



Jefferson Park Neighborhood Association est.2001

Newsletter for Summer 2024



Website



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Meetings

You are all invited to JPNA meetings at 7pm, Congregational Church of Jefferson Park, 5320 W. Giddings.

June 26: Illinois Representative of 19th District Lindsey LaPointe.

Free parking is available at the Hoyne drive-up Bank, Milwaukee & Giddings. Refreshments will be served.

The Pros and Cons of Ranked Choice Voting

Introduction

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV), also known as instant-runoff voting, is an electoral system where voters rank candidates in order of preference instead of voting for a single candidate. If a candidate secures more than half of the first-choice votes, they win. If not, this process repeats until a candidate achieves a majority. RCV aims to ensure a more representative outcome, reduce negative campaigning, and eliminate the need for separate runoff elections by allowing an instant runoff based on voter preferences. This method has gained popularity as a means to improve democratic processes, but it also has its share of detractors. Here, we explore the pros and cons of RCV to better understand its impact on elections.

Pros of Ranked Choice Voting

- 1. **Promotes Majority Support:** RCV ensures that the elected candidate has majority support. If no candidate gets more than 50% of the first-choice votes, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and their votes are redistributed based on voters' next preferences. This process continues until a candidate surpasses the 50% threshold, ensuring the winner has broad support.*
 - 2. **Reduces Negative Campaigning:** Since candidates benefit from being ranked as a second or third choice, they are incentivized to campaign positively. Negative attacks can alienate potential supporters of other candidates. Consequently, RCV can lead to more civil and issue-focused campaigns.*
 - 3. **Decreases the Spoiler Effect:** Traditional voting can result in vote splitting, where similar candidates divide the vote, allowing a less popular candidate to win. RCV mitigates this issue by allowing voters to rank multiple candidates, ensuring that votes for less popular candidates are not wasted but transferred to others.*
 - 4. **Encourages Diverse Candidates:** With RCV, voters feel more comfortable supporting non-mainstream candidates as their first choice because they can still rank mainstream candidates as backups. This can lead to more diverse candidates and ideas being represented in the election.*
- Saves Costs in the Long Run:** By eliminating the need for separate runoff elections, RCV can save time and money. Traditional runoffs require additional resources and lower voter turnout. RCV provides an instant runoff, concluding the election in one round.*

Cons of Ranked Choice Voting

- 1. **Complexity for Voters:** RCV can be confusing, especially for voters unfamiliar with the system. Understanding how to rank candidates and how the counting process works can be challenging, potentially leading to errors and increased numbers of spoiled ballots.*
- 2. **Increased Administrative Costs:** Implementing RCV can be costly initially. Election authorities need new voting machines and software capable of handling ranked ballots. Additionally, there may be higher costs for voter education and longer timeframes for counting and certifying results.*

(Continue on Page 2)



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- Walk, ride or jog with a partner.
 - Avoid dark isolated places - don't walk or park there.
 - Be alert, look around.
- Keep at least one hand free - don't carry bulky purses or packages.
- When you are alone, avoid wearing headphones or talking on your cell phone.
- Late at night, have someone meet you at the bus stop or train station. Have the taxi driver watch while you enter your home.
- On public transportation, try to use the busiest, best-lit stop possible both to get on and off the bus or train. When waiting for a train, stay close to other people in the most well-lit area of the station. When on the train or bus, sit near the driver or operator.
- After dark, tell family and friends when to expect you and how you will be traveling. When at a bar, never lose sight of your drink.
- Have your house and car keys out and ready to use.
- Follow your instincts - if you feel threatened go to the nearest open store or business.
- Call 911 immediately.

NEWS from the SCHOOLS

After winning first place in the state of Illinois, Whitney Young Magnet High School took 2nd place in the National Finals of the Academic Decathlon.

The Academic Decathlon is a national competition between high schools. A team of students take multiple choice exams in Economics, Literature, Math, Music, Science, and Social Science. They each write an essay on a national topic. They write and give a speech. Finally, there is an oral interview.

This is a remarkably difficult exam and coming in 2nd in the National Finals is a notable achievement. Unfortunately, the academic achievements of the Chicago Public Schools are rarely noted by Chicago's media.

By the way, a team of students from Chicago Public Schools were chosen by the State of Illinois to represent the state at the National Science Fair. You heard it here at JPNA! Peter Insley (Education Committee JPNA)

JPNA Board Members: Colleen Murphy (President); William "Brian" Wardman (Vice-President/Newsletter Editor); Floyd Rueger (Secretary); Bruce Herr (Treasurer); Gwynne Carlson; Steve Neidenbach; Eva Skowronski; Peter Insley

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3. **Longer Counting Process:** Counting RCV ballots is more complex and time-consuming than traditional voting. This can delay results, leading to longer periods of uncertainty post-election. In tightly contested races, the process of redistributing votes can take days or even weeks.

4. **Potential for Voter Disenfranchisement:** In some cases, voters may not rank all candidates, either by choice or due to confusion. If their top choices are eliminated early, these voters might feel their voices are not fully heard in the final outcome. This phenomenon, known as ballot exhaustion, can be problematic.

5. **Resistance to Change:** Many voters and election officials are accustomed to the traditional voting system. Transitioning to RCV requires significant changes in mindset and practice, which can face resistance. This resistance can slow down the adoption of RCV, despite its potential benefits.

Conclusion

Ranked Choice Voting presents a promising alternative to traditional voting systems, aiming to create more representative and positive elections. However, its implementation comes with challenges that need careful consideration and management. While it promotes majority support and reduces negative campaigning, it also introduces complexity and potential voter confusion. As more jurisdictions experiment with RCV, ongoing evaluation and adaptation will be crucial to addressing these issues and optimizing the system for widespread use.

***Information paraphrased and quoted from <https://www.fairvoteillinois.org/rcv> and similar sites/.*

Activities in Jefferson Park

Jeff Fest: Jefferson Memorial Park.

Friday July 12, 5pm—10pm

Saturday July 13, 2pm—10pm

Sunday July 14, 2pm—10pm

ROBERT'S SQUARE Back to School /Movie in the Park.

JPNA, Alderman Gardiner, Chicago Police Bureau of Detectives Family Liaison Office, Cradles to Crayons and Helen & Joe Community org.

Friday, August 8 at 8:00pm (or Dusk).

Movie will be Wonka

Flea Market at Copernicus Center:

Sunday, August 25, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

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