

November 8, 2024

Dear Sen. Osten, Sen. Hwang, and other members of the Ranked Choice Voting Tsk Force,

I am writing to support CT adopting ranked choice voting. There are a few reasons for this.

1. It offers competing voices a chance to offer new policy proposals as well as to let the state electorate to consider different ideas and issues than major party candidates offer.

2. It lets people vote for policy to advance the state without the worry of allowing someone they are diametrically opposed to winning due to a “Spoiler Vote”.

A corollary is that when I ran for Lt. Governor in 2022, many people I know in Government and news media thought we had really good ideas for the state. We were not considered “viable candidates” and ended up with less than 1% of the vote. Yet I wonder still if we had gotten 15% of votes of conscience, what would the legislature have talked about? Could citizens have cheered ideas on school reform, property tax reform, or energy transition and savings that would be lowering costs and improving services today?

3. Our polarized politics keeps accelerating to extremists in both major parties. An August primary with 20% turnout when the major parties have less than 25% of the electorate means that our candidates are selected by only 4-5% of the citizenry. Surely, that is a way to breed disengagement and apathy for all government and institutions, as the election is often about flawed, non representative candidates compared to the general public, supported by special interests or causes only.

4. Ranked Choice Voting’s instant runoff ensures that the winning candidate has a majority of the electorate support them. When only a minority of voters supports a final election candidate, the calls that they do not represent “me” become louder and more apparent, again undermining trust in government and its institutions.

5. The argument that people will be confused does not hold water. People make choices every day, what coffee brand, donut type, food for dinner. To say citizens can’t select candidates they prefer is insulting to the electorate’s intelligence and perspectives.

As an example, my daughter sent me a ballot from Cambridge for the municipal elections. Each column had all candidates listed for each office; council had 15 names listed and the directions were to pick 6. it was easy and much clearer to the voters than the Glastonbury Ballot of 6 columns in 2 or 3 rows and some people think they can only pick one in the same column. It is not everyone, but our high vote getters always strongly suppressed the other candidate vote numbers in the same column, which made ballot position often the determinate of who was elected in our 8 and 9 positions of our town council.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this with you.

Chip Beckett

Chairman, Independent Party of Connecticut