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Governor's Working Group on Ranked Choice Voting
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Support

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut is a nonpartisan, statewide organization that seeks to empower voters and defend democracy. Among our goals are to make it easier for eligible voters to vote, to promote active citizenship, and to build confidence in elections and government through effective public policy. We encourage electoral methods that provide the broadest voter representation possible. We appreciate the opportunity to submit comments today in support of ranked choice voting (RCV).

Over the past 25 years, the League of Women Voters has repeatedly studied ranked choice voting, and has supported it in various forms nationwide. Over 14 state and local leagues have examined ranked choice voting in detail and have adopted positions of support.

Ranked choice voting promotes majority rule and fair representation, allows voters to honestly rank candidates without fear of helping candidates they like the least. RCV gives candidates incentives to engage with voters to earn their support, reduces negative campaigning as candidates would be happy to be someone's second choice if not their first. Winning candidates reflect the views of the widest number of constituents.

Approximately 13 million voters in 50 jurisdictions across the U.S. use ranked choice voting. It has become the fastest-growing nonpartisan electoral reform in the country. One of the most powerful aspects of RCV is that it offers voters greater choice and creates space for both voters and candidates to express a wide range of views. Single-choice elections put pressure on voters to vote "strategically" - picking the candidate they believe has the best chance of defeating their last choice, instead of picking

someone they like. With RCV, voters can rank the candidates they like most in honest order of preference. If their favorite can't win, they won't accidentally help the candidate they like least - their vote will simply count for their next choice.

Voters like and understand RCV. Exit polling results find that voters in RCV cities overwhelmingly report that they like RCV and prefer it to their previous voting method. (FairVote. 2023. Exit Surveys: Voters Love Ranked Choice Voting. <https://fairvote.org/report/exit-surveys-report-2023/>)

RCV decreases negative campaigning because candidates need to reach beyond a single base of voters and talk to everyone in order to win. Sometimes, this means appealing to be the second or third choice of voters who support a different candidate as their first choice. Studies have found that candidates use more positive language in debates, and voters in RCV cities perceive less negativity compared to voters in non-RCV cities. (Campaign civility under preferential and plurality voting by Todd Donovan, Caroline Tolert, and Kellen Gracey, 2016 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0261379416000299>)

RCV also improves diversity. Recent research has found that RCV tends to result in greater election rates for women and candidates of color. (In Ranked Choice Elections, Women Win, RCV in the United States: A Decade in Review. Represent Women. (2020). https://www.representwomen.org/research_voting_reforms)

Voters like RCV and are comfortable with the ranked ballot. Implementation is smooth. (New America, What We Know About Ranked-Choice Voting <https://www.newamerica.org/the-voting-experience>). The League was founded on the belief that voters should play a critical role in democracy, and ranked choice voting increases that ability.