

Supporting Ranked Choice Voting for Washington County

A. Whereas ranked choice voting is an increasingly common voting system that more accurately expresses the will of the voters by allowing us to rank multiple candidates in order of preference, rather than being limited to only choosing a single candidate; and

B. Whereas, to use ranked choice voting for the election of our county officials the Washington County Charter must be amended, and all amendments to the Charter must be approved by a vote of the People; and

C. Whereas Article 5 plank 7 of our state party's Platform reads, "We support the right of political parties to nominate candidates by means of instant-runoff voting, thereby ensuring nominees are supported by a majority of electors", and Article 5 plank 29 of our Platform states, "We support the enactment of voting improvements that eliminate vote splitting and more accurately reflect the preferences and will of the voters"; and

D. Whereas ranked choice voting is currently used for elections in: California, New York, Florida, Massachusetts, Colorado, Minnesota, Utah, Maryland and Oregon, statewide in Maine and Alaska, nationwide in Australia, Ireland, and New Zealand, as well as many other places; and

E. Whereas the Washington County Democratic Central Committee uses ranked choice voting for the election of party officers, as do many other state and local Democratic Party organizations; and

F. Whereas ranked choice voting is more efficient and convenient than traditional runoff elections and because of this it saves voters, candidates and governments the time and money of having those runoff elections; and

G. Whereas ranked choice voting helps ensure that all candidates elected to office win the support of a majority of voters, instead of being able to win by plurality, and in doing so it eliminates the spoiler effect; and

H. Whereas candidates for public office have less incentive to run negative campaigns that attack their opponents in a ranked choice voting system, which encourages positive campaigning; and

I. Whereas Ranked Choice Voting reduces the barriers to entry for women and people of color, creating more diversity among elected officials, and studies have shown that it significantly increases the number of people of color and women running for and winning public office; now

Therefore we, the Washington County Democratic Central Committee, resolve as follows:

1. We endorse the Ranked Choice Voting for Washington County ballot initiative (02032020RCV), for which the ballot title is, "Amends County Charter to Elect Officials Using Ranked Choice Voting".
2. We support all legal and ethical efforts to enact a ranked choice voting system for single seat elections at all levels of our government including the local, state and federal.