

Rebuttal to Argument in Favor of Measure BB

Supporters of rank choice voting (RCV) have provided you with some lofty theoretical reasons to support it. However, in the Bay Area, in practice, RCV has accomplished little. In Albany, it will accomplish even less.

San Francisco has been using RCV since 2004. Oakland, San Leandro and Berkeley have been using it since 2010. All four cities vote by districts and use a single-seat version of RCV known as instant run-off voting. According to online voter registrar records, there have been 60 RCV elections in San Francisco and 83 in the East Bay, a total of 143.

In 94.4 percent of these elections, the candidate who won the first round of counting either prevailed in the first round (just like in a conventional election) or won after additional rounds of counting rank-choice ballots. In only 5.6 percent of the elections did a candidate who did not take the lead in the first round come from behind to win.

If the extended ballot counting of RCV only affects the outcome of about one election in twenty, it's not worth the bother. There is no reason to expect Albany's experience will be any better—especially since this ballot measure would also implement the even messier “at large” version of RCV. (For more analysis of Albany and RCV, please see mb4albany.org).

For Albany, RCV is a solution without a problem. We strongly recommend that our voters save \$26,000 per election, and save themselves some aggravation, by voting against this measure.

Michael Barnes, Albany City Council Member

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