



## 2019 ISSUE PAPER: ELECTION METHODS

### Position statement

In order to improve election accountability, the LWVWA:

- supports state election laws allowing for more options for alternative election systems in governmental jurisdictions at both the state and local levels.
- believes that consideration should be given, when evaluating election systems, to how well they promote “representativeness,” citizen participation and accountability, as well as keeping the cost of elections within range by holding them in regularly scheduled General or Special Elections.
- supports the concept of a majority vote requirement for winners of single offices such as mayor or governor, as long as it is achieved using a voting method such as the Instant Runoff Vote, rather than a second, separate runoff election.
- supports the adoption of election methods that produce proportional representation when electing representative government bodies such as councils, legislatures and Congress.

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Washington currently uses a single-member, winner-take-all election system, electing the person with the most votes regardless of how well they represent their electorate. This system has led to a number of problems including lack of representation for minority groups, winners without majority support, and elections won by less popular candidates because of vote splitting.

Most other democracies in the world use different methods for electing their representatives: proportional representation (PR) and/or ranked choice voting (RCV), sometimes known as instant runoff voting (IRV). These alternatives reduce the power of gerrymandering, wasted votes, and negative campaigning. They eliminate spoilers and strategic voting, allow for more robust participation by third parties, and result in more diverse representation.

### Summary of Issues for the 2019 Legislative Session

In the 2018 session, HB 2746/SB 6402 (the Local Options Bill) was introduced, but died in committee. These bills would have changed state law to allow local jurisdictions to adopt alternative voting procedures. The LWVWA supported these bills and intends to support a similar set of bills again this year, with additional League efforts needed to educate representatives about the impacts of the bill.

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