

Instant Runoff Voting – Costs and Effects on Voters and Voting

Studying the value and risks of Instant Runoff Voting

We caution organizations that are in a rush and a hurry to implement IRV or other type voting methods that are unknown quantities to remember the lesson of HAVA. That was rushed through as well and we've seen what happened as a result.

This information is provided as part of an encompassing research on voting integrity.

Advocates of Instant Runoff voting claim that IRV saves counties money by preventing the need for costly runoff elections; that it empowers third parties; that it will prevent the “spoiler” effect; and that it is fairer to voters.

Critics of Instant Runoff Voting say that it negatively impacts election integrity, increases costs and labor for elections, audits and recounts, making them more onerous, does not meet its political promise, doesn't help third parties, does not allow voters 2nd chance to elect their preferred candidate, and does nothing about the problem of ballot access for third parties.

Find out what actual election officials and political consultants say about IRV as employed in their jurisdiction. Find out what IRV is. Learn why IRV was rejected in by the city councils of Raleigh and Rocky Mount North Carolina. Find out why nationally recognized statistician Kathy Dopp warns that IRV will impair election integrity, or why Chuck Herrin, IT Certification specialist and White Hat Hacker says that IRV is not logistically viable and introduces too much complexity to our election process. Read the report by CALPERS, by California Public Employees' Retirement System trustees and the reason they chose not to adopt IRV. Find out whether IRV really does improve elections and save money.

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What is Instant Runoff Voting and Who Is Advocating It

How will the “pilot program” for IRV be carried out in North Carolina?

According to NC Session Law 2006-192: "instant runoff voting" means a system in which voters rank up to three of the candidates by order of preference, first, second, or third. If the candidate with the most first-choice votes receives the threshold of victory of the first-choice votes, that candidate wins. If no candidate receives the threshold of victory of first-choice votes, the two candidates with the greatest number of first-choice votes advance to a second round of counting. In this round, each ballot counts as a vote for whichever of the two final candidates is ranked highest by the voter. The candidate with the most votes in the second round wins the election.

Fair Vote, a national organization also known as the Center for Voting and Democracy is the driving force behind the push for the Instant Runoff Voting method.

Fair Vote, on its website says that:

“Instant runoff voting is a winner-take-all, constitutionally protected, voting system that ensures a winning candidate will receive an absolute majority of votes rather than a simple plurality. **IRV eliminates the need for runoff elections** by allowing voters to rank their candidates in order of preference.” <http://www.fairvote.org/irv/whatis2.htm>

'FairVote pursues an innovative, solution-oriented pro-democracy agenda. Our vision of an **equally secure, meaningful and effective vote for all Americans** is founded on the principles articulated in the Declaration of Independence, Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech: we are created equal, government is of, by and for the people and it is time to make real the promise of democracy.

'Founded in 1992 and operating for many years as the Center for Voting and Democracy, FairVote is the leading national organization acting to transform our elections to achieve unfettered, fraud-free access to participation, a full spectrum of meaningful choices and majority rule with fair representation and a voice for all.

'Achieving our goals rests upon bold, but achievable reforms: a constitutionally protected right to vote, direct election of the president, instant runoff voting for executive elections and proportional voting for legislative elections. As a reform catalyst, we develop and promote practical strategies to improve elections for local, state and national leaders.'
<http://www.fairvote.org/?page=2>

News Update – City Councils of Raleigh North Carolina and Rocky Mount North Carolina decide:

Raleigh City Council Tables Instant Runoff Voting Proposal

Council Members cite concerns about voter disenfranchisement, complexity, lack of transparency, cites value of one-on-one candidate runoffs.

On April 3, 2007 in the Raleigh City Council chambers, 6 out of the 8 council members expressed concerns about Instant Run-off Voting (aka Ranked Choice Voting). There was obviously no support for bringing IRV to Raleigh for the upcoming City of Raleigh elections. The motion was tabled meaning that no action would be taken to implement IRV.

Below are transcripts of the meeting that I prepared from the video of the meeting.

Council member Dr. James P. West:

"I indicated that I have some concerns about this especially in disenfranchises certain segment of voters.. especially those of lower socio economic level , I think we have had some examples of that in Florida.

There's a perception of trust, and I think we should make sure that the democratic process and try to make sure that everybody participates.

A vote-less people is a hopeless people, what we don't want in this great city

I have met with some elected officials, I also had an informal conversation with our WAC representatives, as well as a representative of the Wake County Voters Coalition, without going into a whole lot of detail, **I could give you a litany of reasons on why this thing is wrong**

But when we weigh on one side of the ledger. Other, especially some people's skepticism, sometimes they don't even look on the other side of the ballot,..

My sixth sense and what I can pick up from the people that I represent is that this is not the time, educate people well in advance, I just cannot support it at this time. Dr. West"

Council member Philip Isley:

"I agree with Dr. West, I'm not going to support it. It feels to me to be a little un-American frankly..." You don't have the opportunity to go to the ballot for your candidate twice.

If someone does want to support a particular candidate, and..

..I just see a great chance for a lot of confusion to exist. it's expensive obviously to have a runoff election, that's what we have in place...

Frankly I think it's odd enough to have odd year elections, but to throw in this monkey wrench into that election cycle in my mind, may actually decrease how many people come out to vote...

I likewise don't think we are ready for this thereby am probably voting against it."

Council member Thomas Crowder:

"I expressed concerns at our last meeting, I still have those concerns...

Just like blackjack in Las Vegas, we are going to see a lot of game-men's-ship trying figure out the odds on putting people into office, and similar concerns, that um Mr. Isley and Mr. West expressed as well.

I thought of a compromise, we could put just the mayoral up, but that means Mr. Mayor that we would have to put up three other people against you as well. Maybe we need to look at just one race as a pilot type process .rather than opening up the whole process in the future.."

Council member Joyce Kekas:

"I agree with all three another thing I'd like to see is if you are going to do pilot programs.. then probably do them in a smaller location, not so much the capitol city. I think it's un-American, I will vote against it."

Council member Tommy Craven:

"to me this is something that would certainly serve the convenience of the board of elections, and maybe save the city a little money, but it's certainly not in the best interest of the voting public."

Council member Russ Stephenson:

"I actually ran into the chair of the Wake BOE and had a discussion, expressed my concerns, really echoing concerns that Mr. West had, so we sat down and scratched out a little test ballot, and said - just looking at my race, an at my race, a large race, the most complicated race, our conversation went on for some time, and based on the length of our discussion, it took us this long- and you're the expert - to figure this out, then I'm not sure this is really the way to go.

April 3, 2007 Raleigh City Council Meeting on video -

http://raleigh.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=2 click on the button that says video by that date* - **there is a drop down button that allows you to jump to the section specifically where they talk about IRV.*

Rocky Mount: *More resist new runoff voting idea*

By Zach Ahmad Rocky Mount Telegram Monday, April 23, 2007

TARBORO – As Twin Counties elections officials prepare to decide on instant runoff voting for Rocky Mount, the list of those opposing the experiment is growing.

...Rocky Mount Councilman Reuben Blackwell, who has announced that he will likely run for mayor, said he thinks it is the wrong time and place to test the method.

"To cast out an instant runoff speculative experiment in communities that have had historic voting rights violations issues is absolutely wrong," Blackwell said. "I think this needs to be studied further before it is done anywhere."

Blackwell added that the current runoff system, though time-consuming, allows voters a chance to re-evaluate options after the field is narrowed rather than making that decision ahead of time.

Concerns have also been raised by council members Andre Knight and Lois Watkins, who have said they will vote against it. Knight pointed out recent controversy surrounding the Edgecombe County Board of Elections and said that should make any significant voting change suspect.

"I'm not quite sure with that Board of Elections," Knight said. "It's not a good time with all the distrust and all in our county..."

<http://www.rockymounttelegram.com/news/content/news/stories/2007/04/23/instantrunoff.html>

Now U Know So What U Going To Do?: Most resist new voter runoff idea in (IRV)

Monday, April 23, 2007 at 01:39 by The Political Agitator

Note: I can't understand why any of the Council persons would want to entertain this idea when it was the State Board of Elections and Democracy NC who suggested Rocky Mount try this. Did they speak to the black politicians and community activist before going to the Board of Elections? Nope. Wiggins, I would love to know what his reservations are. Combs who is running for Mayor probably see it as somewhat an advantage since Blackwell may run for Mayor also. Miller's comments are ignorant because voter confusion alone should be the reason to vote this down when there is very little time to educate the voters.

Note: State Board of Elections Director explains Instant RunOff Voting in Rocky Mount

Does Instant Runoff Voting meet FairVote's vision of "equally secure, meaningful and effective vote for all Americans"?

Secure - does IRV impact the efficacy of performing audits and recounts, without making them prohibitive in time, difficulty and expense?

Meaningful – does IRV ensure that the voter's ballot counts as they intend it too? Studies say that voter education is essential to ensure that more voters know they are expected to rank their choices, and the "rules" of doing so. Failure to understand this affects just how much the ballot counts.

Effective – does IRV increase democracy, provide security, reduce election costs, and make elections more meaningful?

Is Instant Runoff Voting Secure?

Computer Security Expert Chuck Herrin's advice to North Carolina lawmakers -

Instant Runoff Voting (By Hand, of Course. It CAN Be Done):

I think that IRV is a fabulous goal, long term. It stands to greatly reduce runoff costs and other problems once we have systems that can reliably handle it. **The problem right now is that our electronic voting systems cannot reliably count straight races**, and even the DRE manufacturers have said that they are not ready for IRV.

Complicating things, IRV introduces a more confusing system in terms of auditability and security, since the ballots are more complex and normal indicators such as exit polls will not be able to easily reflect IRV results.

Tracing back the will of the voter in the event of problems or fraud would be more difficult with IRV until a reliable procedure and design is in place, and any abuses are much less likely to be detected since the whole point of the IRV system is avoiding recounts.

That's not to say that it can't be done, just that it is extremely important to get it right the first time, with proper design and certification.

Instant Runoff Voting is a great goal for us to work toward, but if we need to get a system in place for 2006 and 2008, IRV is not logistically viable. For IRV to work, we need systems that are trustworthy and reliable, and that takes more time and money than we have available before the next election.

An analogy I use for IRV is the flying car - definitely possible, and a great idea, but right now we won't get there by strapping a missile to a Yugo. Would it fly? Sure - but I don't think it's what we want to rely on for safe and reliable transportation.

I would be happy to work with you towards IRV as a long-term goal, as I think it has merit as a long-term solution when properly designed and tested.

<http://www.chuckherrin.com/sinceyouasked.htm>

Dr. Rebecca Mercuri, Internationally respected electronic voting expert and Harvard Fellow:

Dr. Rebecca Mercuri provided testimony was to the North Carolina State Legislature that was key to passing its verified voting law in 2005

[http://www.ncvoter.net/downloads/Rebecca_Mercuri_Jan_7_2005.pdf]

Here is an excerpt of Dr. Mercuri's opinion on IRV:

"...It is incumbent upon election officials to be able to thoroughly understand how results will be calculated, such that manual recounts and audits are possible, when mandated. **These processes also become increasingly difficult and more time consuming when run-off methods are employed**, so the chance that errors in the electronic or manual vote calculations will be detected and properly resolved is necessarily reduced.

Furthermore, there **are certain run-off methods that can produce different results** based on the organization of ballots in the stack.

Since these methods lend themselves to potential "gaming" of the ballot set that may not be independently detectable or auditable, these run-off styles must be prohibited.

The present climate of distrust regarding election integrity will only be further undermined by skepticism invoked by increased complexity of alternative balloting methods, especially if the vendors are allowed to continue to obfuscate their vote tabulation products."

http://www.ncvoter.net/downloads/Dr_Rebecca_Mercuri_Instant_Runoff_Voting.pdf

Mathematician Kathy Dopp: IRV voting would complicate achieving election integrity

Until transparent, verifiable, sufficient manual audits of electronic vote counts are obtained in every state to ensure the integrity of outcomes (and these exist in no states yet) IRV voting will create big obstacles to detecting any outcome-altering vote miscount using statistical methods; and therefore leave our elections open to undetectable vote fraud.

In addition, **IRV can put a person in office that is not wanted by a majority of voters.**

There are other methods that are probably better. See this page:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instant-runoff_voting#Practical_implications

... Much more mathematical analysis is needed before IRV is implemented and its implementation must wait until after the integrity of our democratic elections is assured, if we want the voters to determine who wins office." Please see:

<http://electionarchive.org/ucvInfo/US/EI-FederalLegislationProposal.pdf>

This opinion expressed by Kathy Dopp can be found in the comments section at this link http://www.opednews.com/articles/genera_steven_h_061215_new_voting_method_to.htm

Is Instant Runoff Voting Meaningful and Effective?

San Francisco Director of Elections Jim Arntz expressed concern about the time and costs of recounting IRV elections in this San Francisco Gate article dated October 5, 2004

“Arntz is hoping that his department doesn't face a recount, which would be a long, tedious process involving an estimated 100 workers and seven days per district to complete. ‘The process also is costly, but the bearer of the bill would be the candidate who requested the recount, he said.’ ”

... .

“The bad news is that a number of voters interviewed after handing in their ballot in the basement of City Hall Monday had not heard of ranked-choice voting -- despite the **\$776,000 spent on education** -- and therefore hadn't studied more candidates

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2004/10/05/BAG0N93Q5S1.DTL>

Note: San Francisco has about the same number of or slightly less registered voters as Wake County NC does.

Tony Barnhard, former Yolo County election officials presents arguments against IRV:

Saturday September 30, 2006 Choice voting forum is less than illuminating

...Hill and Bernhard each presented their arguments for and against choice voting, but offered only a rough sketch of how the system works.

Audience questions got the speakers to flesh out the process a little more, but one questioner who asked, “I don't know how my car engine works, does that mean I shouldn't drive a car?” seemed content to trust that the process just works...

...

Bernhard agreed that choice voting is difficult to understand but his main argument against implementing it in Davis is that it isn't needed.

“It's not a swimmingly easy procedure,” he said. “It's not transparent, it's not simple and easy to understand like the current system is.”

Bernhard also said he felt uncomfortable with the concept of changing the voting system to get a different result.

“It's the same votes, but if you count them differently, you can change who gets elected,” he said.

“That doesn't sound right to me. It's giving a helping hand to some and not to others by giving additional votes.”

...He (Hill) was criticized for attacking Bernhard by an angry Oakley on her way out of the Community Chambers at the end of the debate.

<http://www.davisenterprise.com/articles/2006/09/29/news/093new1.txt>

Oakley (Freddie Oakley) is a pro voter verified paper ballots election official, she is the Yolo County Clerk-Recorder.

Does IRV Make Elections More Meaningful?

Political Consultants and writers weigh in. Does IRV ensure that the voter's ballot counts as they intend it to? Do people understand the "strategy" needed in IRV voting? Does IRV prevent the "Nader Effect"? Studies say that voter education is essential to ensure that more voters know they are expected to rank their choices, and the "rules" of doing so. Failure to understand this affects just how much the ballot counts.

Greg Dewar, Political Consultant in San Francisco:

IRV with multi seat contests is a waste of time:

"Wasting Time With IRV on the San Francisco Ballot"

I got my mail ballot last week and sat down to slog through pages and pages of voter guides, local ballot measures, state ballot measures, and candidates. Voting this season is less about voting *for* people you'd actually want to serve in office, and more about keeping really bad eggs off the shelf. Same goes for the initiatives.

The funniest part of my ballot, however, was San Francisco's allegedly fair and democratic "Instant Runoff System" in action. Candidates for San Francisco College Board and School Board, all of whom run city-wide, are still elected under a **"vote for 3 candidates out of a list"** system that according to self-appointed reformers is the result of Satan's handiwork... Here's where it gets fun. At significant expense, the city printed up special little ballots so you can mark your "first second and third choices" for these offices. Problem is, both candidates are running *unopposed*.

http://www.gregdewar.com/2006/10/wasting_time_with_irv_on_the_s.html

Does IRV prevent the "Nader Effect"?

The "Nader" example is the most common one. People use it to try and make themselves feel better about 2000.

However, there are some flaws. First, the "third party" is not helped by IRV at all - their candidates still lose! Somehow having a "Nader voter" have a chance to put "gore" as his second choice doesn't help "Nader" - and the cost of going through the recounts (i.e. first pass second pass, etc) is high. Plus there is no guarantee every single "Nader" voter would have put Gore as their 2nd or 3rd choice.

More importantly, if the goal of IRV is to somehow elect "more progressive" judges in NC, there's no evidence to suggest they'd win. Remember, always remind people that the person with the most votes wins, IRV or not. Having people somehow express some "good feelings" about a 3rd party candidate who ultimately loses out because the incumbent is the top vote getter is utterly meaningless.

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<http://www.dewar.us> and <http://www.gregdewar.com>

More writings by Greg Dewar about IRV and the political affect it has (or doesn't have) IRV thwarts "bullet style" voting:

Politics are just as nasty as ever in San Francisco:

[Anatomy of an Earned Media Hit: The Phantom \(Check\) Menace in San Francisco](#)

We're about 90 days out from Election Day, and elections in San Francisco are starting to catch some attention. Thanks to "Ranked Choice Voting" (or IRV, or whatever the cool kids are calling it these days), incumbents, such as Supervisors...

Posted in GregDewar.com on August 7, 2006

http://www.gregdewar.com/2006/08/anatomy_of_an_earned_media_hit.html

Lack of one-on-one runoff meant that weak appointed incumbent candidate won:

May 3, 2005 - Straight Talk On So-Called "Instant Runoff Voting" or Why the "Cure" Is as Deadly as the "Disease"

Having actually worked on a campaign in 2004 in San Francisco under said voting system, I'm taking a moment to write a column that I should have written in 2004, that gives you, the citizen, some straight talk on this issue. ... we should also be wary of "solutions" that are packaged as the One True Answer to our problems, without putting said "solutions" through the intellectual wringer.

http://www.gregdewar.com/2005/05/straight_talk_on_socalled_inst.html

Instant Runoff Voting Not Meeting Expectations - by John Dunbar, Nov. 17, 2005

It's noteworthy that the Green Party which has long supported ranked choice voting so that there could be oxygen in the American electoral system for their politics failed to make a single endorsement, much less three for Treasurer, Assessor and City Attorney. Non was the operative ranking principle....

So far under IRV we have incumbents getting well below 50 percent and even into the low 30 percent range on the first pass being re-elected under IRV. A frontrunner in a supervisor contest was successful with under 30 percent support in the first pass...

How good a job is IRV doing in terms of producing democratic outcomes with the greatest number of voters? In 2004, no supervisor in a contested race triggering ranked choice voting won a majority of the total votes cast in their districts. In multiple candidate races, supervisors were elected who received well under 40 percent of the total votes cast....

IRV is simply a voting system. It gives the electorate a new set of tools, **but it asks an enormous amount of voters, news organizations and endorsement groups.**

The jury on this San Francisco experiment is still out, but IRV to date falls short of its backers expectations.

<http://www.beyondchron.org/news/index.php?itemid=1468>

The San Diego Elections Task Force:

"If the City continues to consolidate its elections, IRV could probably not be accommodated on the regular ballot provided by the Registrar. **The amount of space City races would require has the potential to triple.** This could require a second ballot page, **which would increase costs and difficulty** for every jurisdiction on the ballot.

With IRV, the City's race would look, and be, different from every other jurisdiction on the ballot. Even if we moved to stand-alone elections, **intensive voter education would be required** to insure that voters understand how to mark the multiple columns of bubbles. There would be significant cost and timing considerations regarding this necessary outreach."

http://www.sandiego.gov/electiontaskforce/pdf/reports/clerkreport_etf_0602.pdf

California Public Employees' Retirement System Trustees' Report on IRV

It has been mathematically demonstrated that the IRV method can result in no winner being selected. It can also be demonstrated that in IRV elections the voters who cast votes for the lowest candidate have the opportunity to vote a second time, while those voting for a more popular candidate vote only once. Thus, these "fringe" voters could decide the winner.

In 2004, the Secretary of State conditionally gave San Francisco permission to use Ranked Choice Voting for its last two elections. **The City of San Francisco prefers the term RCV** because IRV could lead citizens to believe the results would be known the night of the election. **In reality, it took days for the final results to be determined.** As of this writing, that approval has not been extended. To the best of our knowledge, only four U.S. municipalities use RCV/IRV. They include: San Francisco, California; Ferndale, Michigan; Burlington, Vermont; and Takoma Park, Maryland.

While CALPERS staff used several research publications in developing this agenda item, one of the most authoritative is a paper published by San Francisco State University's Public Research Institute in May, 2005, entitled "An Assessment of Ranked-Choice Voting in the San Francisco 2004 Election."

The paper's findings indicate a generally positive result, with 61% indicating they prefer RCV with only 13% indicating they prefer majority voting. **Key to the positive process, however, was ensuring the voters were aware they were going to be asked to rank their top three choices and that they understood the process.**

San Francisco spent almost \$800,000 on voter education, or roughly **\$2.00 for each registered voter** in San Francisco. It is also important to note that the primary sources of information for the voters were newspapers, 57%, and television, 31%. Neither of which are available to CalPERS. Only 38% of the voters polled indicated they learned about RCV from literature distributed by the San Francisco Department of Elections, which is the principal method CalPERS would use to inform members.

While there are logistical and procedural issues with moving to an IRV method, the main concern exists with the confusion any "ranked" system, including IRV, would bring to the members. **Any savings realized by moving to IRV would be lost with the education program** required to acquaint members with the new system.

Additionally, **there is the concern that the added complexity of ranked voting will further discourage and confuse** CalPERS' members and the voter turnout, which is already low, would be further reduced.

RECOMMENDATION (B-7): Although ranked voting systems have had some limited use throughout the world for decades, it is a new concept to Americans. Until their use becomes more common, CalPERS should not move to any ranked voting system.

COST: Moving to IRV/RCV would avoid the \$850,000 cost of a runoff election. This amount would be reduced, however, by the costs of voter education. While it is doubtful that CalPERS would spend \$2.00 per registered voter, as San Francisco did, spending only fifty cents per member would still cost more than \$500,000 for CalPERS' largest election.
<http://www.calpers.ca.gov/eip-docs/about/board-cal-agenda/agendas/bpac/200605/item11.pdf>

Do enough voters understand IRV?

Look at the numbers.

An Assessment of Ranked-Choice Voting in the San Francisco 2004 Election

SUMMARY

The majority of voters appear to have made the transition to Ranked-Choice Voting with little problem: about seven out of eight we surveyed said that, overall, they understood it "fairly well" or "perfectly well." However, that leaves **one in eight who expressed some lack of understanding.**

It is important to assess what factors influence one's overall understanding of the RCV system. This report has attempted to take a first step in that effort.

While the wide majority of voters came to the polls with knowledge of RCV, **nearly one-third said they did not know they would be asked to rank candidates in the BOS races.**

The lack of prior knowledge explains differences in voters' understanding of the ballot as well as tendencies to not rank candidates.

We found differences across racial and ethnic groups in regard to their prior knowledge of RCV, their overall understanding, and their propensity to rank candidates on the ballot.

Non-Hispanic Whites and Asian Americans came to the polls more aware of RCV than others.

Whites and Asians also reported a higher level of overall understanding than other groups.

African Americans reported less understanding than other racial/ethnic groups, a difference that grows once other influences are considered.

At this point, the reasons for that difference are not clear.

Finally, Whites and Asians tended to rank three candidates more often than others.

The overall finding on RCV is positive. Wide majorities of voters knew about Ranked-Choice voting, understood it, and used it rank their preferences.

Further, most prefer it, with only about one in eight saying they prefer the former run-off system.

Since voting is such a fundamental democratic act, and the primary political behavior expressed by most citizens, **it is also important to note shortcomings.**

The lack of prior knowledge, understanding, and full use of the Ranked- Choice system among some groups of citizens are concerns that should capture the focus of citizens and government alike and shape efforts to find remedies in future elections.

<http://pri.sfsu.edu/reports/SFSU-PRI%20Ranked%20Choice%20Voting%20Preliminary%20Report.pdf>

Do enough voters understand IRV?

Look at the numbers.

An Assessment of Ranked-Choice Voting in the San Francisco 2005 Election

IRV was re-named Ranked-Choice Voting because it can take days or weeks to get the results.

Prior Knowledge of Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV)

- A narrow majority of voters surveyed (54%) knew before voting that they would be asked to rank candidates for City Treasurer and Assessor in the 2005 election.
- The proportion of voters who had prior knowledge of RCV was lower in 2005 (54%) than in the 2004 election for the Board of Supervisors (67%).
- Those with lower rates of prior knowledge tended to be those who were less educated, reported having lower incomes, and spoke a primary language other than Spanish.
- African Americans were considerably less likely than other racial and ethnic groups (41.9%) to know they would be ranking their choices for these offices.

Use of the Ranked Choice Ballot

-The majority of voters reported ranking three candidates in the race for City Treasurer (57%), while 33% reported selecting only one candidate.

**That means that in the event the first choice does not win, 33% do not participate in the "run-off".*

http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/election/Elections_Pages/July1706.pdf

Impact of IRV on North Carolina and Counties

The North Carolina state legislature passed a bill to use IRV for judicial vacancies. (vacancies that are elected with public financing) and test it out in up to 20 cities and counties.

SESSION LAW 2006-192 HOUSE BILL 1024

AN ACT to authorize the state Board of elections to conduct a pilot program in which the INSTANT RUNOFF METHOD OF VOTING WOULD BE USED IN LOCAL ELECTIONS; ...

“The pilot program shall consist of using instant runoff voting as the method for determining the winner or winners of a partisan primary or a nonpartisan election that normally uses nonpartisan election and runoff or nonpartisan primary and election. Instant runoff voting may also be used to determine results in an election where nonpartisan plurality elections are normally used, but only if the governing board of the local jurisdiction concurs.”

<http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2005/Bills/House/HTML/H1024v7.html>

Here is what the NC IRV ballot would look like:

Instructions on counting the ballots are on pages 1- 4, and the actual ballot is on page 5 (provided by the Rocky Mount Telegram)

<http://alt.coxnewsweb.com/rockymounttelegram/pdf/sampleballot.pdf>

Judicial Contests are a poor choice for Instant Runoff Voting –

October 22, 2006 Judicial races draw little interest

However, there are 142 contests across North Carolina many likely know little, if anything, about — judgeships. And it’s probably one reason why judicial races spark such little interest during election season.

Kevin McGuire, an associate professor of political science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: ““People don’t participate in elections when they don’t know the candidates or where they stand...Judicial elections are naturally low in information...”
<http://www.kinston.com/SiteProcessor.cfm?Template=/GlobalTemplates/Details.cfm&StoryID=39974&Section=Local>

Voter Education for IRV would nearly double election expenses in Wake County NC.

North Carolina election officials have not announced any plan to educate the voters though. Candidates would have the responsibility and expense of educating their supporters.

San Francisco - REGISTERED VOTERS - TOTAL. 421,094. In 2004 San Francisco spent \$776,000 on advertising. That comes out to \$1.83 per registered voter spent on voter education. <http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/election/results.htm>

Wake County REGISTERED VOTERS - TOTAL (as of July 2006) . . . 507, 517
At a cost of \$1.83 per registered voter spent on voter education, the total cost estimate for one year would be: \$928,750 <http://www.sboe.state.nc.us/voterreg/voterstat.htm>

2004 Wake County’s Board of Elections’ net expenditures were approximately \$1.5 Million
<http://www.ncvoter.net/downloads/WakeExpenditures.xls>

THE BEST WAY TO HELP THIRD PARTIES IS TO MAKE BALLOT ACCESS EASIER:

Right now there isn't any legislation in NC in the pipeline to improve things right now. (I checked at www.ncleg.net).

You can help third parties by helping them meet their ballot access requirements of X number of signatures. You can sign their petitions, help in signature petition drives, and donate to them.

The Libertarian Party seeks 107,000 signatures, and has about 46,592 so far. You will probably find more up to date info about ballot access at their website than any other.

http://www.lpnc.org/get_involved/ballot_access.html

The Green Party doesn't have any news on ballot access at this time as far as I know, but they do have petitions for you to download.

<http://www.ncgreenparty.org/>

Here is a bigger list of political parties in NC:

<http://www.politics1.com/nc.htm>

The North Carolina Coalition for Verified Voting is the state's only nonpartisan, all volunteer grassroots organization focused on the "machinery" of elections and advocacy for simple checks and balances to protect every vote and voter.