



PRESERVE DEMOCRACY

Presentation for Alaska House State Affairs Committee in Support of H.B. 1
March 28, 2023

Kelly Tshibaka
Kelly@PreserveDemocracy.com

THREAT

Ranked-Choice Voting is an emerging threat to our election system. It causes:

VOTER SUPPRESSION

INCREASED NEGATIVITY AND COSTS IN CAMPAIGNS

DISTRUST IN THE ELECTION SYSTEM

RISK TO THE DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMACY OF ELECTION OUTCOMES

INCREASED VULNERABILITY TO DARK MONEY

FEWER CANDIDATE CHOICES

MORE EXTREME CANDIDATES BEING ELECTED

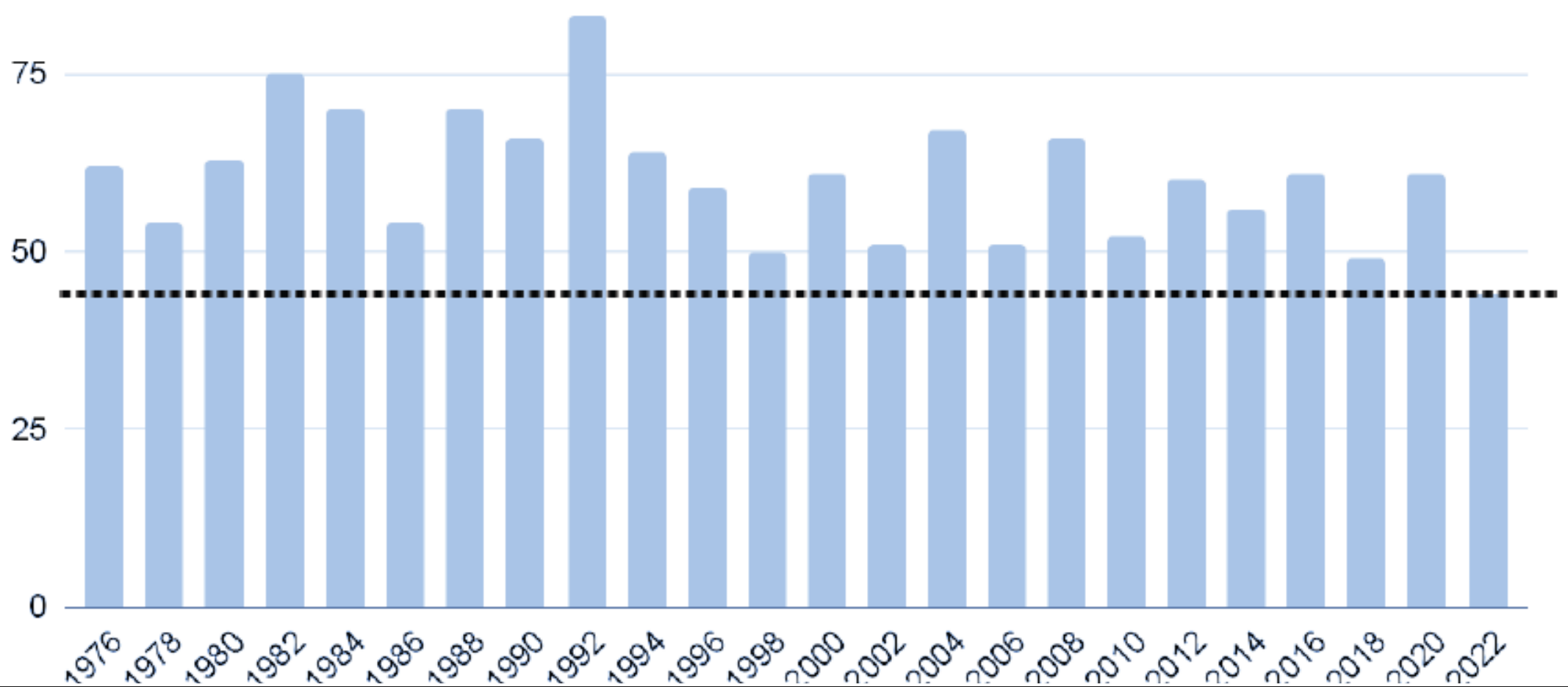


ALASKA'S RECORD LOW VOTER TURNOUT

Lowest voter turnout in state history occurred the year Alaska introduced Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV).

Turnout was 44.4%, down from 49.8% in 2018 and 56.08% in 2014. That is 18,000 less voters than in 2018 and 2014.

Even fewer voters participated in the US Senate and House races. *Only 40% voted in the federal races—a 10% drop from 2018.*



Alaska Voter Turnout Rate by Year



ACLU TESTIMONY – RANKED CHOICE VOTING

“Ranked choice ballots have suppressed voter turnout... (RCV) has resulted in decreased turnouts up to 8% in non-presidential elections. RCV exacerbates economic and racial disparities in voting. Voting errors and spoiled ballots occur far more often. In Minneapolis, for example, nearly 10% of ranked choice ballots were not counted, most of these in low-income communities of color.”

--Testimony of Vignesh Ganapathy
Kansas Policy Director



NEW YORK POST

“Ranked choice voting is not beneficial to minorities. It’s voter suppression. I hope that the courts see that ranked choice voting is not right for democracy.”

- Hazel Dukes

President of the NY chapter of the NAACP, 7/1/21

**NEW YORK
Amsterdam News**

“Let there be no doubt we are seeing a renewed systematic and racist effort to restrict the ability of Black voters to exercise the right for which so many have died... I am deeply concerned that the imposition of Ranked Choice Voting...will disproportionately discourage Black and Latino voters from full participation. Voter suppression comes in many forms.”

- Hazel Dukes

President of the NY chapter of the NAACP, 5/13/21

RANKED-CHOICE VOTING CREATES...



INCREASED NEGATIVITY and COSTS



Maine's US Senate race is the most negative one in the country

The race also "set records as the most expensive in Maine's history."

October 2, 2020

RANKED-CHOICE VOTING CREATES...



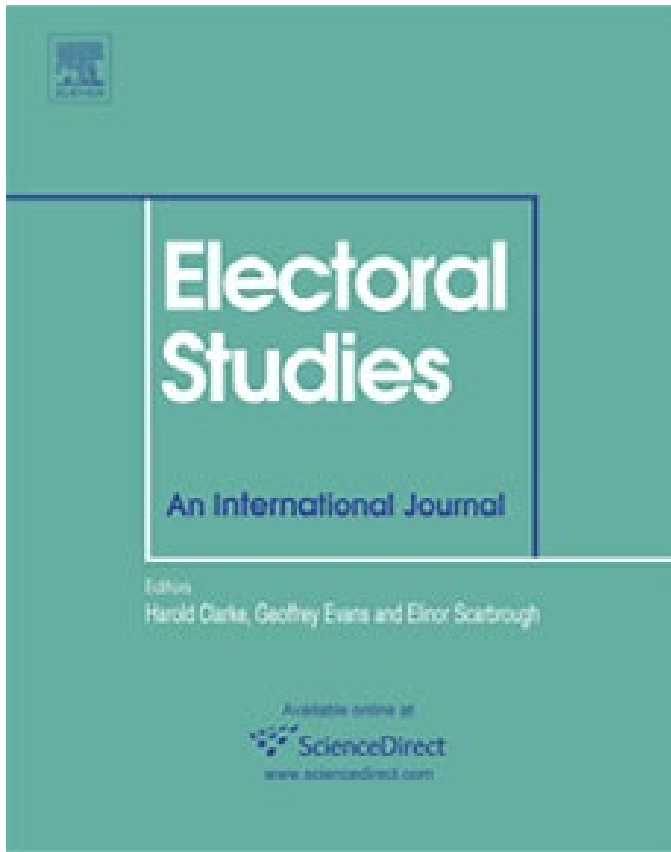
DISTRUST

San Francisco Chronicle

Alameda County admits tallying error in ranked-choice voting, flips one result and raises big questions
December 28, 2022

- The certified 3rd place candidate was declared the actual winner
- After the election was certified, the Registrar of Voters learned its RCV system was not configured properly by FairVote, *a special-interest funded organization that has advocated for the spread of RCV for decades*
- FairVote came into Alameda County, reprogrammed the RCV system, and the election results were re-run, producing a different outcome
- Led to a recount of every RCV race in the county
- “It really feeds into the distrust so many people have in our election system when this sort of thing happens.” –Jim Ross, *SF Chronicle*, 12/28/22

RANKED-CHOICE VOTING: BALLOTS TOSSED & WINNERS GET LESS THAN 50%



Nov. 18, 2014

MYTH Lower ranked candidates are redistributed until a candidate with *50% or more* of the vote wins.

FACT In 4 jurisdictions using Ranked-Choice Voting, none of the final winners received 46% of the total vote share because over 27% of the ballots originally cast were thrown out as the RCV rounds progressed.

THE STUDY CONCLUDED:

RCV increases the difficulty of the task facing voters. A substantial number of voters either cannot or choose not to rank multiple candidates. Even individuals who mark three distinct choices often face the prospect of exhaustion, so education alone will not fix the problem.

The possibility that exhaustion might tip the balance in the final round poses a serious risk to the democratic legitimacy of the method and the outcomes it produces.

RANKED-CHOICE VOTING CATERERS TO DARK MONEY

75

In 2022, 75 candidates ran for 3 state-wide offices in Alaska.

With Alaska's RCV-related open primary system, the burden was on each voter to research every candidate's background and platform to make an informed decision... an impossible task.

So, the candidates (incumbents) with the most money (*and dark money*) had the greatest advantage... and won in all 3 races.

RANKED-CHOICE VOTING LIMITS CHOICES

1

In 2020, 6 third-party candidates were on the general election ballot for federal offices in Alaska (not including Al Gross, candidate for US Senate, who ran as an Independent but was on the ballot as a Democrat).

In 2022, only 1 third-party candidate was able to make it through Alaska's new RCV-related open primary system to the general election for a federal office.

RCV significantly limited the ability of Independents, Libertarians, Alaska Independent Party, and other 3rd party candidates from making it to the general election.

RANKED-CHOICE VOTING ELIMINATES MODERATES

In Alaska's 2022 U.S. House race, Democrats forced out a moderate Independent candidate, Al Gross, who previously ran as the Democrat candidate for U.S. Senate in 2000. This left only one remaining Democrat in the final 4 general election, Mary Peltola, who held far more extreme political views than Al Gross.

Similarly, a moderate Alaska Native Republican dropped out of the final 4 in the U.S. House race after determining she had no path to victory to win the election. A less moderate candidate took the fourth spot on the ballot.

BI-PARTISAN OPPOSITION TO RANKED-CHOICE VOTING

Former U.S. Senator Mark Begich (D-AK) & Former Governor Sean Parnell (R-AK)



Ranked Choice Voting is a
“confusing new system” that
“encourages political
trickery...”

Alaskans shouldn’t have to
doubt that their votes count.”



San Francisco Chronicle

“I am concerned that [RCV] has often
led to voter confusion...The cure being
proposed [for low turnout] is far worse
than the disease. We do not believe
the Board should be experimenting
with San Francisco’s hard fought right
to vote. Primaries and runoff elections
have served our nation well for most
of its history.”

-- **Gavin Newsom, Governor of CA (D),**
on vetoing a bill that would allow RCV
statewide



STATES ARE BANNING RANKED-CHOICE VOTING



IDAHO may be next

ALASKANS WANT TO REPEAL RCV



53% OF ALASKANS WANT RCV REPEALED

Alaska Survey Research Poll by Ivan Moore
January 2023

- Poll of 1,397 registered Alaskan voters shortly after 2022 election
- “Everyone who follows me here on [Twitter] knows that I am a huge supporter of RCV, but these numbers show the reality. The original passage of RCV was by a very narrow margin and any idea that ‘once we have an RCV election, everyone will love it’ is NOT the case.” – Ivan Moore

The background of the image is a stylized American flag, with the stars and stripes visible. The flag is heavily textured with a network of black, cracked lines that resemble dried mud or shattered glass, creating a sense of decay and damage. The colors are muted, with the red appearing more like a dark, dusty red and the blue a dark, muted blue.

PASSING H.B.1 WILL PREVENT

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