

CHARTER AMENDMENT INITIATIVE TO ADOPT RANKED-CHOICE VOTING FOR THE ELECTION OF CITY OF SACRAMENTO OFFICERS

This initiative measure, entitled the “Ranked Choice Voting for Sacramento Act,” proposes to change the system for the election of city officers for the City of Sacramento. It would not change any elected officer’s term; nor would it change the City’s current staggered election cycles.

The measure would amend Article X (“Elections”) of the Sacramento City Charter. Its main purpose is to replace the current primary-then-runoff system with a “ranked choice voting” system, which is also known as “instant runoff voting.” Ranked-choice voting is an election system in which voters rank candidates for office in order of preference, and the ballots are counted in rounds that simulate a series of runoff elections until one candidate receives a majority of votes. In the first round, every ballot counts as a vote towards the voter’s first-choice candidate. After every round, if any candidate receives a majority of votes from the continuing ballots (that is, ballots that count towards a candidate that has not been eliminated), that candidate is declared the winner. If, in a round, no candidate receives a majority of votes, the candidate receiving the fewest number of votes is eliminated, and every ballot counting towards that candidate is advanced to the voter’s next-highest-ranked choice among the continuing candidates. All continuing ballots for all non-eliminated candidates are counted again in a new round. This continues until a candidate receives a majority vote and is declared the winner.

The measure proposes that special elections to fill vacant offices would also use the ranked-choice voting system. Additionally, for a special election held before the first regular municipal election to use ranked-choice voting, the city council would have the authority to provide for a ranked-choice voting election by ordinance.

The measure proposes other minor changes (e.g., deleting references to “primary election”) in various Sacramento City Charter sections to conform to the change in voting methodology described above.

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