

Argument Against Measure BB

Rank choice voting (RCV) may be a good option for some cities, but for Albany it would be expensive, complicated—and pointless. RCV's advantage lies in avoiding run-off elections when there are far more candidates than open seats. In Albany we often have the opposite problem—finding enough candidates to have competitive elections at all. In addition, Albany does not use run-off elections, so avoiding them is not an issue. RCV offers nothing for our city.

RCV advocates claim that it would make it easier for ethnic candidates to be elected in Albany. But this is wishful thinking. RCV voting algorithms do not consider race or class. When New York City switched to RCV, it was the ethnic community organizations that resisted (Politico, 11/5/2019).

In the 2018 San Francisco mayoral special election, two candidates attempted unsuccessfully to use RCV tactics to block the election of London Breed, the first female African American mayor. Like any election rules, RCV rules can be manipulated.

Here in Albany, when candidates of color run for office, they tend to win—and get reelected. The problem is not getting these candidates elected, it is getting them to run for office in the first place. RCV does nothing to solve that problem.

With RCV, a voter who has a choice of four candidates has 24 possible ways to rank them. With five candidates, there are 120 possible rankings. California ballots are already complicated enough. RCV will just add to voter fatigue and could even discourage participation in the electoral process.

For Albany, RCV makes no sense. The hypothetical benefits do not outweigh the very real costs of an additional \$26,000 per election. RCV does nothing but add more stress to a county voting system struggling to adjust to new pandemic voting procedures.

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