

To the Members of the Ranked Choice Voting Committee,

My name is Lon Seidman, a former member of the Connecticut Democratic State Central Committee (DSCC) and an elected member of the Essex Board of Education and the Region 4 Board of Education. I am writing to you today in support of giving party committees and municipalities the option of ranked choice voting for the election or nomination of candidates.

When I was a member of the DSCC, I planned and chaired a number of party nominating conventions. As I learned the intricacies of this responsibility one thing was made clear to me by my mentors: 50%+1 is a central tenet of the nominating process.

Ultimately a winner is selected who may be a second choice “consensus candidate” of a majority of delegates present. Delegates never have to worry about “throwing a vote away” on a long shot candidate - they will ultimately pick a second, third or even a fourth choice in subsequent rounds of voting.

Up until recently it was difficult to implement this type of voting procedure at scale for a primary election short of requiring costly runoff contests. But technology has improved to a point where a very simple ballot can give voters the ability to cast a vote for their preferred candidate along with a second and third choice. The new tabulators selected by the State of Connecticut are already compatible with these “instant runoff” ballots.

The Citizens' Election Program (CEP) makes running for office more accessible to a broader range of candidates, increasing the likelihood that primary contests will include more than two contenders. **If party insiders, such as delegates, have the right to vote for their second and third choice candidates, why shouldn't rank-and-file party members have the same opportunity in a primary?**

I believe there is also significant potential to apply ranked-choice voting to regular elections. The success of our local governments relies on a diverse and talented pool of volunteers willing to step up and pursue local office. In Connecticut alone, nearly a million voters choose not to affiliate with a political party, often feeling "shut out" of the process as a result. Ranked-choice voting offers a solution by empowering voters to consider unaffiliated or third-party candidates they might have been hesitant to support in a traditional, winner-takes-all system. This approach not only broadens voter choice but also encourages a more inclusive, representative democracy at the local level.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lon Seidman, Ivoryton, Connecticut