

## CharterReview - Public Contact

**From:** <tim.t.lindsey@gmail.com>  
**To:** <CharterReview@cityofsacramento.org>  
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## Public Contact

Date	December 9, 2009
Contact Name	
Phone Number	
Constituent E-mail	<a href="mailto:tim.t.lindsey@gmail.com">tim.t.lindsey@gmail.com</a>
Message	<p><b>More Sacramento data: 2006 June Direct Primary, City Council (half). This is an important election day, for example the State gubernatorial primary is on the ballot. It's not like anything would be saved by eliminating the primary. The IRV supporters want us to think that some special election could be eliminated. Not. There would still be polling on that day. Instead, what would they do? I didn't see a specific proposal, but it looked like they would have a single IRV election in November. IRV is far more expensive to count, once the cost of audits, fixing errors, and the like is figured in. IRV creates many opportunities for a decision to be close that could affect the entire remainder of the counting process. It's really a bizarre method, it *sounds good* to people who have not studied voting systems.... It *seems* easy to understand for some. And, in fact, that "easy understanding" is often quite erroneous. People who should know better, like the committee that wrote the voter information pamphlet that was used to "explain" IRV to the voters there, can get it wrong. IRV doesn't find majorities, frequently, so the oft-repeated claim that it finds them is highly misleading. It *can*. Sometimes. Usually not, that is, if there is no majority in the first round, *usually* there isn't after all the other rounds are completed. City Council District 1: One candidate, 7,803 (98.51%), write-in 118, (1.49%), overvotes 0, undervotes 3,223. City Council District 3: 2 candidates, Winner, 7,958 (74.58%), runner-up 2,697 (25.28%), write-in 15 (0.14%), overvotes 7, undervotes 1,374. City Council District 5: Winner, 4,527 (76.41%), runner-up 1,382 (23.32%), write-in 16 (0.27%), overvotes 7, undervotes 1,052. City Council District 7: One candidate, 7,175 (98.36%), write-in 120 (1.64%), overvotes 0, undervotes 2,560. Notice that if all the overvotes, undervotes, write-ins, and losing candidates combined in complete unity, the same winner remains. Absolutely, this place doesn't need IRV, and it has a pretty good system that could be improved with some minor tweaks. IRV would, in fact, be a giant step backwards, with no gain for the additional expense and, in fact, a loss. No runoffs in 2006. 2004 March Direct Primary. Mayor. Wow. Heather Fargo won with 59.8%. Runner-up, Ross Wells. 20.9%. Heather was apparently an incumbent in 2008, so that was a real loss, she was apparently relatively unpopular. It would also appear that she had no strong opponent in 2004. City Council Districts were all won with substantial margins. In District 8, the winner supposedly got 100%. Ah. They were not counting the write-ins. Often done. The complete results aren't on-line as far as I could see.... but it's highly unlikely that write-ins would have resulted in majority failure. They don't count over and undervotes. Robert's Rules might. (Overvotes, definitely would become part of the basis for a majority, but undervotes with the standard blank ballot with a Robert's Rules election would be "scrap paper," but what about a ballot with many offices and questions at once? Probably an abstention, still. If the voter wishes to object to all the candidates, a write-in does it. And should be counted as part of the basis. So the percentage numbers in the report at <a href="http://www.elections.sacounty.net/coswcm/groups/public/@wcm/@pub/@vrc/@inter/documents/webcontent/sac_004993.pdf">http://www.elections.sacounty.net/coswcm/groups/public/@wcm/@pub/@vrc/@inter/documents/webcontent/sac_004993.pdf</a> are incorrect. 2002 March Direct Primary City Council elections were all contested. Closest one is reported as 57.9% to 42.1%. No runoffs. 2000 March Direct Primary. Heavily contested election for Mayor: Heather Fargo 21.8% Rob Kearth 20.2% Robbie Waters 18.2% Joe Genshlea 14.7% Julie Padilla 11.7% Steve Cohn 9.1% 4 others total 4.3% I've never seen such a broad distribution of votes before. This is an election where I'd not care to predict the outcome of a runoff, nor of IRV. 3-way ties, which this is, pretty close, are quite quirky in IRV, any one of the top three could win. *even if one of them was the second choice of everyone,* if that person happened to be Robbie Waters. (This is a peculiarity of IRV, and it's rare because three-way close races are rare.) Easily, Waters could have been the compromise winner, it's impossible to tell from these votes, and it also could be very difficult to tell from IRV, unless one can get access to direct ballot data. Range would give some good information, as would Bucklin. City Council District 2 had a real contested election, with four candidates on the ballot. Sheedy had 47.5%, Farrel had 27.2%. De Luz, 20.2%, and Johnson (a different Johnson) 5.1%. Still, Sheedy is so far in front that any shift in the runoff would seem unlikely. District 4 was contested, but the winner had 90%. District 6 was uncontested, and District 8 had five candidates, but the winner still got 62.2%, the runner-up had 27.4%. So, big excitement in Sacramento in November, two runoff elections! General Election 2000. Anyone remember that year? I was in California at the time.... Mayor: Heather Fargo, 54.1%, Rob Kerth, 45.9%. Not terribly exciting. District 2: Sheedy, 52.7%, Farrell, 47.3%. District 2 was almost a comeback, Farrell had not a whole lot more than half of the Sheedy votes in the primary, for Farrell to have overcome that through vote transfers in IRV would be unheard of. Doesn't happen. Period. Not in nonpartisan elections. But in real runoffs, an underdog candidate who comes in second does have a real chance in the runoff, is suddenly more credible. Only a little more and Farrell would have won. Had this been an IRV election, Sheedy has 47.5% and gains percentage from every direct vote transfer, and also from every ballot exhaustion, where a voter has voted only for eliminated candidates. Sheedy would almost certainly have cleared the phony IRV "majority." In this case, the result didn't change. In other studies, the rate of comeback elections seems to be about one in three. How much Farrell pulled ahead shows how it could work. Those brainwashed by IRV propaganda might think that Farrell was a victim of vote-splitting in the first round. Not terribly likely. In a head-to-head context in an election with relatively high turnout, Farrell still lost. Rather, the most likely explanation for the votes is that Farrell wasn't terribly well-known in March, wasn't considered to have much of a chance to win, and certainly would not have been able to come up so far against Sheedy. It's possible to make a rough prediction of what votes Farrel would have gotten with IRV, though that rests on assumptions about general voting behavior as seen in IRV elections, there can be individual exceptions.</b></p>
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