

## **LWVUS and LWVIL Positions related to Ranked Choice Voting**

### **VOTER REPRESENTATION/ELECTORAL SYSTEMS**

#### **LWVUS Position**

*Statement of Position on Voter Representation/Electoral Systems as adopted by concurrence by the 54th National Convention in June 2020:*

#### **IMPACT ON ISSUES A GUIDE TO PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS of the LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS 2022 - 2024**

LWVUS promotes an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive. We encourage electoral methods that provide the broadest voter representation possible and are expressive of voter choices.

Whether for single- or multiple-winner contests, the League supports electoral methods that:

- Encourage voter participation and voter engagement.
- Encourage those with minority opinions to participate, including under-represented communities.
- Are verifiable and auditable.
- Promote access to voting.
- Maximize effective votes/minimize wasted votes.
- Promote sincere voting over strategic voting.
- Implement alternatives to plurality voting.
- Are compatible with acceptable ballot-casting methods, including vote-by-mail.

The LWVUS believes in representative government. The League supports electoral systems that elect policy-making bodies—legislatures, councils, commissions, and boards — that proportionally reflect the people they represent. We support systems that inhibit political manipulation (e.g., gerrymandering).

The LWVUS supports enabling legislation to allow local jurisdictions to explore alternative electoral methods, as well as supporting state election laws allowing for more options at both the state and local levels. With the adoption of any electoral system, the League believes that education of the voting public is important and funding for startup and voter education should be available. We encourage a concerted voter education process.

## League History

The League has positions on a multitude of public policy issues decided by our elected representatives, however, until the adoption of this position it did not have a position on how we elect the representatives that make those public policy decisions. Over time, 14 Leagues have conducted studies and developed positions supporting alternatives to the plurality system. This position is a compilation of positions adopted by state and Leagues in Arizona, California, Colorado, , Florida, Massachusetts, Maine, Minnesota, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Vermont, and Washington, as well as Santa Monica, CA, and established LWVUS principles on representation.

This position does not support any particular election method but rather supports the LWV goals for “an open, governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive.” It allows for Leagues to use the position to evaluate or propose electoral options. This position provides us a clear but flexible base of principles to explore election method reforms and take action when appropriate for voters. Moving forward, LWVUS will work with state and local Leagues to interpret and use the position, but some basic guidelines for use include:

- The National League could use this position to support or oppose federal legislation.
- A State League can use it to support or oppose state legislation.
- **Local Leagues can use it to propose or evaluate an electoral system proposed in their community.**
- **Local Leagues can propose or support a suitable election method as a remedy to voting rights lawsuits filed when a protected group is under-represented by the current system.**

At the start of 2022, LWVUS launched a legislative office hours series to answer state/local Leagues’ questions about LWVUS positions. One common theme was Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV). LWVUS has not supported legislation at the federal level to institute RCV across the board. However, LWVUS encourages state and local leagues to use the Voter Representation/Electoral Systems section of Impact on Issues — specifically, the position line that recommends informing their advocacy around state and local legislation and ballot initiatives — with regard to the use of ranked-choice voting locally.

Best Practices Criteria for Applying  
Ranked Choice Voting Position to Legislation  
LWVIL Ranked Choice Voting Task Force 2022

LWVUS and LWVIL positions support ranked choice voting (RCV) as an alternative to plurality voting that can be applied in any election. The LWVIL recognizes that these recommended criteria represent best practice. As many of these criteria as possible should be included.

- Provides for voter education on using an RCV ballot.
- All voting equipment must be fully capable for RCV.
- Understandable ballots.\*
- Proportional RCV is used for multi-winner elections.
- Allows for qualified write-in candidates.

The LWVIL supports local Leagues' ability to advocate for such a system at the local level. The LWVIL supports the right of local governments to choose RCV for their local elections regardless of what system is used at the state level.

\*Sources for ballot design:

RCV Resource Center: <https://www.rcvresources.org/>

Center for Civic Design: <https://civicdesign.org/projects/rcv/>

The LWVIL Ranked Choice Voting Task Force included members from these Leagues:

Champaign

Evanston

Chicago

LaGrange Area

Deerfield/Lincolnshire

Wheaton

Downers Grove

Woodridge - Lisle