



February 26, 2025

SUBMITTED VIA EMAIL TO:

Judiciary Committee, WV House of Delegates, judiciary@wvhouse.gov
House Judiciary Committee members *

Judiciary Committee, WV Senate, judiciary@wvsenate.gov
Senate Judiciary Committee members *

TESTIMONY in Opposition to **Five Bills to Prohibit Ranked Choice Voting:**
SB 133, SB 226, SB 490, HB 2408, HB 2683

In 2021, the League of Women Voters of West Virginia (LWVWV) adopted the following position on ranked choice voting (RCV): LWVWV supports legislation that assures that the candidate preferred by the majority of voters will be the winner of the election. The League supports RCV, initially to elect West Virginia Supreme Court Justices, with consideration to expand RCV for future elections.

The bundle of bills referenced above would prohibit RCV in WV elections. LWVWV deems such action to be extreme and premature. Therefore, **we OPPOSE all these bills.**

Majority rule is the cornerstone of American elections. The value of RCV is that it ensures that a candidate who wins an election is actually the choice of the majority who voted. This may or may not be the case under current law in multi-candidate races. An example can easily be found in the results of the 2024 WV primary election for Governor. We use this race solely for illustration.

Candidate	% of vote
Patrick Morrisey	33.3%
Moore Capito	27.5%
Chris Miller	20.4%
Mac Warner	16.0%
Mitch Roberts	1.4%
Kevin Christian	1.4%

Use of RCV in a race with such a large number of candidates might or might not change the outcome. Experience from other jurisdictions reveals that, often, it does not. However, we do know from this illustration that the winner of the race received only 33% of votes cast, with a voter turnout of only slightly more than 30%. That plurality result is not a majority.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan volunteer organization that encourages informed and active participation of citizens in government. The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate, but is engaged in local, state, and national issues of importance to our communities. The League works to influence public policy through advocacy and education. League membership is open to all men and women age 16 or older. More at: www.lwv.org (National) and www.lwvwy.org (WV).

As of 2024, RCV in the U.S. was used most frequently in local jurisdictions (cities and counties). Only Alaska and Maine use RCV for general elections statewide. Some political parties, in more states, use RCV in their primary elections. (**SOURCES:** (1) [Where is RCV used?](#) Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center, updated March 2024. RCVRC is a division of the Election Administration Resource Center, a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. (2) [Ranked choice voting information: Where is ranked choice voting used?](#) Updated Nov 2024; [Research and data on RCV in practice](#). FairVote.)

In summary, we OPPOSE this entire bundle of bills. A ban on RCV at this stage would accomplish nothing. LWVWV supports RCV, but we also believe that any future move to adopt RCV statewide or in any local jurisdictions in WV, has two prerequisites, neither of which have been satisfied:

1. Ensure that automated voting machines and software can accept and accurately tabulate ranked choices. Counting and tabulation of ranked choice votes is far too laborious and resource intensive to be undertaken manually on a large scale, and it would delay election results unnecessarily.
2. Undertake, with funding, a substantial voter education campaign so that voters being introduced to RCV for the first time would fully understand in advance how to cast their ranked choice votes.

The League of Women Voters urges you to vote down any and all of these bills to prohibit ranked choice voting.

Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Judy K. Ball".

Judy K. Ball, PhD, MPA
Chair, Legislative Action Workgroup
League of Women Voters of West Virginia
LWVofWV@gmail.com
240.997.1222