League of Women Voters strongly support ranked-choice voting

Editor:
Greater diversity of candidates, more representative results, more positive policy-oriented campaigns, and ease of use are some advantages of Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV). These advantages are why the League of Women Voters of Alameda is working toward the day when voters in Alameda will adopt this voting method for city officeholders.

A 2016 study examined the effect of RCV on people of color and women running for elected office in the Bay Area. In comparing Bay Area cities that used RCV and those that did not, the study found that there was an increase in the election of women, people of color, and women of color with RCV. In contrast cities without RCV saw a decrease for the same period.

This increase in diversity of elected officials provides a better representation of the demographics of our cities and of the issues affecting diverse communities.

Another strong advantage is that voters hear more about positive policy goals, the sole reason people are elected to office. Under RCV, candidates do not benefit from attacking their opponents. With RCV, candidates are also competing to be voters' second or third choice. They begin to collaborate with their opponents and run more positive campaigns. This minimizes the toxic and polarizing campaigns that turn off voters.

Many critics of ranked-choice voting say it's too complicated, but a 2021 exit poll of voters in Utah found that 81 percent reported RCV "very or somewhat easy" to use. Further, 88 percent of RCV voters were satisfied with the method they used to cast their ballot, demonstrating both high understanding and satisfaction across the state.

Making democracy work is the guiding principle of the League of Women Voters nationally. Implementing RCV in Alameda is one step that we can do locally to strengthen democracy.

For further information or to get involved, contact the League at www.lwvalameda.org/ranked-choice-voting.html.

Karen Butter
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