot in an election using the plurality system, majority rule is not a concern. However, when three or more candidates are running, the winner might not have received a majority of the votes. In fact, eleven of twelve statewide elections in Minnesota conducted from 1998 through 2002 were decided by less than a majority,1 sparking interest in alternative voting systems that would address this and other issues. According to preliminary results of Michigan’s 2010 primary (as posted on the Secretary of State’s website), nominees for Governor, four Congressional District races, eleven State Senate races, and forty State House races were selected by less than a majority.

Many people are unaware that alternative voting systems exist and are unfamiliar with the steps necessary to adopt one of them. These facts suggest that League members, legislators, and the public would find information about alternative voting systems to be a useful resource.

The purpose of this study is to provide background information about the most frequently discussed alternative voting systems for reference, discussion, and debate. The study does not offer solutions or proposals for change, nor does it assume that changing the current system is necessarily desirable. This study will use the term voting system to mean a collection of rules and procedures that establishes how an election will be conducted. These rules include how the ballots are marked, how the votes are tabulated, how many votes are necessary to win, and other election administration procedures.

The scope of the study is limited to single-seat Michigan state and local elections, such as those for mayors, state legislators, or governor. It describes our current election system and two alternative systems—Plurality, Approval Voting (AV), and Instant Runoff Voting (IRV)—in terms of how the ballots are marked and how the votes are counted. In addition, the study presents different issues raised by advocates for each system.

In the Plurality and Approval Voting systems, voters do not rank their choices; they simply indicate which candidate or candidates they prefer. In the Instant Runoff Voting system, however, they do rank their choices. This means that they identify their first choice, their second choice, and so on, depending on how many candidates are running and the voter’s interest in ranking more than one candidate. Ranking all of the candidates is not a theoretical requirement of any system. This process is called preference voting.

Each of these systems has advocates who are actively working for its acceptance, if not in Michigan, then in other states or at the national level. This is not a comprehensive list of all voting systems but rather a discussion of those with vocal supporters and/or those that occur most frequently in academic publications. The League of Women Voters has incorporated the opinions of supporters and opponents of each alternative voting system.
The report does not address presidential elections, the Electoral College, multi-seat elections, proportional representation, or other election reform issues such as redistricting, paperless ballots, or campaign finance.

Notes:
http://www.sos.state.mn.us/election/result.html
Voting Systems

Plurality: An Unranked Voting System

Michigan uses the Plurality system, also called First Past the Post, in which each voter chooses a single candidate, and the candidate with the most votes wins. In races with three or more candidates, it is possible for a candidate to win with fewer than 50 percent of the votes: in other words, the winner can be elected by a minority of the voters. Recent examples include Michigan’s 2010 gubernatorial primary, Minnesota’s 1998 and 2002 gubernatorial elections and, at the national level, the presidential elections of 1992 and 2000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plurality Ballot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vote for one candidate:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate A □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate B □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate C □</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Plurality system originated in ancient Greece and Rome and evolved in England before the American Revolution. Outside the United States, the Plurality system is used in the United Kingdom and other former British colonies, such as Canada and India.

Although the U.S. Constitution sets out a complicated process for electing the president via the Electoral College that requires a majority vote of electors, it permits the states to determine their own election procedures. Michigan state statutes, therefore, not the U.S. Constitution, dictate how elections in Michigan are conducted.

Approval Voting (AV): An Unranked Voting System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approval Ballot</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vote for all candidates you approve of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate A □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate B □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate C □</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Approval Voting system, voters are allowed to vote for as many candidates as they wish. The candidate receiving the greatest total number of votes wins the election. Approval Voting was created in Venice in the 13th century when the Venetians used it to elect members to their Grand Council.

Approval Voting did not surface again until the mid-1970s, when it was independently proposed by several scholars, including Steven J. Brams, professor of politics at New York University, who remains its champion to this day. Best known for its use in electing the secretary-general of the United Nations, Approval Voting is also used to elect officers of professional organizations such as the Institute of Management Sciences, the Mathematical Association of America, and the American Statistical Association.

Interest in using this system to elect public officials is growing in the United States. An organization called ‘Americans for Approval Voting’ has formed to work for the adoption of Approval Voting for public elections in the United States.

The following example shows how AV might work. Four professors in a college English Department are trying to choose a handbook (a text with rules for grammar and punctuation) for their students. They have narrowed the choice to three books, which are virtually the same except for the titles. They decide to use the Approval Voting system, so the professors vote for all of the handbooks of which they approve.
The Table of Contents displays the number of pages for each of the selected books:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professor</th>
<th>Pocket Handbook of Grammar</th>
<th>Great Big Picture Book of Grammar</th>
<th>Grammar and Videogames</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angelou</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tan</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dickinson</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The *Pocket Handbook of Grammar* is the winner.

A reverse form of the Approval Voting system (Brams calls it *Disapproval Voting*) has been used since 1987 in some Eastern European countries and the former Soviet Union. Voters cross off the names of candidates of whom they disapprove. Brams adds that this procedure is similar to Approval Voting in that candidates not crossed off are, in effect, approved of, although psychologically there is almost surely a difference between approving and disapproving of candidates.⁶

**And the Winner is ð° Kicked Out**

One of the earliest forms of democracy in Greece was introduced by Cleisthenes in 508 B.C. This was a rather negative form of an election. Each year voters were asked to cast a vote for the politician they most wished to exile for ten years. Votes were written on **ostraka**, which were broken pots, and from this comes our present word to **ostracize**. If no politician received more than 6,000 votes, then all remained, but if any received more than 6,000, then the one with the largest number was exiled. Requiring that someone had over 6,000 votes before being ostracized was an added feature to try to ensure that only when a person was unpopular with a large number of voters was exile the result. If there was a fairly even spread of votes, nobody would get over 6,000 and, although some would get the most, it would not matter in such a case.⁷

**Instant Runoff Voting (IRV): A Ranked Voting System**

In the United States, the terms *Instant Runoff Voting* and *Single Transferable Vote* (STV) are often used interchangeably, but STV also is used in elections that produce more than one winner. This study examines Single Transferable Vote as it is used in contests with a single winner among multiple candidates and uses the term *Instant Runoff Voting* for this process.¹¹

**Instant Runoff Ballot**

Indicate your 1st and 2nd Choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In Instant Runoff Voting, voters rank the candidates on the ballot, marking their first, second, and third choices, depending on how many candidates are in the race; however, a voter does not have to vote for more than one candidate. In round one, the first choice votes are counted. If a candidate gets 50% + 1 of the votes, he or she is declared the winner. If no one has a majority, the counting goes to round two. The candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated. The votes cast for the eliminated candidate are then transferred (or moved) to the second choice listed on each ballot. If someone gets a majority the election is over. If no one receives a majority, the counting goes to round three and continues until someone has 50 percent + 1 of the total votes. There is no need for a separate runoff election, thus explaining the term *Instant Runoff Voting*, and the winner always has a majority of the votes.¹²

A simple example illustrates how IRV works. One hundred citizens are voting for the most architecturally unique county courthouse in Minnesota. The candidates are Stearns County, Freeborn County, and St. Louis County (Duluth).
Round One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County Courthouses</th>
<th>First Choice</th>
<th>Second Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stearns</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6 for Freeborn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35 for St. Louis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeborn</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10 for St. Louis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30 for Stearns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis Co. (Duluth)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15 for Stearns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 for Freeborn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No courthouse has a majority, so the election goes to the next round. The lowest vote-getter, St. Louis, is eliminated, and the 19 votes are redistributed 15 for Stearns and 4 for Freeborn.

Round Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County Courthouses</th>
<th>First Choice</th>
<th>Second Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stearns</td>
<td>41 +15</td>
<td>6 for Freeborn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35 for St. Louis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeborn</td>
<td>40 + 4</td>
<td>10 for St. Louis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30 for Stearns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis Co. (Duluth)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>15 for Stearns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 for Freeborn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now Stearns has 41+15 votes or 56. and Freeborn has 40 + 4 or 44. The Stearns County courthouse wins with the majority of the votes.

A national advocate of IRV is the Center for Voting and Democracy. This organization sponsors an extensive website, which provides information about IRV and other voting systems.13

Instant Runoff Voting is not a new concept: the key to development of Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) was the invention of the single transferable vote (SW) in the 1860s by Thomas Hare in England and Carl Andrae in Denmark. Instant Runoff Voting, using a preference ballot, was invented by W.R. Ware, a professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, around 1870.14

Four states Ð Florida, Indiana, Maryland, and Minnesota Ð used variations of Instant Runoff Voting in primary elections as early as 1912. Ireland and Australia currently use IRV in national elections,15 and London uses it to elect its mayor.16 San Francisco is implementing IRV for its November 2004 elections as well.17 In 2003, at least 19 states, including Minnesota, introduced legislation to enact IRV, but the bills failed or were carried over in every instance.18

Other organizations also use Instant Runoff Voting. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences uses it to determine the finalists, and the American Political Science Association uses it to elect its president.19

NOTES
4 U. S. Constitution, Article 2, Section 1. "Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress. . . ."
5 One exception is the 1967 federal statute requiring that members of Congress be elected from single-winner seats.
6. O'Connor and Robertson, "History of Voting."
8. Americans for Approval Voting is a nonprofit Texas corporation formed for the purpose of political action and seeking 501(c)(4) tax exempt status. http://www.approvalvoting.com/about.html
10. O'Connor and Robertson, "History of Voting."
13. The Center for Voting and Democracy is a non-partisan and non-profit corporation incorporated in the District of Columbia for educational purposes. The Center researches and distributes information on electoral systems that promote full voter participation and fair representation, particularly alternatives that will enable more voters to elect candidates of their choice than in plurality or in traditional at-large elections. 6930 Carroll Ave., Suite 610, Takoma Park, Maryland. http://www.fairvote.org/; www.fairvote.org/vra/Amicus198.htm; FairVote Minnesota: http://www.fairvotemn.org
15. Ibid.
19. The History of Instant Runoff Voting."
Determining the Will of the People

Arrow’s Impossibility Theorem

In 1952 Kenneth Arrow won a Nobel Prize in part for proving that there is no such thing as a perfect voting system. He was trying to put together a set of minimal conditions that would consistently translate individual preferences into group preferences, but he found that this was impossible. In other words, there is no voting system that consistently meets Arrow’s minimal criteria except a dictatorship. This discovery startled mathematicians and political scientists who have been studying and debating Arrow’s theorem ever since.

Arrow’s discovery, according to Harvard University government professors Kenneth Shepsle and Mark Bonchek, suggests that systems of combining individual votes into a group choice or winner is not as straightforward as it seems. No system is consistently fair when the number of voters is large, when their preferences are varied, or when more than two candidates are in the race. They observe that even though each individual in the group has preferences that are consistent... this need not be true of the group's preferences. This explains why it is so difficult to identify the true will of the voter or the ideal Democratic Candidate.

Research also indicates that no fixed set of criteria for a good voting system exists. Citizens creating a new voting system or changing an old one must set priorities and make tradeoffs among a number of competing goals. Some might want to encourage third parties, some might want to measure the will of the voters as perfectly as possible, some might want to reduce factions, some might want a specific kind of representation, and so on.

Instead of focusing on the criteria for a good voting system, this study discusses the issues most frequently raised by advocates for particular systems, those mentioned in the literature of mathematics and political science and those of specific relevance to Michigan.

Majority Rule

According to the proponents of alternative systems, the most important criterion for any single winner voting system is that it produce a winner elected by a majority of eligible voters. They point to statements such as that by Noah Webster, who wrote in 1787, "Hence the doctrine, that the opinions of a majority must give law to the whole State: a doctrine as universally received, as any intuitive truth." Although the United States Constitution requires a majority of votes to elect the president in the Electoral College and to pass certain bills in Congress, it does not require the states to adhere to the principle of majority rule. Nevertheless, this doctrine is so deeply embedded in the minds of most citizens that they are often surprised to learn that a candidate can be elected by a minority of the voters; however, some people see no problem when a candidate wins an election with less than a majority of the votes.

Almost two hundred years after Webster’s affirmation of rule by the majority, the Vermont House of Representatives commissioned a study that endorsed Instant Runoff Voting for the state of Vermont. This commission stated that the Plurality voting system contains a fundamental defect that violates the most basic precept of democracy: majority rule because a candidate can be elected with fewer than 50 percent of the votes.

Asserting that Instant Runoff Voting will solve this problem, the Center for Voting and Democracy says; "IRV advantages the majority, since it ensures that a minority of voters can never defeat a candidate supported by a majority." The Vermont study adds that this is the main attribute of IRV that prompts this Commission to recommend its adoption for all statewide elections.
Promoters of Approval Voting suggest that it will generally elect the candidate with the greatest overall support.²⁹ Robert J. Weber of Northwestern University in Illinois presents a mathematical proof that Approval Voting will usually result in a winner preferred by a majority of the voters in a three-candidate setting in which two similar candidates share the support of a majority of the voters.³⁰ He believes that Approval Voting more effectively represents the preferences of the electorate in the three-candidate race than the Plurality system.³⁰

Winning with a minority of votes is not a new occurrence. In 17 presidential elections, including the election of 1860 won by Abraham Lincoln, the winner received fewer than 50 percent of the popular votes.³¹ One could argue that even though these candidates received less than a majority of the popular vote, they did receive a majority of votes in the Electoral College, thus not violating the principle of majority rule.

In Minnesota, it is not unusual for officials to win elections with a minority of the votes. Minnesota

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Gore</td>
<td>Dayton</td>
<td>Ventura 37.0%</td>
<td>Kiffmeyer 46.8%</td>
<td>Dutcher 49.1%</td>
<td>Johnson 45.4%</td>
<td>Hatch 47.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Gore 47.9%</td>
<td>Dayton 48.8%</td>
<td>Kiffmeyer 46.8%</td>
<td>Dutcher 49.1%</td>
<td>Johnson 45.4%</td>
<td>Hatch 47.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Coleman 49.5%</td>
<td>Pawlenty 44.3%</td>
<td>Kiffmeyer 47.56%</td>
<td>Awada 44.63%</td>
<td>[Hatch-majority 54.64%]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

governors Jesse Ventura and Tim Pawlenty were both elected without a majority. In 1998, Reform Party candidate Jesse Ventura won with only 37 percent of the votes, defeating both of the major party candidates. In 2002, Republican Tim Pawlenty became governor with 44 percent of the votes, with Democrat Roger Moe earning 36 percent and Independent Tim Penny receiving 16 percent. Between 1998 and 2002, 11 statewide offices were won with a minority of the votes and one with a majority.³²

Even though some believed that these elections did not measure the true will of the voters, few people thought they were unfair, given the rules set out by the Plurality voting system.

**Sincere vs. Strategic Voting**

Supporters of each of the voting systems discussed here believe that a voting system should enable citizens to honestly vote according to their consciences.³³ They claim that their particular system will promote sincere voting rather than strategic or tactical voting, which they consider gaming the system. They prefer a voting system that discourages people from voting for anyone but their true favorite.³³

Douglas Amy, professor at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts and author of *Real Choices/New Voices*, explains the importance of voting sincerely: "To produce a true mandate voters must be voting sincerely - that is, they must be casting a vote for a party that truly represents their own specific ideological and policy preferences."³⁴ If in 2000, for example, one's true favorite was Ralph Nader, some would say that voting for anyone else would be insincere.³⁵

Proponents of alternative voting systems criticize the Plurality voting system, in particular, for encouraging strategic voting, saying that people who want to vote for third party candidates may feel that they must settle for the lesser of two evils by voting for their second choice. They fear that a sincere vote for a minor party candidate may lead to the election of a candidate they dislike. The minor party candidate may become a spoiler in the election, contributing to the election of a candidate not supported by the majority of the voters.

Eliminating the lesser of two evils choice is one of the main advantages of the Instant Runoff Voting system, according to the Center for Voting and Democracy: "Voters have every incentive to vote for their favorite candidate rather than the lesser of two evils because their ballot can still count toward a winner if their first choice loses."³⁶

Advocates of the Approval system believe that AV encourages sincere voting. Steven Brams and Peter
Fishburn argue that Approval Voting is less vulnerable to manipulation than any of the others. In addition, voters don’t have to rearrange the order of their votes or vote for someone they don’t like to keep someone else from winning.37

Others argue that the Approval Voting system does not reward honest voting in every situation. Voting for one’s first, second, and third choice candidates without ranking them in some cases can lead to the defeat of one’s favorite candidate because the ballots are equally weighted. Voters cannot indicate a strong preference for one candidate and a weak preference for another.38 If enough other people voted for their second choice, that candidate might win. Approval voting proponent Brams admits that this is a valid concern but states that rational voters can use information from polls to help them decide whether to vote for a second or third candidate.39

Brams speculates that a benefit of sincere voting under the Approval Voting system is that it will make it possible to measure the true level of support of minority party candidates. Election results will be relatively undistorted by strategic voting, so voters and political parties will have access to important information that is unavailable under the Plurality system.40 A national example of election results distorted by strategic voting is the presidential election of 1992. Gerald Posner wrote in the New York Times Magazine that Perot did not take more votes from Bush and help elect Clinton as many people believe: In fact, exit polling showed that Perot hurt both parties almost equally, taking roughly the same number of votes from Clinton as he did from Bush. Exit polls also show that more people would have voted for Perot if they thought he had a chance to win his vote total could have approached 40 percent (Clinton won with only 43 percent).41

Critics claim that the opposite is the case: the intensity of a candidate’s support will not be accurately measured with the Approval Voting system because a voter’s third-choice Approval vote counts as much as his or her first-choice Approval vote.42 One must also keep in mind that each of these alternative voting systems except Instant Runoff Voting is vulnerable to another kind of strategy: bullet voting. Individual voters (perhaps at the suggestion of campaign organizers) could mark only one candidate or bullet vote rather than mark or rank several candidates. Bullet voting would distort the results, and the election system would revert back to the Plurality system.43

[Wasted Votes]

In voting system terminology, wasted votes are those that do not go toward the election of any candidates. Whether or not voters believe that their vote has been wasted depends on their definition of the term. If voting for a candidate who loses means one’s vote is wasted, then as many as 49 percent of the voters will feel that way in any election that requires a majority of the votes to win. Most often the term is used to mean votes for a third party candidate who has little chance of winning.44

Some people might choose to vote for a candidate they know will lose in order to lodge a protest or stand on principle. A strong third party showing may, for example, cause major parties to incorporate new issues in their platforms. Dennis Thompson, Harvard professor and author of Just Elections, says that protest votes in sufficient numbers, can send a powerful message and can have an effect on campaigns and elections in the future.45 Issues once deemed immune to legislative change were first proposed by third parties: abolition of slavery, minimum wage, women’s right to vote, social security, end to child labor, and the 40-hour work week. They are now accepted laws of the land.46

Advocates of Instant Runoff Voting assert that reducing the number of wasted votes is one of the advantages of IRV. According to Ted Halstead and Michael Lind, voters realize that if they vote for a third party candidate in the current Plurality system, their vote will probably be wasted. The authors explain that voting for a third party so easily backfires that voters in a Plurality system were offered a stark choice between voting for one of two major national parties or not voting at all. Increasing numbers of Americans have chosen the latter option.47

The Vermont Commission points out that under Instant Runoff Voting, when a first choice candidate is eliminated, the vote is reassigned to the second choice candidate that the voter designated, reducing the chance that the voter’s vote will be wasted.48
Advocates of Approval Voting also speculate that voters won't have to worry about "wasting" their votes with this system. If their most preferred candidate has little chance of winning, they can vote for him or her and a more viable candidate without worrying about "wasting" their vote on the less popular person.  

**Voter Turnout**

Many people are very concerned about the issue of low voter turnout, blaming the Plurality system. Some speculate that changing to an alternative election system will bring more voters to the polls, but this claim is difficult to verify, according to a study by political scientists about the effects of voting systems on turnout. The authors found that factors such as cultural differences, registration barriers, weak parties, non-competitive races, the perception that one's vote doesn't count, and so on may depress voter turnout. State-to-state comparisons of turnout are difficult as well because states have different ways of tracking turnout, and so far no significant history of alternative voting systems exists in this country for which state-to-state comparisons would be possible.

The Minnesota Secretary of State's office explains that Minnesota's turnout statistics may appear as percentages of three different numbers:

- Voting-Age Population. This number comes from Census Bureau estimates and includes non-citizens, felons, and those under guardianship of the person.
- Voting-Eligible Population. This number does not include non-citizens but does include felons and those under guardianship of the person, even though they can in fact register. It is not an exact number.
- Population registered to vote.

Despite these problems, the study found that changing to an alternative voting system increased voter turnout by about five percentage points. The authors examined the effect of cumulative voting* on turnout in about 100 communities across the United States, mostly in Texas, some in Alabama, New Mexico, and a scattering of others, including one in South Dakota. One of the authors of the study, Shaun Bowler of University of California Riverside, said, "The best we can tell is that changing the electoral system will boost turnout probably somewhere in the low single digits. It's a consistent finding. So far as I know all studies show an increase is likely. None show a decrease."  

The Vermont Commission speculates that IRV would increase turnout by pointing to mayoral elections in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in the 1970s that were conducted using IRV. When an election had only two credible contenders, voter turnout was low. When a third party candidate was added, voter turnout jumped 28 percent. It adds that other nations that use IRV have far higher levels of voter participation than Vermont does, but other factors may be responsible for this as well, such as the day (or days) of the week on which elections are held or whether voting is required by law.

**Appendix 1:**

**A Real World Voting Paradox**

Donald G. Saari, a mathematician at the University of California at Irvine, explains a real-world voting paradox that occurred in a 12-way general election in the 1991 Louisiana gubernatorial race: Republican David Duke, a former Ku Klux Klan grand wizard, received 32 percent of the vote, while Democrat Edwin W. Edwards, a former governor who bragged about his gambling and had been indicted twice on federal racketeering charges, got 34 percent, both eking out more votes than the incumbent Republican governor Charles E. (Buddy) Roemer, who received 27 percent. It was reasonable to suspect that incumbent governor Roemer would have beaten either of them in a head-to-head race, says Mr. Saari.

The result was a widely disparaged "Krook-or-Klan" runoff. Bumper stickers supporting Mr. Edwards read "Better the lizard than the wizard." Mr. Edwards won the runoff with 61 percent of the vote. A poll found that almost half of the voters who chose Mr. Edwards said their main motive was to defeat Mr. Duke.

*Cumulative voting (accumulation voting or weighted voting): This is a multiple-winner voting system intended to promote proportional representation. In this system, a voter facing multiple choices is given X number of points. The voter can then assign his or her points to one or more of the choices, thus enabling one to weight one's vote if desired.*
Unlike preference voting where the numbers represent ranks of choices or candidates in some order (i.e. they are ordinal numbers), in cumulative votes the numbers represent quantities (i.e. they are cardinal numbers). This form of voting is advocated by those who argue that minorities deserve better representation, and thus could (by concentrating their votes on a small number of minority candidates) ensure some representation from the minority.

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22 Ibid., 49.
23 Reynolds and Reilly. IDEA, 9.
27 http://www.fairvote.org/irv/vermont/11simpleresults.html
30 Minnesota Election Results. Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State. http://www.sos.state.mn.us/election/vermont/01results.html
33 IRV Promotes Majority Rule.
34 IRV Promotes Majority Rule.
37 Brams and Fishburn. Approval Voting. 15.
42 Alternative Single Winner Systems.
44 Reynolds and Reilly. IDEA, 10.
49 Brams. Approval Voting and the Good Society.
52 Bowler, et al., Election Systems and Voter Turnout.
53 Shaun Bowler, e-mail message to Tony Solgård, Oct. 29, 2003.

Intensity vs. Breadth of Support for a Candidate

Finding a Compromise Candidate

Intensity of support refers to how strongly a voter supports or opposes a candidate. Those who are passionate are often mobilized and highly motivated to vote. On the other hand, breadth of support indicates a candidate who can appeal to a wide variety of people across opinions and party lines. In alternative systems, candidates have an incentive to appeal to supporters of other candidates as their second or third choice.

Proponents of preference voting systems, ones in which the voters rank the candidates, believe that an election system should balance the intensity of a candidate’s support with the breadth of his or her support. Going too far in either direction can call into question the legitimacy of the winner. According to Samuel Merrill III in *Making Multi-candidate Elections More Democratic*, it is vital that the voters perceive the winner as the one preferred by the majority of the electorate: “The belief that a loser is preferred by a majority of the electorate or enjoys greater intensity of support can call into question that legitimacy.”

Critics of the Plurality voting system say that it measures only the amount of intense, core support for a candidate, and breadth of support is irrelevant, permitting single-interest groups to take over a political party in races with more than three candidates. Instant Runoff Voting supporters believe that their system offers a compromise between two extremes: It requires sufficient core support to avoid elimination and enough broad support to win a majority of the votes.

Instant Runoff Voting does not always offer a compromise, say its opponents. It can prevent the “spoiler” effect in races in which the minor parties have little core support; however, “as soon as one of those minor parties gains power, its supporters vote for it at the risk of hurting their own cause, just as in the current plurality system.”

Proponents of IRV acknowledge that in a three-way race, a compromise candidate can be eliminated and an extremist elected. They present this example in an article that discusses the flaws in all of the voting systems in this study; they point out, however, that IRV “generally does a better job of finding the true compromise candidate than either plurality or two round runoff elections: Two extreme candidates have strong core support, neither can appeal to a majority, and a moderate candidate has weak core support but is preferred by a majority as a compromise over the other two candidates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marvin (Moderate)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Under IRV, the moderate candidate is eliminated first, and one of the extremists is elected.

IRV advocates criticize Approval Voting because it measures only whether or not a candidate is acceptable to the voter; it does not distinguish between a candidate who is intensely liked—a first choice—and those who are more weakly approved of—second and lower choices.

They add that “the adoption of Approval Voting could cause the defeat of a candidate who was the favorite of 51 percent of the voters by a candidate who was merely acceptable to 75 percent of the voters. They speculate that if a candidate who is the first choice of 51 percent of the voters loses to someone who is the second choice of 75 percent of the voters, then the Approval Voting system would likely be repealed.” See sidebar for example.
An adapted scenario shows how Approval Voting might allow a candidate with strong majority support to lose in an election with 100 voters. The structure of this scenario was presented by backers of Instant Runoff Voting to show why IRV is superior to Approval voting. Three women private detectives are running for president of Cherchez La Femme, an association of female private investigators. J. Marple has the genteel lady detective vote, K. Millhone attracts quirky free-spirits, and V. I. Warshawski appeals to the feminists. Under plurality voting, Marple is the favorite choice of 65 voters, Millhone is preferred by 25, and Warshawski is liked by only 10. Marple is the unambiguous winner, and Warshawski is a distant third. Marple would also win using the Instant Runoff system.

Under Approval Voting however, many genteel lady detectives might approve of Warshawski as well as Marple, being secretly attracted to Warshawski's feminist philosophy. But since there is no way to say that they like Marple better than Warshawski, Marple can lose. The final count might give 70 votes to Marple, 35 votes to Millhone, and 75 votes to Warshawski, who would win the election and become the new president of Cherchez La Femme.

Approval Voting system champions believe that the one with the broadest appeal is also the strongest, minimizing the importance of intensity of support. They explain ways that both the Plurality system and the Instant Runoff Voting system can produce a winner who is not supported by the majority of voters: Under Approval Voting, by contrast, it would be the candidate with the greatest overall support—the one most widely approved of—who would win.

Others point out that intensity and breadth of support are descriptive concepts, too subjective to measure. Lynn Arthur Steen, professor of mathematics at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota, believes that intensity and breadth of support are not useful ways to compare different voting systems because they cannot be measured objectively.

Monotonicity

Instant Runoff Voting has a mathematical problem—it does not pass the monotonicity test. Mathematicians define monotonicity as follows: With the relative order or rating of the other candidates unchanged, voting a candidate higher should never cause the candidate to lose, nor should voting a candidate lower ever cause the candidate to win; voting your choice should only help your candidate. In certain very specific circumstances, however, such as an extremely close three-way race, more first-place votes can hurt, rather than help, a candidate. Voters, by raising the ranking of a candidate, may actually cause that candidate to lose. (For an example of how this might happen, see Appendix 2 [page 20].)

The Center for Voting and Democracy, however, defends the IRV system against the charge that non-monotonicity makes it unacceptable. An article titled No System is Perfect reminds readers that Arrow's Impossibility Theorem proves that every system has problems and that the problem of non-monotonicity exists only in theory, not in the real world: If the theoretical problems with choice voting occurred even as frequently as 0.1 percent of the time, there would be many such examples, but there are none. Samuel Merrill says that it would be relatively impossible in an election with large numbers of voters to use non-monotonicity to a candidate's advantage: This strategy, if it is possible at all, is at once difficult to design and implausible to implement in a large electorate.

Administrative Issues

Voter Education

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota interviewed current and former local and state election officials to see how a change in election systems would affect election administration. These officials had similar concerns.
The task of educating voters about a fundamental change in voting method appeared difficult but not impossible to almost all of the election officials and administrators interviewed. They mentioned that every election confuses a small number of voters, even though the voting system has been in place for over 200 years. Citizens seek answers from hot lines, election judges, and the Minnesota Secretary of State’s Office or they simply do not vote. They agreed that it would take a well-planned and adequately funded campaign to reach all of the voters sufficiently in advance of the election to teach them how to fill out their ballots. Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer, whose office would bear the primary responsibility for voter education, showed more concern, asking, “How could we explain a new system if no one can understand what we have now?”

Elaine Voss, former Deputy Secretary of State, indicated that it would be “absolutely critical” for voters to fully understand the system by which someone is elected: “It would discourage voter participation if they didn’t understand the method.”

Training Election Judges

Local election officials were also concerned about the costs of training election judges so they would understand any new election system. Local governments normally pay for training judges, so at least initially they would need state funding for the retraining.

Voting Equipment

Several local and state officials in Minnesota felt that changing to any of the alternative voting systems in this study would require upgrading the software in the voting machines to meet new vote tallying procedures. This is not a problem, said Ramsey County Election Manager Joe Mansky, because software used in voting machines can be programmed to tabulate the votes regardless of which election system is used. He said that with the right computer software, “we can count any ballot you want.” Although some expense is involved, several election officials responded that a software upgrade would not necessarily be a significant cost burden for local governments.

Election administrators were also concerned about having more than one type of election system on the same ballot. They wondered for example, what if IRV were used to elect the mayor but Plurality was used for the city council or school board. Voting machine vendors at a conference for county election officials said that their machines could be programmed to allow a mixed type of ballot without a significant cost increase. It is possible that more complicated vote tabulation involved in alternative methods could slow down the process of reporting the outcome of the election.

Errors

Election officials said that a change in election system would inevitably produce some degree of administrative errors, at least in the beginning, but a paper trail for all ballots could allow recounts if necessary. To prevent errors, the League of Women Voters supports the implementation of voting systems and procedures that are secure, accurate, recountable, and accessible, regardless of the voting system or equipment that is adopted.

Political Issues

Introduction Political Context

Accounts from other states suggest that politics affects attitudes toward changing the voting system. Parties that benefit from the current system often do not want to alter it, and parties that have lost, particularly third parties are often very interested in changing the system. For example, in the 1990 election for governor in Alaska, the vote was split between the Republican and the Independence Party candidates, permitting the
Democratic candidate to win with 42 percent of the vote. This election prompted Republicans to support an initiative to create Instant Runoff Voting in Alaska.\textsuperscript{75} The situation was reversed in a 1998 New Mexico election for a Congressional seat, inspiring the Democrats to introduce a bill to amend New Mexico’s Constitution to permit Instant Runoff Voting and require that a candidate win by a majority of the votes.\textsuperscript{76}

Appendix 2: Monotonicity

An example from a math text helps explain this issue. [In the original, the term \textit{plurality-with-elimination} was used for Instant Runoff Voting.] Three cities, Athens (A), Babylon (B), and Carthage (C) are competing to host the next Summer Olympic Games. The final decision is made by a secret vote of the 29 members of the Executive Council of the International Olympic Committee, and the winner is chosen by the Instant Runoff system. Two days before the actual election, a straw vote is conducted by the Executive Council just to see how things stand. The results of the straw poll are shown in Table 1.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Number of Voters & 7 & 8 & 10 \\
1st choice & A & B & C \\
2nd choice & B & C & A \\
3rd choice & C & A & B \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Preference Schedule in Straw Vote Two Days before the Actual Election}
\end{table}

The results of the straw vote are as follows: In the first round Athens has 11 votes, Babylon has 8 and Carthage has 10, which means that Babylon is eliminated first. In the second round, Babylon’s 8 votes go to Carthage, so Carthage ends up with 18 votes, more than enough to lock up the election.

Although the results of the straw poll are supposed to be secret, the word gets out that unless some of the voters turn against Carthage, Carthage is going to win the election. Because everybody loves a winner, what ends up happening in the actual election is that even more first-place votes are cast for Carthage than in the straw poll. Specifically, the four voters in the last column of Table I decide as a block to switch their first-place votes from Athens to Carthage. Surely this is just the frosting on the cake for Carthage, but to be sure we recheck the results of the election.

Table 2 shows the preference schedule for the actual election. Table 2 is the result of switching A and C in the last column of Table 1 and combining columns 3 and 4 (they are now the same) into a single column.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
Number of Voters & 7 & 8 & 14 \\
1st choice & A & B & C \\
2nd choice & B & C & A \\
3rd choice & C & A & B \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Preference Schedule for the Actual Election}
\end{table}

When we apply the Instant Runoff system to Table 2, Athens (with 7 first-place votes) is eliminated first, and the 7 votes originally going to Athens now go to Babylon, giving it 15 votes \textit{and the win!} How could this happen? How could Carthage lose an election it had locked up simply because some voters moved Carthage from second to first choice? To the people of Carthage this was surely the result of an evil Babylonian plot, but double-checking the figures makes it clear that everything is on the up and up. Carthage is just the victim of a quirk in the Instant Runoff system: The possibility that you can actually do worse by doing better! In the language of voting theory this is known as a \textit{violation of the monotonicity criterion.}\textsuperscript{77}

NOTES:
58 Alternative Single Winner Systems.\textsuperscript{8}
61 Alternative Single Winner Systems.\textsuperscript{9}
63 Richie et. al., Letter to Science.
64 Brams and Fishburn, Approval Voting, 4.
65 Lynn Arthur Steen, Professor of Mathematics, St. Olaf College, comments on draft, June 6, 2004.
66 Steen.
69 Merrill, 75.
70 Mary Kiffmeyer, Minnesota Secretary of State, Interview with Helen Palmer and Marsha Oliver, 14 Jan. 2004.
73 Vendor voting machine display, Conference for County Election Officials, December 12, 2003, Thunderbird Hotel, Bloomington, Minnesota.
77 Garfunkel, For All Practical Purposes, 422-423.
Glossary

**Approval Voting**: Voters are allowed to vote for as many candidates as they approve of; the candidate receiving the greatest number of votes wins.

**Burying**: Strategic voting that insincerely ranks an alternative candidate lower in the hope of defeating him or her.

**Compromise**: Strategic voting that insincerely ranks an alternative candidate higher in the hope of getting him or her elected.

**Independent or third party candidates**: Candidates from any political party organized in all or nearly all states other than the two current leading parties, which since the time of the American Civil War have always been the Democratic and the Republican parties.

**Insincere voting**: Occurs when a voter’s reported preference order differs from his or her true preference order.

**IRV - Instant Runoff Voting**: Using a preference ballot, voters go to the polls once and designate their 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choices at one time. A series of runoff elections are conducted using voters’ preferences until one candidate emerges with a majority of the votes.

**Kenneth Arrow**: Nobel Prize winner who proved no voting system is free from counterintuitive properties: i.e., a vote for someone can actually hurt that candidate. The idea is that no voting system is perfect.

**Majority vote**: A method of voting which calls for the winner to have a majority of the votes $\delta \geq 500/0 + 1$.

**Monotonicity**: The mathematical criterion which states that with the relative order or rating of the other candidates unchanged, voting a candidate higher should never cause the candidate to lose, nor should voting a candidate lower ever cause the candidate to win. The idea is that voting for one’s choice will help one’s candidate.

**Multi-seat election (multi-member district)**: A district from which more than one representative is elected.

**Nonmonotonicity**: Voting characteristic in which voting for one’s choice may hurt one’s candidate’s chances of winning. If a voting system is not monotonic, it may encourage tactical voting.

**Plurality vote**: A method of voting in which the candidate with the most votes wins. In elections with three or more candidates, the winner may have considerably fewer than one-half the total votes cast.

**Preference voting**: A method of voting that calls for voters to rank candidates in order of their preference.

**Ranked ballot**: A method of voting which calls for voters to put their choices in order of preference.

**Runoff election**: An election that is held if the first election does not produce a majority winner. It is usually held 1-3 weeks later and requires voters to return to the polls.

**Sincere Vote**: One with no falsified preferences or preferences left unspecified when the election method allows them to be specified.

**Spoiler effect**: Occurs when a third candidate takes enough votes away from a candidate that it causes the candidate to lose.

**STV**: Single transferable vote is a ranked ballot voting method designed to accurately achieve proportional representation in multi-candidate elections. When similar methods are applied to single-candidate elections they are sometimes called Instant Runoff Voting. In both systems of voting the ballot choices represent an
ordinal ranking of preferences, but they are tallied differently.

**Tactical or Strategic Voting**: Describes any decision by the voter in marking a ballot that is intended to improve the outcome of the election from the voter’s point of view; see Insincere Voting.

**Voting paradox**: Situation in which an election outcome is not what our common sense says it should be.
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http://www.fairvote.org/irv/various1.htm


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†Election Reporting. Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State. http://electionresults.sos.state.mn.us/20020215/VoterTurnout.asp


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The Problem IRV Solves. Center for Voting and Democracy.

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* No longer available.
Alternative Voting Systems: Consensus Questions

Name of Local League: __________________________________________________________

Contact Person___________________________________________ Phone (______)__________________
E-mail____________________________________________________

Directions:

- Please indicate your League’s opinion for each of the voting systems studied for single-seat elections when more than two candidates are running.
- Please comment on the reasons for your League’s decision.
- This consensus process allows for supporting more than one voting method.
- The State Board will develop a position statement regarding the outcome.
- Please check if the preponderance of your group agrees - either Support or Oppose. If no agreement can be reached or if the group is sharply divided, check No Consensus.

QUESTION: Is the current method of plurality voting adequate under all circumstances, or should alternate options be recommended? The methods under consideration are the following.

1. Plurality Voting: Current voting system in Michigan; the candidate with the most votes wins, regardless of whether or not he or she received a majority of the votes cast.
   Support ___ Oppose ___ No consensus ___
   Why or why not?:

2. Approval Voting: Voters cast votes for all the candidates they approve. The candidate with the most votes wins.
   Support ___ Oppose ___ No consensus ___
   Why or why not?:

3. Instant Runoff Voting: Voters rank the candidates. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated, and the votes cast for the eliminated candidate are transferred (or moved) to the next choice listed on each ballot. This process of elimination continues until a majority winner is declared.
   Support ___ Oppose ___ No consensus ___
   Why or why not?