

Problems with Our Current (Plurality) Voting Method

in Single-Winner Elections with
3 or More Candidates

**Because you can show
your support
for only one candidate....**

1) You can't express your preferences
as clearly as in better voting methods.



2) You might be inclined to vote for a
candidate who is not your favorite,
or you might be discouraged and not
vote at all.



3) Two similar candidates may split the
vote, resulting in the election of a third,
less desirable candidate.



*The League supports authorizing and
implementing **alternatives to plurality
voting** that allow people to express their
preferences more effectively.*

- Excerpt from the LWV of Colorado position

Some Notable

Plurality Elections

in which most voters did not
support the winning candidate

2022 **Colorado: Congressional District 8**
Yadira Caraveo (D) 48.4%

Barbara Kirkmeyer (R) 47.7%

Richard Ward (Libertarian) 3.9%

2018 **Ohio: CD12** (GOP primary)

Troy Balderson 29%

Melanie Leneghan 28%

7 more candidates

Maine Governors (*winning percentage*)

2014 Paul LePage 48.2%

2010 Paul LePage 37.6%

2006 John Baldacci 38.1%

2002 John Baldacci 47.2%

1994 Angus King 35.4%

2010 **Hawaii: CD1** (special)

Charles Djou (R) 39.4%

Colleen Hanabusa (D) 30.8%

Ed Case (D) 27.6%

MAKING
DEMOCRACY WORK®

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*Interested in better multi-winner voting
methods? See our multi-winner pamphlet.*



**Should a candidate win with
only 35% of the vote?**

**Should voters be limited to
supporting only one
candidate?**

In our familiar **single-winner plurality
elections**, the winner only needs more votes
than any other candidate, and voters are
limited to expressing support for just one
candidate.

**Better
Single-Winner
Voting Methods**

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF BOULDER COUNTY

January 2023

Approval Voting

You can vote for all the candidates you support. The candidate with the most votes wins.

Approval Voting is used in Fargo, ND.

Top-Two Approval Voting

In the primary election, you can vote for any number of candidates. The top two vote-getters advance to a general election to be conducted on a different date, in which you vote for your favorite of the two finalists.

St. Louis uses a nonpartisan Approval Voting primary followed by a top-two general election.

Note: Both forms of Approval Voting use the same ballot, just as IRV and Condorcet Voting use the same ballot. The difference is in the tabulation.

Vote for all you support	
Liam	<input type="radio"/>
Rosa	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Jill	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Ali	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Better Single-Winner

Voting Methods:

- Allow you to show support for multiple candidates
- Reduce vote splitting and the spoiler effect so more candidates will run
- Encourage candidates to appeal to a broader swath of the electorate

STAR (Score, Then Automatic Runoff) Voting

Score the candidates from 0 to 5. The two candidates with the highest total scores advance to an automatic runoff. Your vote in the runoff goes to the finalist you scored higher on your ballot.

STAR Voting is used by political parties in Oregon.

Score your favorite(s) a 5, your least favorite(s) a 0 and the others according to your level of support						
Liam	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	1	2	3	4	5
Rosa	0	1	2	3	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	5
Jill	0	1	2	3	4	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Ali	0	1	2	3	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	5

Instant-Runoff Voting (IRV)

Rank the candidates. Your ballot starts as a vote for your first-choice candidate. Votes are counted in rounds in which the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated. If the candidate receiving your vote is eliminated, your vote is transferred to your highest-ranked non-eliminated candidate. The last candidate remaining is elected.

IRV is also known as single-winner Ranked Choice Voting. It is used for federal elections in Maine and Alaska.

Condorcet Voting

Rank the candidates. For every possible one-on-one matchup between candidates, your vote goes to the candidate you ranked higher. If a candidate beats all other candidates one-on-one, that candidate is elected.

Rank the candidates				
Liam	1	2	3	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Rosa	1	2	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	4
Jill	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	2	3	4
Ali	1	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	3	4