

RCV and STAR Voting Testimony

My name is Sass and I'm testifying against Senate Bill 791 and Senate Bill 343 and in favor of House Bill 3250 to establish STAR Voting as the default for Oregon. I'm running for US House in Texas and am an avid voting reformer and enthusiast. While I'm actively starting a campaign for Approval Voting in Austin, TX, I advocate for STAR Voting for Oregon.

<https://www.equal.vote/star-vs-rcv>

RCV only mildly mitigates the spoiler effect, still trending toward a two-party system over time. RCV would accomplish little to nothing in a jurisdiction that is already locked into a duopoly. STAR Voting eliminates the spoiler effect completely.

<https://rangevoting.org/Why2Part.html>

<https://www.rangevoting.org/IRVcs.html>

RCV only provides an illusion of choice. Here's the prime example: imagine your first-choice candidate is the last one eliminated. All of the other preference information you expressed on your ballot is thrown away. That information is not taken into account when deciding who wins. This tossing of voter preference information creates dramatically distorted results away from the center of public opinion. STAR Voting uses *all* of the voter preference data to determine the winner.

<https://www.rangevoting.org/IRVbadRemove.html>

<https://rangevoting.org/IEVS/Pictures.html>

Note: STAR is Range+top2-runoff on the page linked above.

RCV does not stand up to modern voting science that uses voter simulations in multi-dimensional political spaces that find the candidate closest to the center of public opinion to maximize voter satisfaction efficiency and minimize voter regret as measured using Bayesian statistics. STAR Voting tops the charts for these metrics.

<https://youtu.be/-4FXLQoLDBA>

<http://votesim.usa4r.org/spatial5dim/spatial5dim.html>

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

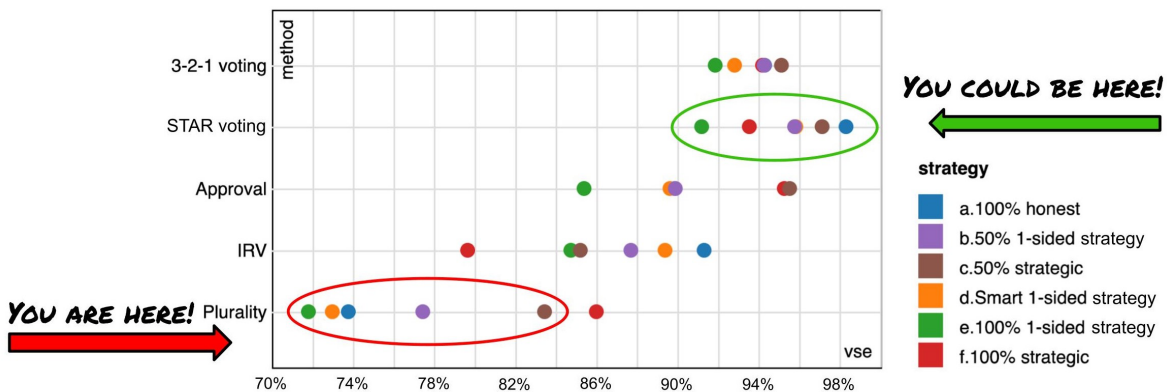
RCV and STAR Voting Testimony

<https://www.rangevoting.org/StratHonMix.html>

Note: STAR Voting is Range2Runoff on the page linked above.

RCV performs best for the *whole* when everyone votes honestly but best for *individuals* when they vote strategically. When voters vote strategically, the performance of RCV drops dramatically. The voter satisfaction efficiency of RCV under strategic voting is over 6 percentage points *worse* than our current First Past The Post voting system under strategic voting as seen by the red dots below:

Election Accuracy by Voting Method



A Voter Satisfaction Efficiency of 100% would mean an impossibly perfect method which would always elect the candidate who would make as many voters as possible as satisfied as possible with the winner.

Voter Satisfaction Efficiency by Dr. Jameson Quinn, PhD in Statistics, Harvard
<http://electology.github.io/vse-sim/VSE/> Captions added for clarity

<http://electionscience.github.io/vse-sim/vse.html>

RCV requires centralized tabulation to a single point of failure, which has major negative implications for election security and result validation. STAR Voting, in contrast, is precinct summable.

<https://www.starvoting.us/audit>

RCV is incredibly expensive to switch to from our current First Past The Post voting system, whereas STAR Voting costs comparatively nothing.

<https://www.starvoting.us/cost>

RCV and STAR Voting Testimony

RCV does not weigh votes evenly. This is in relation to a US Supreme Court ruling tying “one person, one vote” to vote weight, which is a mathematical concept in voting science that can be quantified. The instant runoff tabulation can unequally weigh votes in favor of different voters. This makes RCV arguably unconstitutional and it could be shot down for the entire country with one perfectly valid Supreme Court decision. This would be devastating for the voting reform movement as a whole as it would destroy public morale for voting reform. This would also put Oregon in a precarious place should it adopt RCV. STAR Voting does not have this problem.

https://www.starvoting.us/equal_vote

Because RCV is just a series of First Past The Post elections, its chances of creating near-tie nightmares are astronomically high.

<https://www.rangevoting.org/IRVamp.html>

In practice, the full ballot data is rarely if ever released in RCV races, creating transparency and trust issues for voters as well as preventing complete analysis from voting scientists. If full ballot data was released, that could lead to vote selling and vote coercion. For single-winner elections, this set of opposing problems is unique to RCV.

<https://www.rangevoting.org/IrvNonAdd.html>

Demonstrably false claims RCV advocates tend to make:

Eliminates spoiler effect

2nd choice is always counted

Your vote is never wasted

It's always safe to vote your conscience

Your vote will never backfire

RCV has failed to pass in Massachusetts; Glendale, AZ; Fort Collins, CO; and Duluth, Minnesota among others, with the primary reason cited by those who voted against it being

RCV and STAR Voting Testimony

complexity. STAR Voting is far simpler as it does not require a flowchart but instead can be tabulated using simple addition.

RCV has been repealed in recent history in Cary, NC; Aspen, CO; Pierce County, WA; and Sunnyvale, CA among others.

Response to Representative Rayfield:

There's a separation between the ballot and the tabulation. Ranked Choice Voting is an inaccurate marketing term. Ireland and Australia use a multi-winner voting method that uses ranked ballots called Single-Transferable Vote. The difference in tabulation is critical. The tabulation used in the particular version of RCV in SB 791 and SB 343, called single-winner instant runoff, is highly-error-prone and far more complex than it appears. STAR Voting doesn't require centralized tabulation or flowcharts to tally. Simple addition at the precinct level is all that's needed.

<https://www.rangevoting.org/AusIRV.html>

Response to Representative Golden:

Because RCV encourages strategic voting and dramatically splits and spoils votes (all of which is agreed on by all serious voting scientists), candidates will not be encouraged to campaign any differently than they did with First Past The Post. STAR Voting strongly mitigates all of these problems.

Response to Representative Campos:

If a candidate would be the top choice of more than half the voters but still lose under STAR Voting (which would be incredibly rare), it would be because that candidate is extremely polarizing while there are other, more balanced candidates with more consensus that more voters would be happy with and that would produce much higher voter satisfaction overall.

Response to Michelle Hicks:

Just because RCV is used doesn't mean it works well.

RCV and STAR Voting Testimony

Response to Pedro:

Just because RCV has been passed doesn't mean it works well. Australia and Ireland do not use the horrendous single-winner instant runoff version of RCV that SB 791 and SB 343 is referring to, and Australia is a de facto two-party system anyway. Exhausted ballots reduced over time because RCV encourages voters to vote strategically so *that* their vote will be included in the final round.

<https://www.rangevoting.org/AusIRV.html>

Response to Isabela:

RCV is neither simple nor comprehensive and does not eliminate the spoiler effect. "Getting more than half the vote" doesn't count when those voters are voting strategically or their vote is from their second least-liked candidate.

https://www.starvoting.us/farewell_to_pass_fail

Response to Barbara:

STAR Voting is simple enough that resource centers beyond the Equal Vote Coalition and local voting enthusiasts are largely unnecessary.

<https://www.starvoting.us/elections>

Response to Paul:

RCV does not encourage voter honesty. Majority voting is a myth in elections with 3 or more competitive candidates.

Response to Lizbeht:

RCV gets worse over time as voters shift from voting honestly to voting strategically. STAR Voting is not subject to this.

<https://www.starvoting.us/star>

RCV and STAR Voting Testimony

Response to Colin:

The benefits of RCV are only temporary and completely wear off over time as voters move to voting strategically. There is no evidence to suggest that STAR Voting hurts disenfranchised voter groups. The equality of voting systems is measurable. RCV has been repealed many times over the last century because it doesn't sustainably accomplish what it promises.

Response to Blair:

Nearly everything you stated is demonstrably false and not worth my time to review.

Summary:

STAR Voting is the ultimate culmination of modern voting science and is the true endgame for single-winner elections. Oregon would be foolish to adopt RCV and wise to adopt STAR Voting.