Five different templates for plausible legislative language implementing Ranked-Choice Voting

The first template is for Hare RCV (or IRV) and was derived from the existing template presented to voters in the 2021 Burlington charter change question and is made a little more explicit than what was presented to voters.

From that, four different versions of Condorcet-consistent legislative language are derived.

Hare RCV (a.k.a. IRV, not Condorcet-consistent):

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All elections of [office] shall be by ballot, using a system of ranked-choice voting without a separate runoff election. The presiding election officer shall implement a ranked-choice voting protocol according to these guidelines:

   (1) The ballot shall give voters the option of ranking candidates in order of preference. Lower ordinal preference shall be considered higher rank and the candidate marked as first preference is considered ranked highest. Equal ranking of candidates shall not be allowed. Any candidate not marked with a preference shall be considered as ranked lower than every candidate marked with a preference.

   (2) If a candidate receives a majority (over 50 percent) of first preferences, that candidate is elected.

   (3) If no candidate receives a majority of first preferences, an instant runoff retabulation shall be performed by the presiding election officer. The instant runoff retabulation shall be conducted in sequential rounds. A "continuing candidate" is defined as a candidate that has not been defeated in any previous round. Initially, no candidate is defeated and all candidates begin as continuing candidates.

   (4) In each round, every ballot shall count as a single vote for whichever continuing candidate the voter has ranked highest. The candidate with the fewest votes is defeated in the current round.

   (5) The instant runoff retabulation of subdivision (4), eliminating one candidate each round, shall be repeated until only two candidates remain. The remaining candidate then receiving the greatest number of votes is elected.

   (6) The [governing jurisdiction] may adopt additional regulations consistent with this subsection to implement these standards.

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Bottom-Two Runoff RCV (Condorcet-consistent):

All elections of [office] shall be by ballot, using a system of ranked-choice voting without a separate runoff election. The presiding election officer shall implement a ranked-choice voting protocol according to these guidelines:

   (1) The ballot shall give voters the option of ranking candidates in order of preference. Lower ordinal preference shall be considered higher rank and the candidate marked as first preference is considered ranked highest. Equal ranking of candidates shall not be allowed. Any candidate not marked with a preference shall be considered as ranked lower than every candidate marked with a preference.

   (2) If a candidate receives a majority (over 50 percent) of first preferences, that candidate is elected.

   (3) If no candidate receives a majority of first preferences, an instant runoff retabulation shall be performed by the presiding election officer. The instant runoff retabulation shall be conducted in sequential rounds. A "continuing candidate" is defined as a candidate that has not been defeated in any previous round. Initially, no candidate is defeated and all candidates begin as continuing candidates.

   (4) In each round, every ballot shall count as a single vote for whichever continuing candidate the voter has ranked highest. The two candidates with the fewest votes in a round, herein denoted as "A" and "B", shall contend in a runoff in which the candidate, A or B, with lesser voter support shall be defeated in the current round. If the number of ballots ranking A higher than B exceeds the number of ballots ranking B higher than A, then B has lesser voter support, B is defeated, and A continues to the following round. Likewise, if the number of ballots ranking B higher than A exceeds the number of ballots ranking A higher than B, then A has lesser voter support, A is defeated, and B continues to the following round. In the case that the aforementioned measures of voter support of A and B are tied, then the candidate with the fewest votes is defeated in the current round.

   (5) The instant runoff retabulation of subdivision (4), eliminating one candidate each round, shall be repeated until only two candidates remain. The remaining candidate then receiving the greatest number of votes is elected.

   (6) The [governing jurisdiction] may adopt additional regulations consistent with this subsection to implement these standards.

"Straight-ahead Condorcet" RCV (version 1):

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All elections of [office] shall be by ballot, using a system of ranked-choice voting without a separate runoff election. The presiding election officer shall implement a ranked-choice voting protocol according to these guidelines:

  (1) The ballot shall give voters the option of ranking candidates in order of preference. Lower ordinal preference shall be considered higher rank and the candidate marked as first preference is considered ranked highest. Equal ranking of candidates shall be allowed. Any candidate not marked with a preference shall be considered as ranked lower than every candidate marked with a preference.

  (2) If a candidate receives a majority (over 50 percent) of first preferences, that candidate is elected.

  (3) If no candidate receives a majority of first preferences, a Condorcet-consistent retabulation shall be performed by the presiding election officer. The candidate, who is the Condorcet winner, is elected if the rankings on all of the ballots indicate that this one candidate defeats, with a simple majority of voter preferences, every other candidate when compared in turn with each other individual candidate. A selected candidate defeats another candidate by a simple majority when the number of ballots marked ranking the selected candidate higher than the other candidate exceeds the number of ballots marked to the contrary.

  (4) If no Condorcet winner exists in subdivision (3), then the candidate having the plurality of first preferences is elected.

  (5) The [governing jurisdiction] may adopt additional regulations consistent with this subsection to implement these standards.

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"Straight-ahead Condorcet" RCV (version 2):

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All elections of [office] shall be by ballot, using a system of ranked-choice voting without a separate runoff election. The presiding election officer shall implement a ranked-choice voting protocol according to these guidelines:

   (1) The ballot shall give voters the option of ranking candidates in order of preference. Lower ordinal preference shall be considered higher rank and the candidate marked as first preference is considered ranked highest. Equal ranking of candidates shall be allowed. Any candidate not marked with a preference shall be considered as ranked lower than every candidate marked with a preference.

   (2) If a candidate receives a majority (over 50 percent) of first preferences, that candidate is elected.

   (3) If no candidate receives a majority of first preferences, a Condorcet-consistent retabulation shall be performed by the presiding election officer. The retabulation shall examine every possible pairing of candidates. Given N as the number of candidates, then the number of possible pairings of candidates is N(N-1)/2. In each pair, if the number of ballots marked ranking a selected candidate over the other candidate exceeds the number of ballots marked to the contrary, then the other candidate is declared defeated. After all candidate pairings are examined, the candidate who remains not declared defeated is the Condorcet winner and is elected.

   (4) If no Condorcet winner exists in subdivision (3), then the candidate having the plurality of first preferences is elected.

   (5) The [governing jurisdiction] may adopt additional regulations consistent with this subsection to implement these standards.

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"Straight-ahead Condorcet" RCV (version 3):

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All elections of [office] shall be by ballot, using a system of ranked-choice voting without a separate runoff election. The presiding election officer shall implement a ranked-choice voting protocol according to these guidelines:

  (1) The ballot shall give voters the option of ranking candidates in order of preference. Lower ordinal preference shall be considered higher rank and the candidate marked as first preference is considered ranked highest. Equal ranking of candidates shall be allowed. Any candidate not marked with a preference shall be considered as ranked lower than every candidate marked with a preference.

  (2) If a candidate receives a majority (over 50 percent) of first preferences, that candidate is elected.

  (3) If no candidate receives a majority of first preferences, a Condorcet-consistent retabulation shall be performed by the presiding election officer. The retabulation shall examine every possible pairing of candidates. Given N as the number of candidates, then the number of possible pairings of candidates is $N(N-1)/2$. For every possible pairing of candidates, each candidate of the pair is selected in turn. In each pair, if the number of ballots marked ranking a selected candidate over the other candidate does not exceed the number of ballots marked to the contrary, then the selected candidate is declared defeated. After all candidate pairings are examined, the candidate who remains not declared defeated is the Condorcet winner and is elected.

  (4) If no Condorcet winner exists in subdivision (3), then the candidate having the plurality of first preferences is elected.

  (5) The [governing jurisdiction] may adopt additional regulations consistent with this subsection to implement these standards.

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