



## Ranked Choice Voting for Texas Primary Elections

**Recommendation:** Allow Ranked Choice Voting in all political party primary elections.

### Background:

- Ranked Choice Voting (also known as Instant Runoff Voting) allows voters to cast meaningful votes that produce a broadly supported nominee worthy of representing the party in the general election.
- Primary elections frequently include multiple candidates; often the top two candidates who advance to the runoff election do not have broad voter support.
- Ranked Choice Voting was used successfully in the Democratic Party primaries in Alaska, Hawaii, Kansas and Wyoming and in caucuses in Nevada for the 2020 presidential election. It was used by the Republican Party in Virginia to nominate statewide candidates in 2021 and in Indiana for its nominations in 2020. It has also been used by some political parties at the state level for their internal elections.

### What is Ranked Choice Voting

Ranked Choice Voting is a nonpartisan change in voting logistics that sometimes helps Republicans, sometimes helps Democrats, and always helps elect candidates with broad voter support. It allows voters to vote their true preference by giving them the option of ranking candidates in order of their choice.

If a candidate gets more than half of the first-choice votes, they win just as in any other election. If no candidate gets a majority of the first-choice votes, an instant runoff takes place. The candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated and voters who picked that candidate as their first choice will have their votes count towards their second choice. This process is repeated until one candidate has more than half of the votes, thus serving as a runoff while eliminating the additional costs and time associated with separate runoff elections.

### Benefits of using Ranked Choice Voting in Primary Elections

- **Reduces costs** for election administrators and for candidates by eliminating the need for an additional high cost, generally low turnout runoff election at a later date.
- **Ranked Choice Voting is information rich and enables political parties to learn more** about multiple issues important to voters.
- Ensures that **participation does not drop off** between the general election and the runoff so everyone who votes initially has their vote count in the final determination of a winner.
- **Provides more choice** as more candidates can compete without fear of splitting the vote among similar candidates resulting in the election of someone who the majority does not support.
- **Candidates win with broader support** as they work to attract voters for whom they may not be their first choice.
- **Frees voters to vote their true preference** without fear of wasting their vote in order to keep a candidate they like least from winning.
- **Increases turnout** as more voters cast ballots because they feel their vote counts.
- **Reduces negative campaigning** since candidates have reason to be more civil and issue focused as they seek to gain second or third place votes.
- **Ensures that votes count** if people vote early or by mail even if some candidates drop out before election day as was seen in the Democratic primary on Super Tuesday in 2020.

Ranked Choice Voting for Texas primary elections can be implemented by a legislative change to the Texas Election Code.