

LWVA falls short of placing ranked choice voting on November ballot, but will keep trying

To the Editor:

The League of Women Voters believes that the right to vote is the foundation of democracy. We support electoral systems which encourage voter engagement, promote sincere voting over strategic voting, and require the winner to receive a majority of the votes cast. We support election by majority vote because the need to appeal to a wide spectrum of voters favors candidates whose positions are less extreme and who are inclined to work with other electees to craft compromises that are essential for good government and are more representative of the entire electorate.

The Alameda League embarked on an educational and signature gathering effort to place ranked choice voting on the November 2024 ballot because our current system in Alameda does not require that candidates receive a majority of votes to win. Ranked choice voting is a method of ensuring majority support by allowing voters to rank candidates in order of preference. If one candidate receives the majority of first choice votes, that candidate is elected. If not, the candidate who receives the fewest votes is dropped from the race. For these ballots, the voter's second choice is used and the votes are retabulated, continuing until a candidate receives a majority. Ranked choice voting saves the expense of conducting multiple elections; it is essentially an instant runoff.

Our effort was conducted solely by volunteers. We found widespread support across the city as we gathered thousands of verified signatures, and we are heartened that there is now a greater understanding of the voting method that will stand us in good stead when this reform is eventually placed before the voters of Alameda. However, we fell short on the volunteer hours to obtain enough signatures to qualify for the

November ballot. We will continue our efforts to educate voters. We continue to believe that Alameda voters should decide this issue, and the League will not give up. After all, look how long it took women to get the right to vote!

Ranked choice voting is a growing trend around the country. While no election system can ensure good governance, we believe that ranked choice voting can contribute towards that goal.

Join the effort by contacting the League of Women Voters of Alameda at lwvalameda.org.

Anna Crane, President
League of Women Voters of Alameda

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