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To: "Mark Prestwich" <MPrestwich@cityofsacramento.org>, <charterreview@cityo...>
Date: 11/16/2009 11:54 AM
Subject: Instant Runoff Voting

To: City of Sacramento Charter Review Committee

From: Blair Bobier, Deputy Director, Political Reform Program, New America Foundation

Re: Instant Runoff Voting

Date: November 16, 2009

As a follow-up to my presentation to the Committee, I would like to draw your attention to some recent developments with Instant Runoff Voting.

1) The City of Minneapolis just conducted its first instant runoff election which was widely viewed as a success
<<http://www.startribune.com/politics/local/69018792.html?elr=KArksUUUoDEy3LGDiO7aiU>> . In a poll released today, a majority of voters said they preferred using instant runoff voting
<http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2009/11/13/irv-poll/?refid=0&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+MPR_Politics+%28Politics+from+Minnesota+Public+Radio%29> as compared to the old method. Although this was a low turnout election, respected commentators
<http://www.startribune.com/local/69411317.html?elr=KArksLckD8EQDUoaEyqyP4O:DW3ckUiD3aPc:_Yyc:aUUsZ> were clear that a ho-hum election was to blame for the low turnout
<http://www.startribune.com/politics/local/69814067.html?elr=KArksc8P:Pc:UHDaaDyiUiD3aPc:_Yyc:aUU> ; not instant runoff voting.

2) Minneapolis' twin city, St. Paul, voted to adopt Instant Runoff Voting <http://www.twincities.com/politics/ci_13710883?nclick_check=1> on the same day that Minneapolis successfully used IRV for the first time.

3) The Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences has decided to use Instant Runoff Voting
<<http://blogs.usatoday.com/oped/2009/09/column-like-hollywood-us-should-update-its-voting-system.html#more>> to determine the winner of its

coveted "Best Picture" Oscar award.

4) Voters in Pierce County, Washington have voted to rescind the use of IRV in their county. This, in large part, was due to political maneuvering and the impact of Washington State's unusual "top two" primary system. By a handful of votes, Aspen, Colorado voters approved a non-binding advisory measure asking their city council to reconsider the use of IRV. It is not unusual for "repeal IRV" efforts to be generated by supporters of candidates who have lost under IRV.

5) There will be Instant Runoff Voting bills introduced into the California Legislature aimed at reducing the unnecessary expense of repeated special elections to fill vacancies in elected offices.

Instant Runoff Voting is on track to be implemented in the 2010 election for the cities of Oakland and Berkeley and continues to be studied by San Jose, Long Beach, Pasadena and Los Angeles (both city and county) as a way to boost voter turnout and cut expenses.

Please let me know if I can provide you with any additional information.

Respectfully submitted,

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