

# League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund

## *Voting Procedures to Increase Voting Participation*

### **Instant Runoff Voting (IRV)**

**Also known as:** Alternative Vote, Majority Preference Vote, Choice Vote, Ranked Choice

**What it is:** In a single round of voting, IRV produces majority support for a candidate in an election with more than two candidates

**What Texas does now:** State election law calls for a separate run-off election between top two vote-getters if no candidate receives a majority.

#### **How IRV would work:**

- Voters rank candidates in order of preference (1, 2, 3...).
- May rank as many or few as voter wishes.
- If no majority, candidate with lowest number of votes is eliminated. The second choice votes of those who ranked this candidate first are transferred to remaining candidates.
- Process repeated until one candidate has a majority.

#### **Example:**

- 500 votes cast in election (251 required to win).
- *First round:* X has 175, Y has 125, and Z has 200.
- Y has least and is eliminated. Those who ranked Y first have their second choice votes transferred to X or Z, if they ranked them.
- *Second round:* X has 175 + 80 votes = 255. Z has 200 + 23 votes = 223. X wins.

#### **Arguments in favor of IRV:**

- Eliminates low-turnout, high-cost runoff elections.
- Eliminates inconvenience of returning to polls to vote in runoff.
- Gives voters more initial choices by allowing ranking of preferences.
- Helps military and overseas voters where time between election and runoff may be too short for them to receive and return ballot.

#### **Arguments against IRV:**

- Confuses voters, who must decide whether and how to rank several candidates.
- Reduces voter confidence in election results because it is hard to explain how votes are counted.
- Increases the need for voter education.
- Adds one-time transition cost for upgrading voting equipment

#### **Discussion question:**

- How well would IRV achieve goals of voter convenience and participation in the election process?

**For more information:** See LWV-TEF *Facts and Issues on Instant Runoff Voting*.