

**From:** <acilek@att.net>  
**To:** <CharterReview@cityofsacramento.org>  
**Date:** 12/3/2009 5:27 PM  
**Subject:** FW: Re: TO THE CHARTER COMMISSION

----- Forwarded Message: -----

From: "Mark Prestwich" <MPrestwich@cityofsacramento.org>  
To: <acilek@att.net>  
Subject: Re: TO THE CHARTER COMMISSION  
Date: Thu, 03 Dec 2009 16:17:23 +0000

Good morning Mr. Cilek,

As you likely know, Sacramento has a Charter Review Committee that is examining ranked choice voting. All correspondence received in their email account - CharterReview@cityofsacramento.org is transmitted to the Committee at their next scheduled meeting.

I appreciate having received your email but believe you likely intended it for the Committee. As such, please send a duplicate email to the Charter Committee and staff will arrange to transmit the material/information to the Committee.

Thanks!

Mark Prestwich  
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>>> 12/2/2009 10:14 PM >>>

Dear Mark,

Here is one of our anti-IRV OpEd's.

thanks,

Andy Cilek  
Minnesota Voters Alliance  
[www.MNVoters.org](http://www.MNVoters.org)

IRV is being billed as a "new" idea in elections which will save Democracy. Its advocates vociferously declare its ability to empower voters, guarantee majority winners, save money, solve the "spoiler" problem, increase debate, provide more choices and make elections more fair. So what is this "new" idea that will bring "fairness" to

our elections?

It's a preferential voting system called Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) that has been around for over 100 years. It comes in various forms and counting methods, but it is merely a vote-ranking system in which voters rank candidates in order of preference rather than picking just one.

The people pushing this idea are generally left of center activists, primarily FairVote, New America Foundation, the League of Women Voters, and others who are upset with the so-called "third party spoiler effect." The real objection is that minor candidates draw votes from their favorite candidates - such as Ralph Nader siphoning votes from Al Gore.

Third party candidates who enter a given field have every right to do so, and even though they may not be as popular, they actually can strengthen elections as more popular candidates have to work harder to earn voter support.

The "majority" issue is a major bugaboo for the pro-IRV crowd, but it's completely unfounded because IRV does not guarantee a majority. Exhausted ballots, those ballots where voters may have only ranked one candidate who was later eliminated, are not counted in the denominator in the final round. Thus, any claims of IRV guaranteeing a true majority winner are simply false and misleading.

In Aspen, Colo., council candidate Michael Behrendt got defeated by 75 of his own supporters who were doing their best to support him by ranking him first. Two independent analysts calculated that if Behrendt had had the foresight to ask 75 of his supporters to rank him second instead of first, he could have won.

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IRV advocates tout the fact that it will save money by reducing election costs because it eliminates primaries. In a recent Pierce County, Wash. IRV election, they saw election costs double using IRV, according to County Auditor Jan Shabro. Minnesota State Sen. John Marty has a bill in the Senate to make IRV the election format for all elections statewide, both primary and general, so this argument is a little disingenuous in the first place.

Proponents claim IRV will invigorate debate. Eliminating IRV actually shuts off debate. In the recent Minneapolis mayoral election, there were 11 candidates. R. T. Rybak, an IRV supporter and winner, failed to engage in even one debate.

Proponents contend that the Minnesota Supreme Court just ruled IRV constitutional. A careful reading of the opinion will reveal that it merely found that the requirements of facial claims were not met. Constitutionality was not decided one way or another, which means future "as-applied" challenges — after an election — are still very much in play.

In oral arguments, sadly, Chief Justice Eric J. Magnuson displayed his lack of understanding of the issue by comparing IRV to buying ice cream: "If they don't have your first choice you get your second choice."

This analogy is completely misguided. First, if a choice isn't available, it's not on the menu. Secondly, the issue is not what choices are available, it's how your choice can be affected by the choices others make. A better analogy would be a process that allows other customers to choose your ice cream for you.

This is the essence of the main argument against IRV – your vote can be changed in its value and effect by the votes cast by others. Evidence presented to the court prompted Magnuson to admit “that (in IRV) a voter cannot be sure that his or her vote for a candidate will help, rather than hurt, that candidate.”

In a recent close race in Aspen, Colo., council candidate Michael Behrendt got defeated by 75 of his own supporters who were doing their best to support him by ranking him first. Two independent analysts calculated that if Behrendt had had the foresight to ask 75 of his supporters to rank him second in instead of first, he could have won.

Just as disturbing, some ballots in IRV can carry more weight than others depending on the makeup of the candidate field. For example, in the Minneapolis 11th ward council race earlier this month, there were three candidates; two democrats and one republican, identified as such on the ballot. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that some voters may end up with the short end of the stick in such an election.

Examples like this are what prompted the 1915 Minnesota Supreme Court, *Brown vs. Smallwood*, to state: "We do right in upholding the right of a citizen to cast a vote for the candidate of his choice unimpaired by second and additional choice votes cast by others." IRV violates this fundamental franchise right.

This battle is far from over. The Minnesota Voters Alliance is planning to file an “as applied” constitutional challenge once the Minneapolis results are in. It should also be noted here that IRV was passed, by a slim margin, in St. Paul and the IRV folks were fined \$5,000 for stating false claims of supporters on their mailers. However, the election results were allowed to stand.

Also, voters in several cities, including Aspen, Colo. and Pierce County, Wash. recently threw out IRV after using it in only one election. It has been a disaster in every city that has used it. Voters in every city should fully investigate IRV and not simply accept the word of self-interested activist groups and politicians. We believe that once IRV is fully understood, the people and the courts will ultimately reject it.

Andy Cilek is the executive director of the Minnesota Voters Alliance. For more information visit [www.MNVoters.org](http://www.MNVoters.org).

## CharterReview - Public Contact

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**From:** <tim.t.lindsey@gmail.com>  
**To:** <CharterReview@cityofsacramento.org>  
**Date:** 12/9/2009 1:40 PM  
**Subject:** Public Contact

### Public Contact

Date	<b>December 9, 2009</b>
Contact Name	
Phone Number	
Constituent E-mail	<a href="mailto:tim.t.lindsey@gmail.com">tim.t.lindsey@gmail.com</a>
Message	<p> <b>A response to teh recent guest editorial in the paper: &gt;Sacramento currently uses a &gt;two-round runoff system to elect its mayor and City Council, with the &gt;first election in June and a runoff election in November, if no &gt;candidate wins a majority of votes in June. The clincher here is that &gt;City Council races almost never go to a runoff candidates &gt;routinely sew up their victories during the first election in June. &gt; &gt;Voter turnout for the June &gt;election, however, is roughly half of what it is in November. This means &gt;that very few Sacramentans are actually participating in the decisive &gt;elections that determine who will represent them. The claim is often made that IRV will increase turnout. Apparently not. Few people turn out for those elections in June because few people are sufficiently exercised about them. Exactly what that means is not clear, but when voters care, they turn out. Two-round runoff has better results than IRV, that's pretty clear; IRV looks good in theory, it would seem that it would just come up with the same result as two-round runoff, but in actual practice, IRV produces, in nonpartisan elections, the same results as Plurality, almost always. (The IRV promoters want us to think in terms of partisan elections, where there is clear labelling of candidates, such that if you prefer one who is eliminated, it can be predicted to whom your vote would then be transferred. That doesn't happen, apparently, in nonpartisan elections, to enough of a degree to matter.) But top-two runoff results in a "comeback election," where the top vote-getter in the first round loses to the top vote-getter in the second. What happened? Well, there are several factors at work. Different voters turned out in the second election, possibly voters who didn't think their favorite could win in the primary. Results are not necessarily improved by higher turnout. Holding a local election with the major election in November will increase turnout, but of people who have only weak preferences -- or practically none -- in the local elections. That causes what's called "donkey voting" in Australia, where actual ballot position seriously matters. Adding in a lot of votes that represent no particular preference does not improve satisfaction with the results! And if people are seriously dissatisfied with those June results, why don't they turn out then? I'll</b> </p>

tell you why. Because they don't need to, they are sufficiently satisfied, and if they turned out, the results would be the same. So they don't bother, except when it **\*does\*** matter to them. You want better representation, you don't use a single-winner system anyway. I should see what is done in Sacramento. >Races for mayor are a different story. These races went to runoff >elections in 2008 and 2000. While these runoffs are important to ensure >that the winner is supported by a majority of voters, conducting two >separate elections is an expensive proposition for both taxpayers and >candidates. There is no way to "ensure a majority" with a single ballot. The IRV supporters here will allow us to imagine that IRV does this, but in actual practice, true majorities are rare with IRV elections that go into elimination rounds. It's a pretend majority, it means exactly this: Of the voters who voted for A or B, a majority voted for A. Never mind that only, say, 40% of those who voted in the election, actually voted for A or B. What can be done with a better ballot system is to avoid some runoffs, but there is a much cheaper, simpler, and better system for doing that, Bucklin voting, also called American Preferential Voting, to distinguish it from the English system we now call IRV. Bucklin does find true majorities for winners, where IRV fails, because Bucklin counts all the votes. IRV only counts some of them, and for this reason, is criticized in Robert's Rules of Order, it's due to the elimination of a possible compromise candidate simply because this candidate doesn't get enough votes in the earlier rounds of counting. >The taxpayers wind up footing the bill for two separate elections and >candidates have to raise money for what are essentially two separate >campaigns. The considerable expense of mounting two campaigns and >the attendant fundraising that goes with it might be barriers for >many community-minded individuals who would otherwise be inclined to >serve their city. Democracy costs money. >Although the elections for City Council and mayor present two different >problems low voter turnout for the former and a hefty >price tag for the latter they share a common solution: "instant >runoff voting." An absolutely horrible solution. There are much better ways to approach the situation, but, remember, no voting system can magically manufacture a majority, unless a majority of voters decide to actually vote for a candidate. >If Sacramento switched to instant runoff voting, it could combine two rounds of elections into >one, allowing the City Council to be elected at the high-turnout >November election and eliminating one unnecessary and expensive election >for mayor. It's much easier, and the **\*same outcomes\*** can be gained, by eliminating the majority requirement. This is the bait-and-switch of IRV proponents. They absolutely won't tell you that in nonpartisan elections, IRV **\*is\*** plurality, almost exactly. All that extra vote-counting, and IRV is expensive to count, does **\*nothing\***. You get the same results with plurality. But you **\*can\*** reduce the number of runoff elections by counting all the votes. Simply doing that -- allowing voters to vote for more than one -- is called "Approval voting," and it's much better than IRV, and costs absolutely nothing. Only a few voters will do it, but this is enough to create a majority in some elections that wouldn't be there otherwise. Bucklin is even better: this is Approval voting, but in stages, you vote a ranked ballot (same ballot as normally used here with IRV), and if no candidate gains a majority, votes from the next rank are added in. While some voters, then, have voted for more than one candidate, this doesn't mean that their votes have extra power, these are really alternative votes, because only one of them ultimately counts to determine a winner. The major difference with IRV is that all the votes are counted simultaneously, so that the most-approved candidate wins. >Here's how instant runoff voting works: Instead of voting for just one >candidate,

voters rank candidates on the ballot in order of preference, >marking their first choice, second choice, third choice, and so on. This, then, requires voters be able to intelligently rank more than one candidate. What ends up happening is probably that votes are by name recognition and some vague sense of image, which is why the relative vote for the top two doesn't change as the additional rounds proceed. That's why the result is the same as plurality. In partisan elections, a minority party voter does have a normally fairly consistent view of the top two candidates. So IRV can make a difference there, but it has other, very serious problems. If one insists on giving up the majority requirement, there are much better methods to use. >A candidate who wins a majority of first-choice rankings is elected. If, >however, no candidate receives an initial majority, the candidate with >the fewest first-choice rankings is eliminated. That candidate's >supporters have their votes count for their second choice. The votes are >counted again to see if any candidate has a majority. If not, the >process repeats until a candidate emerges with majority support. See! "Majority support." This is utterly deceptive. It's an artificial majority, one which is not based on the standard meaning of "majority" in elections. Take the counting process of eliminating the lowest-vote candidate at each round one step further. Presto! Unanimous election! When candidates were eliminated, voters who had not ranked any candidates beyond that one were eliminated. IRV finds a majority by eliminating, not only candidates, but voters. Bucklin does not do that. In partisan elections, Bucklin will also see the kind of consistent vote patterns that can shift results, but it doesn't eliminate a compromise candidate, like IRV will. It just proceeds through the ranks, seeking a \*true\* majority. Bucklin, like IRV, was sold as a runoff eliminator. That was an error, and one of the reasons Bucklin was dropped may have been the failure of that expectation. However, Bucklin as a primary and runoff method would be excellent, because it's better than IRV, much better, at finding a majority. The only way to get guaranteed majorities with IRV is to coerce voters. That's how they do it in Australia: you \*must\* vote for all but one candidate, at some rank. Or your ballot is discarded. (In some provinces in Australia, they have gone to Optional Preferential Voting, and they had to rewrite the rules to allow election without an "absolute majority." And, in fact, they find, where there is OPV, majority failure becomes common, lots of voters don't bother to add lower ranks.) >San Francisco has been using >instant runoff voting successfully since 2004 and has saved millions of >dollars by eliminating its low-turnout runoff elections. They say so. Saved millions in runoffs and cost millions in far more complex counting of votes as well as increased voter error, apparently. > Furthermore, in >2008, San Franciscans elected the most diverse Board of Supervisors in the city's history. >Instant runoff voting may well have contributed to that diversity by >encouraging more candidates to seek office, increasing voter turnout >and eliminating the spoiler >dynamic from district elections. Sacramento >enjoys a diversity not unlike >San Francisco's and might >similarly benefit from using instant runoff voting. Generally, minority voters in San Francisco disliked IRV, it seems from the SFSU Report. >A number of jurisdictions using instant runoff voting have found that >this voting method improves the tenor of campaigns and, in some >instances, has actually resulted in candidates cooperating on the >campaign trail. Unlike a head-to-head runoff election, where mudslinging >can be very effective, instant runoff voting presents candidates and >voters with an entirely different situation. San Francisco has been examined from this perspective and there is no sign of reduced election "mudslinging." The fact is that there are generally two major candidates

in any election and IRV doesn't change that, and these candidates do *\*not\** campaign together, since the election is going to come down to one or the other of them, almost certainly. >Candidates who might need the support and second-preference votes > from their opponents' supporters in order to win have an incentive >to conduct more civil campaigns. In San Francisco > and in Minneapolis, > which just conducted its first >instant runoff election candidates have campaigned together and >have sponsored joint appearances and fundraising events. Sure. No-hope candidates, for the most part, or a no-hope candidate cooperating with a possible winner. In order to decide if better voting systems are needed in San Francisco, one would need to look at actual election results and actual problems. Instead, what I see here is a national agenda being push on a locality, advocating an election system for national purposes, not because it will actually help that locality. There are far simpler reforms to address the legitimate problems, in any case, IRV is a very poor system, in the opinion of most voting systems experts. >By improving and lowering the cost of campaigns, instant runoff voting >has the potential to encourage more citizens to seek public office in >Sacramento. And where has this happened? What has been the lowered cost of campaigning? Any evidence for this? >This, in turn, could generate increased interest in city >governance, enhanced public dialogue about the critical issues facing >the city and better representation for all Sacramentans. Cures dandruff, too. >Instant runoff voting deserves the attention of voters, Charter Review >Committee members and city officials all of whom should be >interested in seeing a City Council that mirrors the population and is >elected using the most sensible and cost-effective method possible. Okay, if this is the criterion, it sure wouldn't be IRV. It would be Count All the Votes (Approval Voting), which would accomplish more than IRV at *\*no\** cost. Just allow multiple approvals of candidates on the ballot. All voting machines can handle that already. And if you want better, there is Bucklin, which is simply phased Approval. Ranked ballot, like IRV. But more fair. They don't tell you about the jurisdictions that have tried IRV and have dropped it. Top Two Runoff has problems, but it's the most advanced reformed voting system in common use, and is much better than IRV, if you care about results. IRV *\*might\** cost less, but only at the price of giving up majority results. And it's clear that IRV does produce the same results as Plurality in nonpartisan elections, but that top-two runoff actually gives an underdog candidate a real chance to get elected. Basically, with IRV, the underdog has to move all the way up from number three to number one in one poll. Very hard to do. With top two runoff, there is an intermediate step, moving up to number two, which gets the candidate into the runoff and which causes the candidacy to be taken seriously. For whatever reasons, one election out of three, nonpartisan, the runner-up in the first round wins the second. Doesn't happen with IRV. That second campaign, which the IRV advocate dismisses as "expensive," was necessary. Further, unless it has specifically outlawed it, the Sacramento runoff can have write-in votes, a very desirable feature, and one which can be truly powerful in cases of a problem result in the first round. Don't allow a phony election reform to damage the best common voting system, one which actually replaced IRV in the past.

This message originated at [www.cityofsacramento.org/charter/contact.html](http://www.cityofsacramento.org/charter/contact.html)

## CharterReview - Public Contact

**From:** <tim.t.lindsey@gmail.com>  
**To:** <CharterReview@cityofsacramento.org>  
**Date:** 12/9/2009 1:43 PM  
**Subject:** Public Contact

## Public Contact

Date	December 9, 2009
Contact Name	
Phone Number	
Constituent E-mail	<a href="mailto:tim.t.lindsey@gmail.com">tim.t.lindsey@gmail.com</a>
Message	<p>The things IRV activists don't tell you would fill volumes. Sacramento. Okay, primary elections for city council and for mayor are indeed held in June. So are party primaries. It's not a "special election," and state propositions are considered at the same time. See the results for this election in 2008.</p> <p><a href="http://www.elections.saccounty.net/coswcm/groups/public/@wcm/@pub/@vre/@inter/documents/webcontent/sac_015363.pdf">http://www.elections.saccounty.net/coswcm/groups/public/@wcm/@pub/@vre/@inter/documents/webcontent/sac_015363.pdf</a></p> <p>Board of Supervisors elections are by district. Term of office is four years, but it appears that elections are staggered to reduce turnover. In 2008, there were District 3 and District 4 supervisors elected. One result was 55.41%/44.30%/0.49% write-in. There were 6,959 undervotes compared to 21,341 for the winner, and there were 105 overvotes. The other election had only one candidate on the ballot, the result was 97.76%/2.24% write-in, with 11,393 undervotes compared to 24,055 for the winner, and there were 7 overvotes. The mayoral election, however, was heavily contested. There were seven candidates plus write-ins. Large numbers of candidates tends to equal majority failure. Sure enough, Kevin Johnson was the leader, with 32,160 (46.08%). Following not far behind was Heather Fargo, with 27,472 (39.36%). That's a fairly stiff lead, unlikely that with IRV, Heather would overcome it. I don't have data for runoff elections weighted by lead or showing what percentage of elections are "comebacks" based on the lead; it's rather obvious that the closer the position in the primary, the more likely a comeback. If it's close enough, a "comeback" might even happen with IRV. This was a nonpartisan election; the examples of "comebacks" that IRV activists want you to look at are all, as far as I've seen, from partisan elections. In third place was Leonard Padilla, with 4,231 (6.06%). The other three candidates split 5,652 votes (8.49%), and there were 280 (0.40%) write-ins, with 49 overvotes, and 1355 undervotes. What happened in November? I'll look, below, after checking on the City Council elections, since I have the page open. District 2, only one candidate, 2,783 (93.93%), with write-in 180, 6.07%. Undervotes huge: 1,053, with 1 overvote. District 4, only one candidate, 8,991 (97.11%), with write-in 268, 2.89%. Undervotes 3,485, 2 overvotes. District 6, only one candidate, 5,654 (97.31%), with write-in 156, 2.69%. Undervotes 2,267, 1 overvote. District 8, only one candidate, 4,139 (97.5%), with write-in 106, 2.5%. Undervotes 996, 1 overvote. Does the IRV activist mention that these elections with supposedly low "turnout" were of candidates unopposed except for write-ins? The propaganda implies that the low vote turnout in these primary elections is a problem. It sure doesn't look like one to me! IRV would make absolutely no difference in these elections, it would be a complete waste of ballot space. The only improved method that could be used in this situation without costing more than it would be worth is Count All the Votes. If somehow more candidacies developed, it would be simple to bump that up to Bucklin, say, or Range. IRV for the City Council would be a bicycle for fish. In November, there was a runoff for Mayor, of course. For Kevin Johnson, 92,288 (57.40%), for Heather Fargo, 67,348 (41.89%), with 1,154 (0.72%) write-in, 60 overvotes, and 8,638 undervotes. That was a big election, that would bring out many people who didn't give a fig about city elections, but sure knew whom they wanted for President.... Total turnout in the primary for mayor: 69,797 (not counting over and undervotes). Total turnout in the runoff: 160,790. If all the undervotes represented dissatisfied voters, not willing to vote for either of the top two, the result would not flip. IRV activists are apparently not willing to look at real election results. In 2008, the system worked perfectly well. Now, was the primary in June worth the cost? Well, for starters, there really wasn't much *extra* cost. If Heather Fargo spent a lot of money on her campaign, the results don't show it. But I'd guess she didn't. She was really too far behind. Of votes for the top two in June, it was Johnson with 53.94%. Of votes for the top two in November, it was Johnson with 57.8%. Johnson pulled further ahead. Johnson *might* have gained a majority in the primary had it been IRV. Would this have been better than holding a runoff? How? Remember, the IRV activists will argue that low turnout in a runoff (or in a primary, whichever system they are attacking) is Bad. Here, the final decision, the important one, is made by the most voters, by far. As to Fargo, I have some suspicion that her supporters turned out heavily in the primary, more than the supporters of Johnson did, hoping for a chance. Otherwise it is suspicious that Heather gained so few percentage points in the runoff. The "new voters" voted preferentially for Johnson, by higher than the overall relative standings. (Gains in votes: Johnson, 60,128, Fargo, 39,876. Of the sum of these, that's 60%/40%.) Note, Sacramento obviously allows write-ins in the runoff election. That's California law, by default. In a little-noticed decision in 2004, I think it was, the last San Francisco election to be held using top-two runoff, the California Supreme Court upheld San Francisco's action to prohibit write-in votes in the runoff elections there, a prohibition which only affected that one election and which *might* have been designed to prevent a successful write-in candidacy. The candidate was motivated to go up to the State Supreme Court, and voting systems activists have been quite asleep at the switch. The SC decided that, while the California constitution requires write-ins to be allowed in all elections, the runoff wasn't a separate "election," and write-ins therefore were allowed because they were allowed in the primary. This was a head-in-the-sand decision, neglecting standard deliberative process completely, pretty bad. And nobody noticed. So, now, in California, cities can prohibit write-ins in runoff elections, which eliminates the possibility of fixing problems in a primary. As far as I know, however, no other city has done this except for San Francisco. Which certainly accomplished the same damage and more by implementing IRV, which really does blow the chances of underdogs out of the water. In theory, top-two runoff with write-ins allowed in the runoff, would be quite likely to elect the Condorcet winner *if*</p>

**the preference strength for that candidate was reasonably strong, once the results were in from the first round that might have eliminated that candidate. This, however, could cause a spoiler effect in the runoff if it were bad strategy. Easily fixed with Bucklin, best, or Approval would be less satisfactory, but still an improvement.**

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## Public Contact

Date	December 9, 2009
Contact Name	
Phone Number	
Constituent E-mail	<a href="mailto:tim.t.lindsey@gmail.com">tim.t.lindsey@gmail.com</a>
Message	<p><b>More Sacramento data: 2006 June Direct Primary, City Council (half). This is an important election day, for example the State gubernatorial primary is on the ballot. It's not like anything would be saved by eliminating the primary. The IRV supporters want us to think that some special election could be eliminated. Not. There would still be polling on that day. Instead, what would they do? I didn't see a specific proposal, but it looked like they would have a single IRV election in November. IRV is far more expensive to count, once the cost of audits, fixing errors, and the like is figured in. IRV creates many opportunities for a decision to be close that could affect the entire remainder of the counting process. It's really a bizarre method, it *sounds good* to people who have not studied voting systems.... It *seems* easy to understand for some. And, in fact, that "easy understanding" is often quite erroneous. People who should know better, like the committee that wrote the voter information pamphlet that was used to "explain" IRV to the voters there, can get it wrong. IRV doesn't find majorities, frequently, so the oft-repeated claim that it finds them is highly misleading. It *can*. Sometimes. Usually not, that is, if there is no majority in the first round, *usually* there isn't after all the other rounds are completed. City Council District 1: One candidate, 7,803 (98.51%), write-in 118, (1.49%), overvotes 0, undervotes 3,223. City Council District 3: 2 candidates, Winner, 7,958 (74.58%), runner-up 2,697 (25.28%), write-in 15 (0.14%), overvotes 7, undervotes 1,374. City Council District 5: Winner, 4,527 (76.41%), runner-up 1,382 (23.32%), write-in 16 (0.27%), overvotes 7, undervotes 1,052. City Council District 7: One candidate, 7,175 (98.36%), write-in 120 (1.64%), overvotes 0, undervotes 2,560. Notice that if all the overvotes, undervotes, write-ins, and losing candidates combined in complete unity, the same winner remains. Absolutely, this place doesn't need IRV, and it has a pretty good system that could be improved with some minor tweaks. IRV would, in fact, be a giant step backwards, with no gain for the additional expense and, in fact, a loss. No runoffs in 2006. 2004 March Direct Primary. Mayor. Wow. Heather Fargo won with 59.8%. Runner-up, Ross Wells. 20.9%. Heather was apparently an incumbent in 2008, so that was a real loss, she was apparently relatively unpopular. It would also appear that she had no strong opponent in 2004. City Council Districts were all won with substantial margins. In District 8, the winner supposedly got 100%. Ah. They were not counting the write-ins. Often done. The complete results aren't on-line as far as I could see.... but it's highly unlikely that write-ins would have resulted in majority failure. They don't count over and undervotes. Robert's Rules might. (Overvotes, definitely would become part of the basis for a majority, but undervotes with the standard blank ballot with a Robert's Rules election would be "scrap paper," but what about a ballot with many offices and questions at once? Probably an abstention, still. If the voter wishes to object to all the candidates, a write-in does it. And should be counted as part of the basis. So the percentage numbers in the report at <a href="http://www.elections.sacounty.net/coswcm/groups/public/@wcm/@pub/@vrc/@inter/documents/webcontent/sac_004993.pdf">http://www.elections.sacounty.net/coswcm/groups/public/@wcm/@pub/@vrc/@inter/documents/webcontent/sac_004993.pdf</a> are incorrect. 2002 March Direct Primary City Council elections were all contested. Closest one is reported as 57.9% to 42.1%. No runoffs. 2000 March Direct Primary. Heavily contested election for Mayor: Heather Fargo 21.8% Rob Kearth 20.2% Robbie Waters 18.2% Joe Genshlea 14.7% Julie Padilla 11.7% Steve Cohn 9.1% 4 others total 4.3% I've never seen such a broad distribution of votes before. This is an election where I'd not care to predict the outcome of a runoff, nor of IRV. 3-way ties, which this is, pretty close, are quite quirky in IRV, any one of the top three could win. *even if one of them was the second choice of everyone,* if that person happened to be Robbie Waters. (This is a peculiarity of IRV, and it's rare because three-way close races are rare.) Easily, Waters could have been the compromise winner, it's impossible to tell from these votes, and it also could be very difficult to tell from IRV, unless one can get access to direct ballot data. Range would give some good information, as would Bucklin. City Council District 2 had a real contested election, with four candidates on the ballot. Sheedy had 47.5%, Farrel had 27.2%. De Luz, 20.2%, and Johnson (a different Johnson) 5.1%. Still, Sheedy is so far in front that any shift in the runoff would seem unlikely. District 4 was contested, but the winner had 90%. District 6 was uncontested, and District 8 had five candidates, but the winner still got 62.2%, the runner-up had 27.4%. So, big excitement in Sacramento in November, two runoff elections! General Election 2000. Anyone remember that year? I was in California at the time.... Mayor: Heather Fargo, 54.1%, Rob Kerth, 45.9%. Not terribly exciting. District 2: Sheedy, 52.7%, Farrell, 47.3%. District 2 was almost a comeback, Farrell had not a whole lot more than half of the Sheedy votes in the primary, for Farrell to have overcome that through vote transfers in IRV would be unheard of. Doesn't happen. Period. Not in nonpartisan elections. But in real runoffs, an underdog candidate who comes in second does have a real chance in the runoff, is suddenly more credible. Only a little more and Farrell would have won. Had this been an IRV election, Sheedy has 47.5% and gains percentage from every direct vote transfer, and also from every ballot exhaustion, where a voter has voted only for eliminated candidates. Sheedy would almost certainly have cleared the phony IRV "majority." In this case, the result didn't change. In other studies, the rate of comeback elections seems to be about one in three. How much Farrell pulled ahead shows how it could work. Those brainwashed by IRV propaganda might think that Farrell was a victim of vote-splitting in the first round. Not terribly likely. In a head-to-head context in an election with relatively high turnout, Farrell still lost. Rather, the most likely explanation for the votes is that Farrell wasn't terribly well-known in March, wasn't considered to have much of a chance to win, and certainly would not have been able to come up so far against Sheedy. It's possible to make a rough prediction of what votes Farrel would have gotten with IRV, though that rests on assumptions about general voting behavior as seen in IRV elections, there can be individual exceptions.</b></p>
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