

Senator Osten, Senator Hwang and distinguished members of the Governor's Ranked Choice Voting Working Group:

My name is Nancy Ellman. I am from Guilford and am a member of Connecticut Shoreline Indivisible and a supporter of Voter Choice Connecticut.

I am testifying in favor of implementing ranked choice voting in Connecticut for state, local and federal elections

I am strongly in favor of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV, also called Instant Runoff Voting) because it allows voters to vote for the candidate(s) who best represent them without having to become experts at political strategy and figure out who has the best chance of winning. The horse race character of the current (first past the post) system has been very bad for our elections. It treats politics like a sport, encouraging gamesmanship and negative campaigning. It makes a voter's decision depend, not just on what they think of a candidate, but also on what they think everyone else thinks. It complicates the procedure and leads to less overall satisfaction with the results. RCV eliminates vote splitting and "spoiler" candidates, and ensures that the winning candidate has the most broad support of the electorate and best represents their interests.

Ranked Choice Voting has been successfully used for early voting for the Nevada caucuses. It has been used in a congressional race in Maine to ensure that the most voters were satisfied with the winner in a multi-candidate race. It has been used by science fiction fans to vote for the winners of the Hugo Awards and for the Oscar Award for Best Picture. Many cities in this country have used RCV for years in local elections with positive results, so a task force will be able to find data on how RCV could be successfully implemented in Connecticut.

I recognize that there may be state constitutional barriers to adopting RCV for state and federal offices, but in addition to proposing legislation to implement RCV for party primaries and municipal elections, I encourage you to pursue legislation that would allow the use of RCV for all elections.

Sincerely,
Nancy Ellman
Guilford, CT