

February 16, 2018

Rochester Charter Commission  
Rochester Mayor and City Council  
201 4th Street SE  
Room 135  
Rochester, MN 55904

Dear Charter Commission, Mayor and City Council,

The Charter Commission should know “Why has RCV been repealed in other cities in the United States?” Pierce County, WA repealed IRV in 2009.

Pierce County, Washington:

Like several other cities, Pierce County jumped on the IRV bandwagon in 2006, before there was much data about this system other than what was promised. After reviewing the ordinance, administrators realized they needed a second ordinance in 2007 to clarify the IRV rules. Note; they switch between callout it IRV and RCV. After the 2008 RCV election, they found many issues with RCV and a repeal ordinance was put on the ballot A citizen lead group was formed for the repeal. An out-of-state group hired a campaign manager to try to keep RCV. On Nov. 3, 2009, voters overwhelmingly rejected RCV.

Here is information that outlines Pierce County’s experiment with IRV:

- Repeal Ordinance Language from County:
  - Whereas, the cost of running the IRV portion of the 2008 General Election was \$1,692,663; and
  - Whereas, the IRV portion of the 2008 General Election proved to be expensive, complicated and confusing, and the results of the IRV races were not available for weeks following the election date; and
  - Whereas 66 percent of the 90,738 voters responding to the Auditors survey indicated they did not like IRV;
- Pierce County Recap (note voters had 2 ballots, 1 traditional, 1 RCV. Huge RCV drop-off - over 20,000 voters returned the traditional ballot but not the RCV ballot)
- Report - Turnout lower in RCV races
- Published RCV Election Results
- Takoma News Tribune Editorial - IRV elects minimally qualified candidate
- Auditors comment on RCV Repeal
- The News Tribune - Pierce County Voters will decide fate of new voting system
- Dark Money flows in to save RCV
- Pierce County Voters nix “ranked-choice voting”
- RCV Repeal winning big
- Editorial: instead of being as “easy as 1-2-3,” RCV caused rampant confusion and was repealed a few years later.



## Pierce County

Office of the County Council

930 Tacoma Avenue South, Room 1046  
Tacoma, Washington 98402-2176  
(206) 798-7777  
FAX (206) 798-7509  
1-800-992-2456

TO: Janice Shabro, Auditor  
Gerry Horne, Prosecuting Attorney

FROM: Denise D. Johnson, Clerk of the Council

DATE: February 12, 2009

SUBJECT: **TRANSMITTAL -- ORDINANCE NO. 2009-1 (ELIMINATION OF INSTANT RUFFOFF VOTING)**

At the February 10, 2009 Council meeting, the Pierce County Council passed Ordinance No. 2009-1, which proposes Pierce County Charter amendments be submitted to the voters for the November 2009 General Election. The Council requests the Prosecuting Attorney write an appropriate ballot title for said election.

A certified copy of the Ordinance is attached for your records. Please see the Ordinance for specifics.

If you have any questions, please contact me at extension 6065 or Susan Long at extension 6068.

### Attachments

c: Lori Augino  
Susan Long  
Doug Vanscoy





1 Sponsored by: Councilmembers Barbara Gelman, Roger Bush,  
2 Joyce McDonald, and Timothy M. Farrell  
3 Requested by: Pierce County Council  
4  
5  
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7

File No. 440

8 **ORDINANCE NO. 2009-1**  
9

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11  
12  
13 **An Ordinance of the Pierce County Council Proposing an Amendment to**  
14 **Article 4, "Elections," of the Pierce County Charter to**  
15 **Eliminate Instant Runoff Voting and Restore the Primary**  
16 **Election for County Elected Offices; Requesting the Auditor**  
17 **to Submit this Amendment to the Voters at the November**  
18 **2009 General Election; and Requesting the Prosecuting**  
19 **Attorney to Draft an Appropriate Ballot Title.**  
20

21 **Whereas**, Section 8.50 of the Pierce County Charter (Charter) grants authority to  
22 the County Council (Council) to propose Charter amendments to be submitted to the  
23 voters at the next November general election occurring at least 90 days after filing; and  
24

25 **Whereas**, Section 8.60 of the Charter requires a minimum of two-thirds  
26 affirmative vote of the Council to enact an ordinance proposing Charter amendments;  
27 and  
28

29 **Whereas**, an Ordinance proposing Charter amendments is not subject to the  
30 veto power of the Executive; and  
31

32 **Whereas**, pursuant to Section 8.50(1) of the Charter, "...an amendment which  
33 embraces a single or interrelated subject may be submitted as a single proposition even  
34 though it is composed of changes to one or more articles."; and  
35

36 **Whereas**, in November 2006, the voters of Pierce County adopted Charter  
37 amendments to require the use of Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) for certain county elective  
38 offices, thereby eliminating the primary system for those races; and  
39  
40



1           **Whereas**, IRV was first used in Pierce County during the November 2008  
2 General Election; and

3  
4           **Whereas**, the cost of running the IRV portion of the 2008 General Election was  
5 \$1,692,663; and

6  
7           **Whereas**, the IRV portion of the 2008 General Election provided to be  
8 expensive, complicated and confusing, and the results of the IRV races were not  
9 available for weeks following the election date; and

10  
11           **Whereas**, 66 percent of the 90,738 voters responding to the Auditor's survey  
12 indicated that they did not like IRV; and

13  
14           **Whereas**, the Council finds that amendments to the Charter to eliminate instant  
15 runoff voting and to restore the primary election for county elected offices will serve the  
16 needs and best interests of the citizens of Pierce County; **Now Therefore**,

17  
18           **BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of Pierce County:**

19  
20           Section 1. The Pierce County Council hereby proposes a Charter amendment as  
21 set forth in Exhibit A, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, for  
22 submittal to the voters at the November 2009 General Election.

23  
24           Section 2. The Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney is hereby requested to draft  
25 an appropriate ballot title for the proposed Charter amendments set forth in Exhibit A.  
26

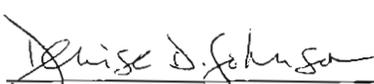
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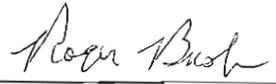
Section 3. This Ordinance shall be filed with the Auditor immediately upon adoption for submittal to the voters at the November 2009 General Election.

PASSED this 10<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2009.

ATTEST:

**PIERCE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
Pierce County, Washington

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Denise D. Johnson**  
Clerk of the Council

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Roger Bush**  
Council Chair  
*Signature not required,  
per Section 8.60 Pierce County Charter*  
**Pat McCarthy**  
Pierce County Executive  
Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Vetoed \_\_\_\_\_, this  
\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_,  
2009.

Date of Publication of  
Notice of Public Hearing: January 27, 2009

Effective Date of Ordinance: February 20, 2009

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*Only those portions of Article 4 of the Charter – Elections that are proposed to be amended are shown. Remainder of text is unchanged.*

**Section 4.10 -- Election Procedures**

The elections of all County officials, ~~except including judges and the Prosecuting Attorney, shall be conducted using instant runoff voting according to the state election method.~~ The County Auditor shall implement by July 2008 an instant runoff voting protocol according to these guidelines:

(1) ~~The ballot shall allow voters to rank a number of choices in order of preference equal to the total number of candidates for each office; however, if the voting system, vote tabulation system, or similar or related equipment used by the County cannot feasibly accommodate choices equal to the total number of candidates running for each office, then the Auditor may limit the number of choices a voter may rank to no fewer than three.~~

(2) ~~The instant runoff shall be conducted in rounds. In each round, each voter's ballot shall count as a single vote for whichever continuing candidate the voter has ranked highest. The candidate or candidates whose combined vote totals are less than the next lowest candidate after each round shall be eliminated and their votes redistributed. This process of eliminating candidates and transferring their votes to the next ranked continuing candidates shall be repeated until a candidate receives a majority (fifty percent plus one) of the votes from the continuing ballots. The candidate receiving the majority (fifty percent plus one) of votes from the continuing ballots will be deemed elected at the time of certification.~~

(3) ~~The County Council may adopt additional regulations consistent with this subsection and RCW 29A.53 (excluding the expiration dates) to implement these standards.~~

**4.15 – Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) Candidacies**

(1) ~~To be placed on the ballot for an IRV office, a candidate must present to the Auditor no later than the end of filing week petition statements supporting the candidacy with original signatures of no less than 25 persons qualified to vote for the office the candidate is seeking. The County Council may change the signature number requirement by ordinance so long as the same number applies to all candidates.~~

(2) ~~The County central committee of each major political party may determine which candidates may use their party label for each partisan County level office.~~

(3) ~~The Minor Party County Executive Committee, or, if there is none, the Minor Party State Executive Committee of each minor party who files with the State Public Disclosure Commission shall determine which candidates may use their party label for each partisan county level office.~~

(4) ~~All candidates meeting the foregoing qualifications will appear directly on the general election ballot. There will be no publicly financed primary for affected County level offices.~~

(5) ~~On or before the last day for filing a declaration of candidacy as a candidate for a partisan IRV county level office, anyone qualified to assume office if elected may file a declaration of candidacy as an "Independent."~~

1       ~~(6) Any candidate who files a declaration of candidacy as an independent for a~~  
2 ~~partisan IRV county-level office shall be placed on the ballot under the title~~  
3 ~~"Independent."~~

4       ~~(7) Any candidate who files a declaration of candidacy for a non-partisan IRV~~  
5 ~~county-level office shall be placed on the ballot under the title "Non-Partisan" (NP).~~

6       ~~(8) Anyone who files a declaration of candidacy for an IRV county-level office~~  
7 ~~shall pay the filing fee required for a declaration of candidacy.~~

8  
9 **Section 4.20—Independent Candidates**

10       ~~(1) On or before the last day for filing a declaration of candidacy as a candidate,~~  
11 ~~anyone qualified to assume office if elected may file a declaration of candidacy as an~~  
12 ~~"Independent".~~

13       ~~(2) Any candidate who files a declaration of candidacy as an independent shall~~  
14 ~~be placed on the ballot under the title "Independent."~~

15       ~~(3) Anyone who files a declaration of candidacy as an Independent shall pay the~~  
16 ~~filing fee required for a declaration of candidacy.~~

17



# Pierce County Facts

- Total Registered Voters in Pierce County  
(as of 3/4/2009)
  - 441,331 Total Voters
    - 412,993 Active
    - 28,338 Inactive
  - Total Absentee Voters – 78%
    - 320,117 Absentee Voters
    - Approximately 10,000 Military, Overseas and Out of County Voters
  - Total Poll Voters – 22%
    - 92,876
    - 58 Polling locations

# How did Pierce County adopt Ranked Choice Voting?

- Pierce County's Charter Commission submitted Charter Amendment No. 3 to the voters to adopt Instant Runoff Voting (IRV)
  - Approved by the voters of Pierce County in November 2006
    - 52.93%
    - Eliminated the Pick-a-Party Primary for these offices
- Required the Pierce County Auditor to implement instant runoff voting for certain county offices by July, 2008
  - Executive
  - Assessor-Treasurer
  - County Council Members
  - Excludes Judges and Prosecuting Attorney
  - Sheriff
  - Auditor

# We changed the nomenclature

- IRV = RCV
- Why?
  - To assist the voter education process
  - More descriptive of how the process works

# What were some of the impacts to RCV candidates?

- The political parties chose who could use their party label through internal party rules for the partisan county offices
  - Executive
  - County Council
- All candidates filed nominating petitions with signature of 25 registered voters
- All candidates appeared directly on the General Election ballot
  - No primary was held for these offices

# How did we implement RCV?

- Hired RCV staff and a consultant to study and develop a project plan
- An internal legal review was conducted of the newly passed amendments and the changes to the charter
- Consulted numerous times with our vendor (Sequoia)
  - Product availability and timeline
  - Software parameters

# Blue Ribbon Review Panel

- A Blue Ribbon Review Panel was formed
  - Five meetings were held
  - Provided feedback and input regarding new charter rules and implementation
  - Major topics included:
    - Filing for Office
    - Results Reporting
    - Voting Options
    - Voter Education
  - Presented 11 action items to the County Council

# Additional Charter Amendments

- Four additional Charter Amendments were presented to the voters in November 2007
- These amendments sought to clarify the implementation of RCV
  - Ranking of three candidates
  - Minor Party Candidate Filing Requirements
  - Implementation Dates
  - Allowing for the Multiple Elimination of losing candidates
  - Algorithm stops when a candidate has a majority

# 2008 – A Busy Year

## Hurdles Jumped and Major Accomplishments



- Policies, Procedures and Rules Established
  - Nominating Procedures and obtaining permission to use Party Label
  - Filing Procedures
  - Procedures for Write-In candidates
  - Candidate Advancement
  - Multiple Elimination
  - Procedures for RCV Recounts
  - Running the Algorithm and Results Reporting

# 2008 – A Busy Year

## More Hurdles



- Obtained Budget Funding for purchase of software
- Go/No Go Decision by vendor to release RCV Module was made
  - It was a GO!
- Conducted Internal Testing of RCV Tabulation software

# 2008 – A Busy Year

## Another High Hurdle



- Received Emergency/Provisional Certification from the State
  - Still awaiting Federal Certification
  - Product is currently at iBeta
- During certification it was determined that the Polling Place Tabulators (Insights) could not be used:
  - Not robust enough to handle RCV ballot image
  - Would not support multiple precincts
  - Implemented a Central Count procedure for counting of Polling Place ballots
    - Hired 114 Ballot Transporters and Ballot Processors
    - Instituted 24 hour shifts to check in, visually scan and tabulate polling place ballots

# By Filing Week – June 1, 2008

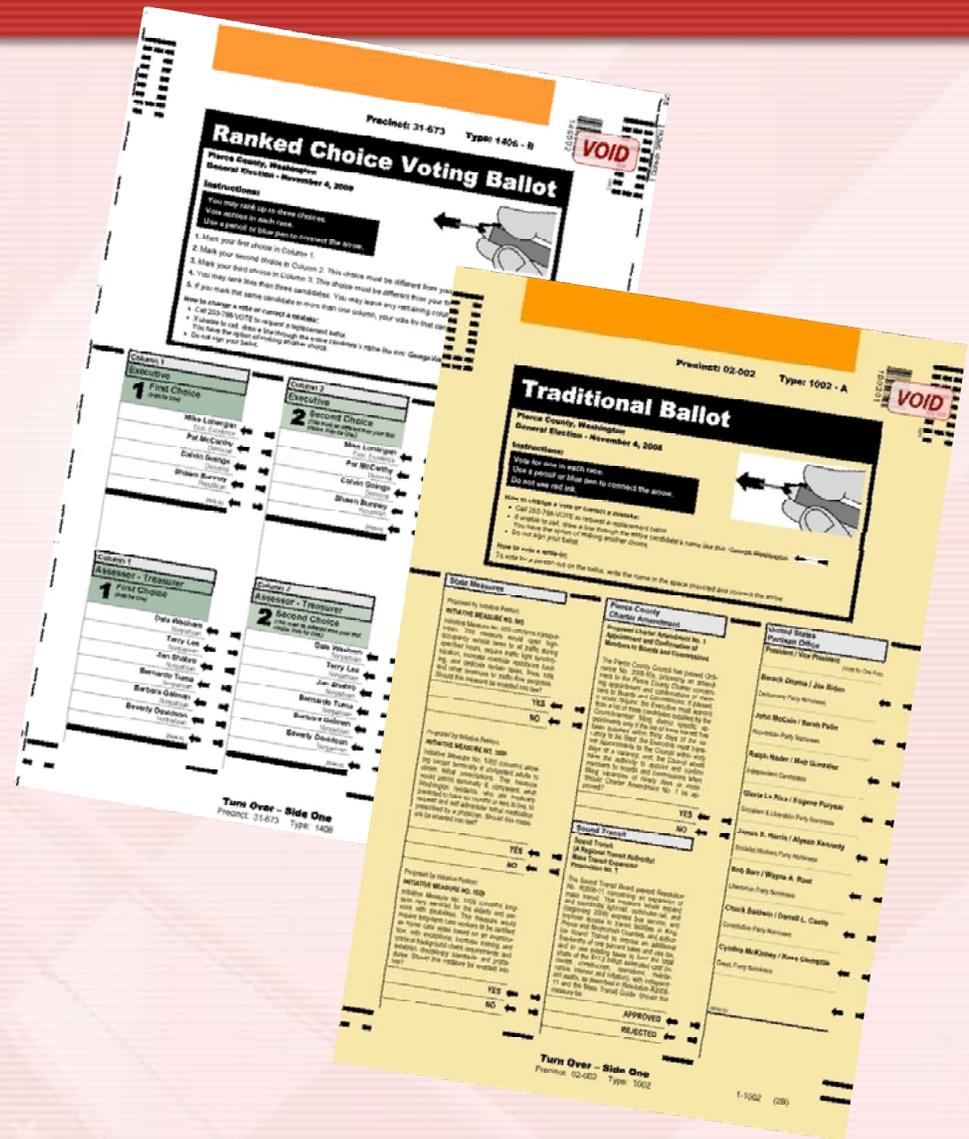
We were ready!



# 2008 – A Busy Year

## The Election Begins – Ballot Design

- Pierce County Voters received two ballot cards
  - Traditional Card
  - RCV Card
- Many hours spent developing instructions and ballot design

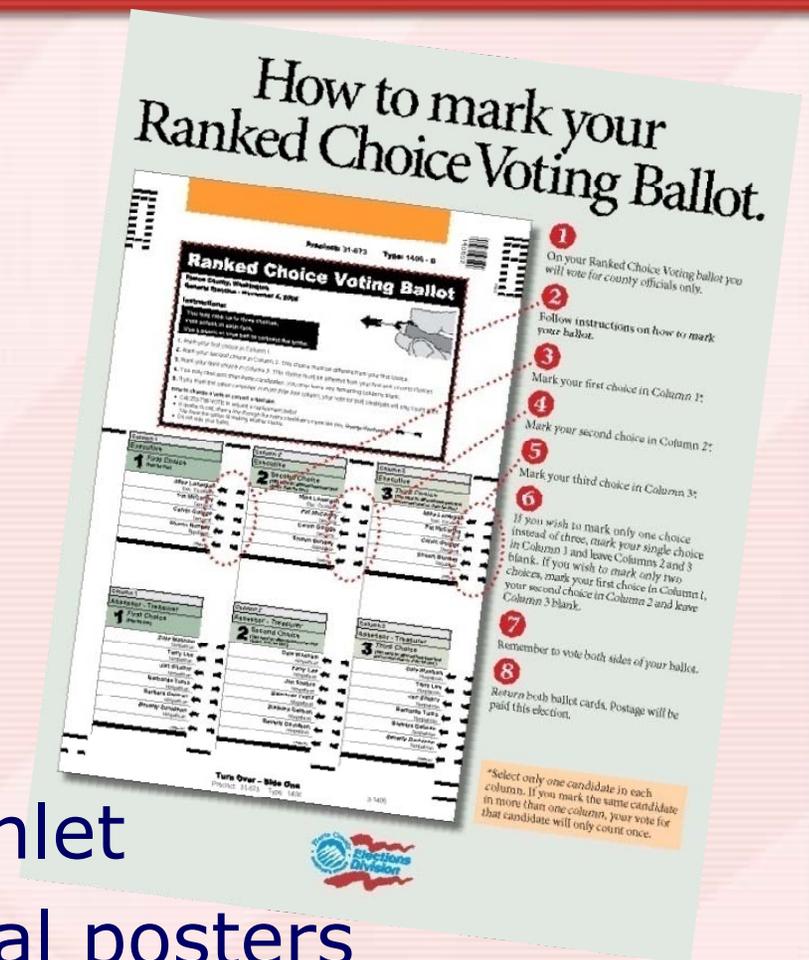


# Postage Concerns

- The return absentee ballot envelope with two ballots required more than one stamp
- We made the decision to pay return postage
- We did not want an extra stamp to be a deterrent to returning both ballots

# How did we educate our voters?

- Enhanced website
- Speakers Bureau
- Two Mailers
  - Postcard
  - Pamphlet
- Billboard
- Ballot insert
- Enhanced Voters' Pamphlet
- Polling place instructional posters
- PSAs on all major networks



# Ranked Choice Voting – How does it work?

The Ranked Choice Voting Ballot card allowed voters to rank up to three candidates in each race.

- Executive
- Assessor – Treasurer
- Sheriff
- County Council

Precinct: 31-673 Type: 1406 - B

**Ranked Choice Voting Ballot**

Pierce County, Washington  
General Election - November 4, 2008

**Instructions:**  
You may rank up to three choices.  
Vote across in each race.  
Use a pencil or blue pen to construct the arrow.

1. Mark your first choice in Column 1.
2. Mark your second choice in Column 2. This choice must be different from your first choice.
3. Mark your third choice in Column 3. This choice must be different from your first and second choices.
4. You may rank less than three candidates. You may leave any remaining columns blank.
5. If you mark the same candidate in more than one column, your vote for that candidate will only count once.

**How to change a vote or correct a mistake:**  
• Call 202-738-1078 to request a replacement ballot.  
• If unable to call, draw a line through the entire candidate's name like this: George Washington  
• You have the option of making another choice.  
• Do not sign your ballot.

**Column 1**  
Executive  
**1 First Choice**  
(Vote for One)  
Mike Lonergan  
Pat McCarthy  
Calvin Goings  
Shawn Burney

**Column 2**  
Executive  
**2 Second Choice**  
(This must be different from your first choice. Vote for One.)  
Mike Lonergan  
Pat McCarthy  
Calvin Goings  
Shawn Burney

**Column 3**  
Executive  
**3 Third Choice**  
(This must be different from your first and second choices. Vote for One.)  
Mike Lonergan  
Pat McCarthy  
Calvin Goings  
Shawn Burney

**Column 1**  
Assessor - Treasurer  
**1 First Choice**  
(Vote for One)  
Dale Washam  
Terry Lee  
Jan Shabro  
Bernardo Tuna  
Barbara Gelman  
Beverly Davidson

**Column 2**  
Assessor - Treasurer  
**2 Second Choice**  
(This must be different from your first choice. Vote for One.)  
Dale Washam  
Terry Lee  
Jan Shabro  
Bernardo Tuna  
Barbara Gelman  
Beverly Davidson

**Column 3**  
Assessor - Treasurer  
**3 Third Choice**  
(This must be different from your first and second choices. Vote for One.)  
Dale Washam  
Terry Lee  
Jan Shabro  
Bernardo Tuna  
Barbara Gelman  
Beverly Davidson

**Turn Over - Side One**  
Precinct 31-673 Type: 1406

3-1406

# How were the RCV ballots tabulated?

- Every first choice vote was counted.
- Any candidate who received a majority (more than 50%) of the first choice votes was declared the winner.
- If no candidate received a majority, a process of eliminating candidates and redistributing 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> choices occurred.

# So, how did it work?

- The candidate who received the fewest number of first choice votes was eliminated from the race.
- Next, voters who selected the eliminated candidate as their first choice had their second choice vote transferred and counted.
- Once the votes were transferred and counted, if a candidate received more than 50% of the votes, he or she was declared the winner.
- This process continued until one candidate had a winning majority (over 50%).

# How much did it cost?

2008 General Election Costs	<u>\$1,664,542</u>
RCV One Time Costs	<u>\$857,025</u>
- Software, Education, Equipment	
RCV Ongoing Costs	<u>\$769,773</u>
- Printing, Paper, Envelopes, Education, Staff	
RCV Subtotal	<u>\$1,626,798</u>
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$3,291,340</b>

# Did voters participate?

## **Voter Turnout:**

Traditional Ballot Cards counted	333,824
RCV Ballot Cards counted	312,771
<b>Total Ballot Cards Counted</b>	<b>646,595</b>
<b>Overall Turnout</b>	<b>81.20%</b>

## **Voter Drop-off/Voter Fatigue Stats:**

### **Executive's Race**

Voters who didn't return an RCV ballot	21,053
Voters who didn't select a 1 <sup>st</sup> Choice	13,330
Voters who didn't select a 2 <sup>nd</sup> Choice	91,510
Voters who didn't select a 3 <sup>rd</sup> Choice	140,439

### **Assessor – Treasurer's Race**

Voters who didn't return an RCV ballot	21,053
Voters who didn't select a 1 <sup>st</sup> Choice	50,431
Voters who didn't select a 2 <sup>nd</sup> Choice	125,270
Voters who didn't select a 3 <sup>rd</sup> Choice	150,833

# Did voters like it?

- We surveyed all voters and 90,738 responded
  - 29,206 **Liked** Ranked Choice Voting
    - 33.98%
  - 56,751 **Didn't Like** Ranked Choice Voting
    - 66.02%
  - 4,781 Undecided/Miscellaneous

**Note:** Three times the number of voters responded to this survey compared to the 2004 Pick-a-Party primary survey.

# Here's a sample of the positive comments

- "Very clear, Bravo!"
- "It was easy, Thanks."
- "I liked it."
- "Great job."
- "I understood how to vote. Thank you."
- "New ranking method is great."
- "Let's expand it to state races."
- "More Ranked Choice Voting!"

# Here's a sample of the negative comments .

- "Leave the ballots alone, why shove this down our throat, why?"
- "Keep the voting simple. Stop trying to fix what isn't broken."
- "Don't waste paper."
- "A useless endeavor and a waste of money."
- "Too complicated."
- "We vote for who we want and these extra votes I believe can only confuse the issue."
- "I'm very confused and I'm 75 years old. Too confusing."
- "I don't like it at all."
- "Traditional ballot is fantastic! What is the purpose and point of voting for 3 candidates? Isn't this an Election? NO Ranked Choice Voting, it seems fishy."

# 2008 – A Busy Year

## The Election is certified



### Ranked Choice Voting Results Table

Contest: County Executive  
Load Type: Complete

	Round 1			Round 2			Round 3		
	Votes	%	Transfer	Votes	%	Transfer	Votes	%	Transfer
Mike Lonergan	45330	15.15%	-45330	0	0.00%	0	0	0.00%	0
Pat McCarthy	79235	26.49%	+12973	92208	31.98%	+44138	136346	50.75%	0
Calvin Goings	69052	23.08%	+8375	77427	26.85%	-77427	0	0.00%	0
Shawn Bunney	105057	35.12%	+13633	118690	41.17%	+13602	132292	49.25%	0
Write-In	458	0.15%	-458	0	0.00%	0	0	0.00%	0
Exhausted by Over Votes	532		+61	593		+125	718		0
Under Votes	13107		0	13107		0	13107		0
Exhausted Ballots	0		+10746	10746		+19562	30308		0
Continuing Ballots	299132	100.00%		288325	100.00%		268638	100.00%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>312771</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>312771</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>312771</b>		<b>0</b>
<b>REMARKS</b>	*Tie resolved in accordance with election law.								

- Ballot Image Reports were posted to our website with each release of results

# The Administration of the Election was a Success!

- Success was predicated on preparation
- We utilized best practices from San Francisco
- The algorithm worked
  - We even ran it on Election Night
  - Results and ballot image reports were posted to our website
- Our overall variance was remarkable
  - 0.000181

# But success was not without significant challenges?

- Determined and requested an RCV budget
- Hired two additional staff members
- Hired an Election Consultant
- Spent hundreds of hours and resources to determine the protocols and procedures to implement and carry out Ranked Choice Voting
  - Staff time
  - Citizen input
- Provisional Emergency Certification of Voting System by Secretary of State
  - Central Count – Hired additional staff to transport ballots
  - Hired and trained over 600 staff
- Purchased software and equipment to conduct RCV

# And more challenges

- Confusion with some voters during the Primary and General Elections
  - Voters thought they could vote for two people in the Primary (Top Two)
  - Limited the Voter Education window
- Mailed two ballot cards to every absentee voter
  - Paid return postage to mitigate the need for multiple stamps for return ballots
- Issued two ballot cards to every poll voter
  - Made for longer waits at the polls
- Worked 24 hours per day for one week to tabulate ballots followed by 17 hour days up to certification
  - 333,824 Traditional Ballots Cast
  - 312,771 Ranked Choice Voting Ballots Cast
  - 646,595 Total Ballots Cast**
- Election results were released daily, however due to the second ballot card results were delayed because of the sheer volume of ballot cards

# Ranked Choice Voting in 2009 and Beyond?

- In January 2009, the Pierce County Council passed a Charter Amendment to repeal Ranked Choice Voting
  - Will appear on 2009 General Election ballot
- One RCV race (Auditor) for a one-year unexpired term will appear on the same ballot

# Ranked Choice Voting

## **Questions and Answers**

“Two issues of under voting emerged in the RCV contests in Pierce County. The first issue—that turnout was generally higher for non-RCV contests—came about likely for two reasons. First, absentee voters, who comprised 84% of all voters, received two ballots in the mail—one for traditional contests, the other for RCV contests. About 20,000 voters did not return their RCV ballots but returned their traditional ballots. In other words, turnout was lower for the RCV contests.<sup>10</sup> While turnout is generally”

Report on Pierce County election shows lower turnout with RCV than traditional election.

Official

### Ranked Choice Voting Results Table

Contest: **County Assessor - Treasurer**  
 Load Type: **Complete**

	Round 1			Round 2			Round 3			Round 4		
	Votes	%	Transfer	Votes	%	Transfer	Votes	%	Transfer	Votes	%	Transfer
Dale Washam	65676	25.02%	+6322	71998	28.94%	+10492	82490	36.44%	+15876	98366	51.93%	0
Terry Lee	50278	19.16%	+8245	58523	23.52%	+11686	70209	31.02%	-70209	0	0.00%	0
Jan Shabro	50023	19.06%	+8224	58247	23.41%	-58247	0	0.00%	0	0	0.00%	0
Bernardo Tuma	18205	6.94%	-18205	0	0.00%	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0.00%	0
Barbara Gelman	49874	19.00%	+10133	60007	24.12%	+13640	73647	32.54%	+17420	91067	48.07%	0
Beverly Davidson	27340	10.42%	-27340	0	0.00%	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0.00%	0
Write-In	1051	0.40%	-1051	0	0.00%	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0.00%	0
Exhausted by Over Votes	363		+71	434		+73	507		+93	600		0
Under Votes	49961		0	49961		0	49961		0	49961		0
Exhausted Ballots	0		+13601	13601		+22356	35957		+36820	72777		0
Continuing Ballots	262447	100.00%		248775	100.00%		226346	100.00%		189433	100.00%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>312771</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>312771</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>312771</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>312771</b>		<b>0</b>
REMARKS	*Tie resolved in accordance with election law.											

262,810 voted in this race. Many did not select Washam on their ballot.

Washam elected with 98,366 votes. 37% Support of Votes that day, but a majority of “continuing ballots” - ones that were not thrown out. 63% did not vote for Washam.



**ABOUT**

This blog offers readers a behind-the-scenes glimpse of The News Tribune's opinion sections. We post observations, our editorials prior to publication, commentary we can't fit into the print edition and interesting ideas we've come across. Staff bloggers are Patrick O'Callahan, Cheryl Tucker and Kim Bradford; guest bloggers are Karen Irwin, Michael Allen, Richard Davis and David Seago.

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**POLITICAL AND POLICY COMMENTARY**

## Julie Anderson for Pierce County auditor

POSTED BY PATRICK O'CALLAHAN ON OCTOBER 19, 2009 AT 8:07 PM [SHARE THIS](#)

*This editorial will appear in tomorrow's print edition.*

A funny thing happened to the Pierce County auditor's office in the two years since citizens voted to make it nonpartisan: It seems to have become more partisan than ever.

Its current occupant, Jan Shabro, was appointed by the Republican majority on the County Council early this year after former Auditor Pat McCarthy was elected county executive.

In appointing Shabro, the council rebuffed the Democratic Party's nominees – which included Shabro's chief challenger, staunch Democrat Julie Anderson. The contest this year looks as partisan as any in the past.

Perhaps it's understandable that the Republicans and Democrats want to keep their stamp on the office. The auditor gets to print her name on every ballot sent out, which is a nice way to pick up name familiarity. That makes the position a good springboard to higher office, as McCarthy's election demonstrated.

Still, the county's chief elections officer ought to be more than nominally nonpartisan, if only to avoid the perception (inaccurate so far) that a particular party has its thumb on the scale when the ballots are counted. Running elections is pure administrative work, as are licensing, animal-control and the other responsibilities of the office. There's no liberal or conservative way to chase pit bulls.

Looking at this choice in terms of administrative experience, we think Anderson has the advantage.

A former lawmaker and County Council member, Shabro has impressive credentials as a legislator. Anderson – a member of the Tacoma City Council – has worked as an administrator in state government and as a director of nonprofit organizations. She has displayed a formidable attention to detail that would serve her well as auditor.

The third candidate in the race, Will Baker, deserves special mention. He's been arrested many times for disrupting public meetings, and he's been convicted of disorderly conduct.

He's made a hobby of running for office, and we would ordinarily regard his candidacy as a joke. Under ranked-choice voting, however, he could conceivably win if he garners enough second-choice votes. Not all diehard Republicans and Democrats are aware of Baker's past, and some might choose him over the better known candidate from the other party. When he ran for state auditor as a Republican in 2004, he won a dismaying one-third of the total vote.

Another perennial candidate with no apparent qualifications, Dale Washam, managed to get himself elected assessor-treasurer on an RCV ballot last year. The assessor-treasurer's office is now in predictable disarray. Let's not repeat the mistake with a candidate who, unlike Washam, actually has a criminal record.

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**TAGS:** [AUDITOR](#), [ENDORSEMENTS](#), [JAN SHABRO](#), [JULIE ANDERSON](#), [PIERCE COUNTY](#)

Opinion of the News Tribune, IRV has elected Perennial Candidates with no apparent qualifications (elected with 37% support)



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## Pierce County Auditor

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### Julie Anderson

**Residence:** Tacoma  
**Contact:** 253-761-3602  
**E-mail:** [julie@julieanderson.org](mailto:julie@julieanderson.org)  
**Website:** [www.julieanderson.org](http://www.julieanderson.org)  
**Occupation:** Deputy Mayor, City of Tacoma



**Experience:** Political -Tacoma City Council, 2004-present Executive management -State of Washington: Department of Commerce, 2007-2009; DSHS, 1996-1998 -Dome District business district, 2002-2003 -The YWCA of Pierce County, 1998-2001 -Episcopal Services for Youth, 1990-1996 Community leadership -American Leadership Forum, 2003-present -City Club of Tacoma, 2003-present -League of Women Voters, 2003-present -Women's Political Caucus, 2003-present -Pierce County: Sheriff's Advisory Board, 2003 -- 2004; Law Enforcement Support Agency, 1997-2001; Commission Against Domestic Violence, 1998-2000 -Council of Executive Directors, 1993-2001

**Education:** M.S., Criminal Justice Administration, Northeastern University, Boston, MA. (1990). Concentration: Administration, civil liability, and constitutional law. Alpha Phi Sigma National Honor Society. B.A., Liberal Arts, Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA (1987). Concentration: Sociology. Hundreds of hours of formal training in executive management, leadership and public relations since degree completion.

#### Do you support keeping polls open? Why or why not?

Unfortunately, this issue is likely beyond our control. The Legislature is poised to eliminate polling stations. Pierce is the only county in Washington with polls. Polls are more expensive to operate, require two different types of vote tabulation, and increase the time needed to count votes. In light of impending poll closure, I will work with citizens to address their loss of civic tradition and improve their trust in absentee ballots.

#### Do you support or oppose the charter amendment that would end ranked choice voting?

While RCV promised to reduce election costs and diversify candidates, my doorbelling experience reveals that most regular voters -- after only one RCV election -- are disenchanted. The Auditor must be the loyal implementer of whatever system the voters will select in November. My duty is to make any election system as efficient, easy to understand, and accurate as possible. If voters retain RCV, I will work tirelessly to improve voter education and cost-effectiveness.

#### In light of the county's budget problems, how would you save money in the auditor's office?

The Auditor must control expenses and grow revenue. I will end the practice of using public resources for political advancement. Each employee will be selected based on merit. Printed materials and advertisements will be for public benefit, not self-promotion. I will also evaluate: -New activities that generate revenue, such as the highly-successful passport service. -Expanding website features for recording, licensing, and certain election functions. -Broadening the product range offered by contractors.

#### Personal Statement:

People should come before politics. As your Auditor, I will place your interests first. When voters made the Auditor a nonpartisan position, they did so for a reason. It was a clear directive to take the politics out of the office. I am an independent community leader with a reputation for hard work, fairness, integrity, and straight talk. That's why Congressman Adam Smith and State Auditor Brian Sonntag support me for Pierce County Auditor.

### Jan Shabro

**Residence:** Bonney Lake  
**Contact:** 253-740-6781  
**E-mail:** [JShabroCampaign@q.com](mailto:JShabroCampaign@q.com)  
**Website:** [www.janshabro.com](http://www.janshabro.com)  
**Occupation:** Pierce County Auditor



**Experience:** Pierce County Auditor -- Jan.2009 to present State Representative, 31st Leg. Dist. -- 2003-2007 Pierce County Councilmember, District #1 -- 1995-2002 Past & Present Civic Involvement: Founder & member: Save Lake Tapps Task Force Past President: Economic Development Corporation of Pierce County Past Chair: Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health Past Chair: Zoo & NW Trek Authority Past Member: Pierce County Regional Council Member: City Club Member: Creator Lutheran Church Member: Tacoma Literacy Council

**Education:** Bachelor of Science in Education -- Pacific Lutheran University, 1964 Master of the Arts in Administration --Pacific Lutheran University 1988

#### Do you support keeping polls open? Why or why not?

Yes. I am a poll voter and think voting with one's neighbors is an important public act of citizenship. As more of our communication, social interaction, etc. is one electronically, poll voting offers an opportunity for community, face-to-face interaction. When parents take their children to the polls, it is a concrete example of civic involvement that children remember and replicate.

#### Do you support or oppose the charter amendment that would end ranked choice voting?

I support eliminating ranked choice voting. It is confusing to voters and expensive. Sixty-six percent of voters who used the system in the last general election disliked it. It's very expensive -- almost doubling election costs. By November, we will have spent \$ 2.3 million to conduct RCV elections. Considering our poor economy, the fact I've cut my budget by almost \$1 million, and will have to furlough staff in January, we cannot afford it.

#### In light of the county's budget problems, how would you save money in the auditor's office?

Since January, I've cut the budget almost \$ 1 million dollars. We've eliminated both extra hire and permanent positions. Also, we have cross-trained staff, reduced candidate's statements to 150 words in the Voters' Pamphlet (saving \$34,000), eliminated training, memberships, travel, and special events. In January, my deputy and I will take furloughs one day a week, and staff may have to take six a year. Unfortunately, the last thing left is to cut jobs.

## Political Buzz

Let's talk politics.

Tuesday, February 10th, 2009

### Pierce County voters will decide fate of new voting system

Posted by **David Wickert** @ 04:29:19 pm

Pierce County voters will decide in November whether to repeal an election system they used for the first time last fall.

By a vote of 6-1, the County Council approved an amendment to the county charter this afternoon that would repeal ranked choice voting. Now the fate of the election system goes to voters for the third time in three years.

Pierce County voters approved ranked choice voting in 2006 and modified it in 2007. The vote was widely interpreted as a rebuke of the state's unpopular "pick a party" primary, which required voters to state a party preference in primary elections.

Ranked choice voting addressed that issue by eliminating primary elections for most county offices. Instead, all candidates for those offices advance to the general election.

Under the new system, voters rank candidates in order of preference. If no one receives a majority of first-place votes, the candidate with the fewest number of votes is eliminated and voters' second and third choices are taken into account.

The process of eliminating candidates continues until someone gets a majority of votes.

Supporters of ranked choice voting say it encourages more candidates to participate and gives voters more choices in the general election. That seemed to be the case last November, when four candidates vied for county executive and six ran for assessor-treasurer.

Opponents say the system is too confusing and didn't give voters the chance to properly vet all the candidates.

Today the council elected to let voters decide who's right.

[More:]

"I think voters are wanting to revisit this question," said Councilman **Shawn Bunney**, R-Lake Tapps.

Councilman **Dick Muri**, R-Steilacoom, cast the lone vote against the proposal.

"I think this is a good system and I want to see us get one more shot at it," Muri said.

No matter what voters decide, they will get one more shot at ranked choice voting. Next November the system will be used in a special election for county auditor.

## Political Buzz

Talking WA politics.

### Pierce charter amendment supporters, opponents squabble over campaign cash

Post by [David Wickert](#) on Oct. 15, 2009 at 9:41 am | [View comments](#)

Supporters and opponents of three proposed Pierce County charter amendments have been trading jabs recently.

**Alex Hays**, president of the Pierce County [Better Government League](#), which supports the three amendments, has accused opponents of accepting "secret campaign cash" from an out-of-state group.

State Public Disclosure Commission records show [Citizens Against Rigging the System](#), which opposes the charter amendments, has accepted \$22,000 from Fair Vote, a Maryland nonprofit. According to its web site, the group advocates for election law changes it believes will increase voter participation and give voters "more meaningful ballot choices."

Fair Vote has contributed more than 80 percent of the money raised by Citizens Against Rigging the System.

Hays says the contributions undermine the principal that "local issues should be decided by local people." He contends Fair Vote has not disclosed its contributors, so voters don't know who's ultimately behind the contributions. And he suggests the contributions are illegal because Fair Vote is a nonprofit and can't support a political campaign.

Popycock, says **Kelly Haughton** of Citizens Against Rigging the System. Or words to that effect.

In a statement released following Hays' accusations, Haughton said IRS regulations allow nonprofits like Fair Vote to devote up to 20 percent of their income to advocacy for or against ballot measures and legislation.

Haughton noted the Fair Vote board is chaired by Washington resident **Krist Novoselic**, a former Tacoma resident. He said Fair Vote's financial backers include the Ford Foundation and Carnegie Corporation.

Haughton contends Hays is trying to change the subject from unpopular charter amendments proposed by incumbent politicians to help themselves.

Near as I can tell, Haughton is right about IRS regulations. I found this in a "frequently asked questions" document on the IRS web site.

“ May a section 501(c)3 organization make a contribution to a ballot measure committee (committees supporting or opposing ballot initiatives or referenda)?

Yes, a section 501(c)3 organization may make a contribution to a ballot measure committee (committees supporting or opposing ballot initiatives or referenda), but it must include such contributions in its lobbying calculations for purposes of determining whether a substantial part of its activities consist of attempting to influence legislation.

For the record, here's what the fighting is about:

- Proposition 1 would move the election of the county executive and council to odd-numbered years by 2015 and increase term limits for those offices from two consecutive four-year terms to three consecutive four-year terms.

#### CONTACT US



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• Proposition 2 would move the election of auditor, assessor-treasurer and sheriff to odd-numbered years by 2015.

• Proposition 3 would eliminate ranked choice voting and restore the primary and general election system for all county elected offices.

Here are the two sides' dueling statements about the Fair Vote campaign contributions:

From Alex Hays:

For Immediate Release 30 September 2009

Contact Alex Hays, PCBGL President: office 253.756.7836, cell 253.861.0103 or [alex-hays@pcbgl.org](mailto:alex-hays@pcbgl.org)

Pierce County Better Government League to C.A.R.S.: "Return the funny money"

82% of "CARS" funding comes from the Maryland based 501 (c) (3) organization "Fair Vote" in an apparent violation of federal law and the principals of Washington State's campaign finance disclosure requirements.

Tacoma, WA – "Local issues should be decided by local people" said League President Alex Hays, "this principal is under attack by the ironically named *Citizens Against Rigging the System*, who have taken over 80% of their funding from a single out of state special interest group"

PDC records show that Citizens Against Rigging the System (CARS) is funded entirely by two organizations: Fair Vote of Takoma, Maryland and a political action committee that shares CARS's P.O. Box. Of the total \$27,000 contributed to CARS, \$22,000 has been donated by Fair Vote and \$5,000 from the PAC that is itself heavily funded by Fair Vote.

It appears that Fair Vote's contribution is the largest to a Pierce County Charter Amendment campaign on record.

CARS opposes the three elections reform charter amendments that will appear on this November's ballot, which includes repealing the costly and unfair "Ranked Choice Voting" system which Pierce County experimented with in 2008.

Hays explained the unusual donation, "We know that Ranked Choice Voting rewards political extremism and distorts elections to give more power to the far left and the far right, Fair Vote represents the far left in the effort push Ranked Choice Voting on the people of America."

Other serious issues make the Fair Vote contribution troubling. Fair Vote is listed as a 501 (c) (3) organization and it appears cannot lawfully donate to CARS. Fair Vote's donors are not disclosed, effectively allowing the extremist organization to inject secret campaign cash into CARS or even money that would otherwise be revealed to be an illegal contribution to CARS.

"To illustrate the danger Fair Vote represents through an admittedly extreme example," said Hays, "this money could be coming from George Soros, the Ku Klux Klan or the Communist Party."

"Secret money is funny money and poses a real danger to democracy. This money must be returned. Fair Vote must fully disclose its current donors," said Hays.

Pierce County Charter Amendments 1, 2 and 3 will appear on the general election ballot. These measures will together shift county elections to odd numbered years, set a limit of three terms of service for County Executive and County Council and repeal the Ranked Choice Voting system the county experimented with in 2008. The PCBGL, through its allied political action committee the PCBGL Voter Education Fund, will support all three charter amendments as part of the League's commitment to good government reforms.

Neither the PCBGL nor the PCBGL Voter Education Fund will solicit or accept contributions from donors outside Washington State. All league activity through the time period of the election is funded through the VEF, which further guarantees compliance with disclosure requirements. "The effort to approve 1, 2 and 3 will be locally funded," concluded Hays.

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END

From Kelly Haughton:

“ Pro-Rigging Group Tries to Change the Subject

With Losing Issues, PCBGL Tries to Attack Messenger

Last week, Alex Hayes and the so-called Pierce County Better Government League (PCBGL) issued a news release attacking Citizens Against Rigging the System and some of its sources of funding.

Kelly Haughton of Citizens Against Rigging the System dismissed the attacks. “This is a case of a political operative trying the usual tricks of attack politics. When you don’t have majority support for your candidate or your issue, you resort to attacks on your opponent. But it’s not going to work because we have the strength of argument — and electoral majority — on our side.”

Citizens Against Rigging the System was formed this year to oppose charter amendments one, two and three — a set of measures designed to personally benefit board members of PCBGL as well as other members of the County Council. The amendments would make it possible for incumbents to stay in office for over a decade by extending their own terms, double how much they can raise from their largest contributors, reduce political competition and move selected offices to lower turnout odd-year elections. Headed by county incumbent politicians, the PCBGL was formed to promote their own careers by rigging the system in their favor.

In the specific case of ranked choice voting, the county council is trying to undo a charter amendment proposed through the traditional charter revision process in 2006 and passed by the voters that year and upheld by a landslide margin in 2007 when first attacked by the county council. In the first ranked choice voting elections in 2008, the number of competitive elections and candidates jumped significantly from the previous system. The system has the strong support of many county civic leaders, including the League of Women Voters of Pierce County. PCBGL wants to restrict the number of candidates running for county level positions. The measures they are advocating are designed to give us a repeat of 2006 when the five incumbents ran for re-election — four of them unopposed — the other with only token opposition.

“Rather than try to defend the county council’s latest attack on our charter,” said Haughton, “incumbent-laden PCBGL makes bizarre accusations against those defending the charter and county voters.”

The largest contributor to Citizens Against Rigging the System is FairVote – The Center for Voting and Democracy. FairVote is a highly respected national organization that is widely recognized as the leading backer of ranked choice voting. Its board chair is musician Krist Novoselic, a Washington resident who used to live in Tacoma. Other board members include New Yorker magazine essayist Hendrik Hertzberg, the Advancement Project’s Eddie Hailes and former Republican Congressman and presidential candidate John Anderson. Foundation funders for its projects include the Ford Foundation and Carnegie Corporation. For many years, it has been designed as an organization that can receive gifts from the Combined Federal Campaign.

More specifically, PCBGL alleges that FairVote as a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization cannot make a donation to a committee organized to take positions on ballot measures. This is false, as they should know from reviewing the IRS code and the Public Disclosure Commission’s website. Organizations like FairVote can devote up to 20% of their income to advocacy for and against ballot measures and legislation. It is following standard practice. A quick perusal of the PDC website shows several ballot committees in Washington receiving contributions from national organizations.

FairVote’s board chair Krist Novoselic commented, “We are proud to support all the grassroots activists and groups like the League of Women Voters working hard for a better democracy in Pierce County. I attended Pierce County Charter Review Commission meetings in 2006 in support of the many people testifying on behalf of IRV and improved voter choice. We supported the charter commission’s recommendations for ranked choice voting in 2006 and are pleased to be able to support those defending that victory in 2009. Not all incumbent politicians like ranked choice voting, but voters like having better choic-

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Candidate or Committee Name (Do not abbreviate. Use full name.)  
 Citizens Against Rigging the System

Mailing Address  
 P.O. Box 1743

City Tacoma, WA Zip + 4 98401-1743 Office Sought (candidates) Election Date 2009

1. MONETARY CONTRIBUTIONS DEPOSITED IN ACCOUNT

Date Received	Amount	Total
a. Anonymous .....		
b. Candidate's personal funds deposited in the bank (include candidate loans in 1c).....		
c. Loans, notes, security agreements. Attach Schedule L.....		
d. Miscellaneous receipts (interest, refunds, auctions, other). Attach explanation .....		
e. Small contributions \$25.00 or less not itemized and number of persons giving _____ (persons)		

2. CONTRIBUTIONS OVER \$25.00

Date Received	Contributor's Name, Address, City, State, Zip	Contributions of more than \$100: Employer's Name, City and State	P R I	G R E N	Amount	Aggregate* Total
10/23/09	FAIRVOTE 6930 Carroll Avenue, Suite 610 Takoma, MD 20912-4498				1,000.00	23,000.00
		Occupation				
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	<input type="checkbox"/> Check here if additional pages are attached	Sub-total Amount from attached pages			1,000.00 0.00	

3. TOTAL FUNDS RECEIVED AND DEPOSITED OR CREDITED TO ACCOUNT  
 Sum of parts 1 and 2 above. Enter this amount in line 1, Schedule A to C4.

1,000.00 \*See reverse for details.

4. Date of Deposit 10/23/09

Treasurer's Signature Douglas E Sharp

Treasurer's Business Telephone No. (253) 278-1101

I certify that this report is true and complete to the best of my knowledge

Date 10-25-2009

# Pierce voters nix 'ranked-choice voting'

by David Ammons | November 10th, 2009



It was widely advertised as the latest cool thing in voting – “ranked-choice voting” or “instant-runoff voting.”

Just three years ago, Pierce County voters, responding to a proposal from the charter review commission, approved this new system for all county elected officials except judges and prosecutors. This system, used rather than the Top 2 Primary, essentially combines the primary and general. Voters pick their favorites for each office, ranking their choices 1-2-3. Candidates who win strictly on first-place ballots are declared elected. If no one does, then second and third choices are apportioned out. The factoring is done by a computerized algorithm.

It has always been kinda confused to explain, but advocates believed it would be

extremely popular and then possibly catch on elsewhere. Its biggest usage was last year when a new County Executive and other offices were filled this way, running in tandem with the regular state primary and general elections.

It went downhill from there. Voters participating in an auditor’s survey said by a 2-to-1 margin that they didn’t like the system. And this year, it was back on the ballot –and voters have thrown it out by a 71-29 margin.

## Political Buzz

Talking WA politics.

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## RCV repeal winning big; term limits extension failing

POSTED BY DAVID WICKERT ON NOVEMBER 3, 2009 AT 9:09 PM [SHARE THIS](#)

First returns on on Pierce County charter amendments:

**Proposition 1** (term limits extension for county exec, council):

Approve: 33.5%

Reject: 66.5%

**Proposition 2** (move elections for assessor-treasurer, auditor, sheriff to odd-numbered years):

Approve: 48.4%

Reject: 51.6%

**Proposition 3** (repeal ranked choice voting):

Approve: 71.8%

Reject: 28.2%

**CATEGORIES:** BALLOT MEASURES, PIERCE COUNTY

**TAGS:**

# Amend county constitution carefully, or not at all

## HIGHLIGHTS

Pierce County Charter Review Commission is hard at work for six months

Listening to citizens and preserving direct democracy is part of its job

That doesn't mean it must advance a long slate of charter amendments





## FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Grass-roots democracy doesn't come any grass-rootsier than the Pierce County Charter Review Commission. Think of it as a trusty old lawn tractor that seldom leaves the barn, but when it runs, the blade is always at the lowest level.

Can representative government get more down-to-earth than this? Commission members meet in no-frills annex rooms and school auditoriums. On a rainy night last week, cookies and pastries greeted a dozen or so earnest citizens who turned out at Peninsula High School to urge the commission to make changes to the county's home-rule charter.

In an impressive display of Jacksonian democracy, they discussed initiative and referendum powers, term limits and other wonky but important rules designed to keep county government subservient to the people.

The charter, adopted in 1980, contains a requirement that it be reviewed at least every 10 years in a process that stretches over a full year – a marathon ill-suited for the fainthearted or easily bored. Last fall, voters elected 21 citizens to sit on this obscure panel, which will meet six months and then go out of business.

The commission has the option to leave the charter untouched, but it's likely to propose amendments and forward them to the November ballot. In the last go-round a decade ago, nine amendments were sent to voters.

In some ways the charter resembles the U.S. Constitution, right down to the "We the People" leading the preamble. They're also similar in that the freeholders/forefathers intended for them to be changed rarely and cautiously.

Look back to the 2006 charter review cycle for an example of a commission taking a wrong turn. Ranked-choice voice was the next cool election idea, winning the support of the commission, the voters and this newspaper's editorial board. But instead of being as "easy as 1-2-3," RCV caused rampant confusion and was repealed a few years later.

It would behoove this year's review panel to remember that mistake. The national and state election ballot will be crowded enough without a dizzying list of local charter amendments thrown in.

Before last year's election, most of the 88 commission candidates said they weren't running with preconceived agendas to monkey with the charter. "If it's not broken, don't fix it," said former County Executive John Ladenburg, one of many experienced hands who ran and won.

But this group was elected against the backdrop of a nasty referendum fight over the county's plans to build a \$230 million administrative headquarters. Gig Harbor resident Jerry Gibbs was sued by the county when he filed to put the building proposal to a public vote. He ultimately gathered enough signatures to secure a spot on the ballot. Voters then overwhelmingly blocked the building.

Sure enough, Gibbs and his supporters were first in line at last week's charter review meeting, asking for stronger referendum rights. The commission should think carefully before complying. The charter's authors had respect but not worshipfulness for direct democracy, making it neither too difficult nor too easy.

Other ideas that have bubbled up from the public range from the reasonable (require County Council meetings to be held during evening hours) to the ridiculous (increase the size of the County Council from its current seven highly paid politicians).

Charter review members also have begun to pitch their own amendments, such as thought-provoking proposals to change the council and the prosecuting attorney to nonpartisan positions.

County freeholders were wise to call for periodic vetting of the charter they wrote. But this year's commission would be misguided to think that to justify going through the decennial exercise, it must present voters with a long menu of amendments.

Every good landscaper knows that when a blade cuts too aggressively, it can weaken the roots and increase the risk of weeds.

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## **MORE MEETINGS AHEAD**

The next meeting of the Charter Review Commission will be Wednesday (March 16) at 7 p.m. at the Pierce County Annex, 2401 S. 35th St., Tacoma. For a calendar of other meetings, go online to [co.pierce.wa.us](http://co.pierce.wa.us)