



2016-2017 Election Methods Study Update Consensus Questions

Name of League/Unit: **LWV Rogue Valley** Number of League members contributing: 35

Contact Person: Barbara Klein
Jackie Clary, LWVRV President

NOTE: Three meetings were held of 15, 16 and 4 members respectively.

At times the division of numbers responding may not add up to all participants due to those abstaining (by statement or non-responsiveness), or those arriving late /leaving early.

Comments and answers underlined.

Question 1. Do you agree that the League should have an actionable position on these alternatives?

YES

Some felt this question should have been toward the end.

SINGLE-WINNER SYSTEMS

Question 2a.

The system elects the candidate with the broadest support of the people although that person may not be the first choice of a plurality of voters.

#4 – 8 #5 - 25

The system elects the winner who is the first choice candidate of a majority (50%+1) of the electorate

4 members refused to answer “wording of 1st choice was objected to the wording and found ‘first choice’ confusing.

#3 – 1 #4 – 5 #5 - 17

The system is easy to use and understand

More important to be ‘accessible.’ Who defines ‘easy?’ Don’t need to dumb down system.

#2 – 17 #3 – 14 #4 - 2

The system promotes sincere voting over strategic voting

 #3 – 1 #4 – 6 #5 - 22

The system encourages voter turnout and voter engagement

#5

The system encourages those with minority opinions to vote

#5

The system discourages negative campaigning

"Who defines 'negative'? Truth can seem negative

#4 – 25 #5 – 5

The system is easy to administer by elections officials

"Easy"? Issues override this.

Mentioned by one and agreed to by others – "if it is too hard for the election officials, perhaps we should elect some for who it is not."

#2 – 23 #3 – 6 #4 - 1

The system is not overly burdensome to taxpayers

"Poorly worded. What is 'overly'? Uniform system throughout the state would be best.

#2 – 29 #3 – 2

The system is resistant to Gerrymandering

(Discussion of unrelated to SMDs).

#5 – 24 #4 - 7

The system provides for the greatest level of voter representation

Some abstained due to confusion over the word 'representation' Some members insisted on relating that to 'participation' despite explanation. They did not understand the point.

#5 – 28 #4 - 4

Question 2b. Do you agree that alternative voting methods exist that can promote democratic choice better than our current plurality method under some circumstances?

YES

Question 2c. Would you approve of RANGE VOTING in preference to the current plurality system?

"More nuances are available... Advantage of knowing all other candidates... No government has used this.... Too much ambivalence... Does it attract more voters?... Strategic vs. sincere nature is disturbing, despite its advantage to knowledgeable voters. It is better than the current system - to avoid extreme candidates and which is also strategic. But Range has significant drawbacks. Other alternative may be better for practical support"

Undecided – 29 No - 6

Question 2d. . Would you approve of APPROVAL VOTING in preference to the current plurality system?

There is only a preference compared to plurality, but not for implementing.... Appreciate that it is easy, but too many drawbacks to promote it... Sincere voting not rewarded. ...May easily revert to a result like plurality. ...

Consensus for 'No' (although 4+ undecided and some were "no to undecided')

Question 2e. Would you approve of RANKED CHOICE VOTING in preference to the current plurality system?

“Despite the risks of non-monotonicity and complexity, it is preferable to plurality. ...It has a good track record, and also has a practical chance of passing in places.encourages voters to learn more about choices...and tends a bit less toward negative campaigning compared to other systems.... Like the tendency for more sincere voting”

Consensus Yes.

MULTIPLE WINNER SYSTEMS

Question 3a. John Adams famously said that legislative bodies should be “in miniature, an exact portrait of the people at large.” Do you agree that legislative bodies should proportionally reflect the people they represent?

Yes. “Obvious” “but how far down do you go for proportional groups” (referencing the issue of threshold levels)

Question 3b

Allows voters to vote for a specific individual (instead of a party or platform)

#3 – 3 #4 – 16 #5 - 16

The system promotes a stable government that does not have to be reorganized between elections

#1 – 4 #3 – 5 #4 – 12 #5 – 19

Sometimes seems necessary but stability good.

The system promotes a stable government by protecting the two-party system.

#1 – 19 #2 – 8 #3 – 1

“2-party better than 1 party....We need more parties.”

The system promotes stable policy outcomes that do not change abruptly when power changes hands

#2 – 1 #3 – 8 #4-19 #5 -1

“Abrupt power changes can be disruptive and dangerous. It depends on the changes.”

The system elects a legislature that proportionally reflects the overall electorate

5 “with wishful thinking”

The system is easy to use and understand

#2 – 3 #3 – 19 #4 – 7

The system encourages voter turnout and voter engagement

5

The system encourages those with minority opinions to vote

5

The system discourages negative campaigning

#3 – 1 #4 – 23 #5 – 5

The system is easy to administer by elections officials

#2 – 25 #3 – 4

("Same as the other question" "See our other responses.")

The system encourages cooperation across party lines

#3 – 10 #4 – 9 #5 – 5

The system enables voters to elect local representatives from their geographic area

#3 – 5 #4 – 9 most undecided

Wording is confusing. "enable"? what does that mean.....Minority issues have not made out as well as they might have with this.Ambiguous."

The system is not overly burdensome to taxpayers

#2 – 24 #3 – 5

The system is resistant to Gerrymandering

5

The system provides for the greatest level of voter representation

5

Question 3c. **closed list,**

NO

"Better than 'bloc' except for non-party people.....Doesn't seem likely to produce practical outcome.....US wouldn't tolerate.....People disillusioned with parties. "

Question 3d. **open list,**

Yes – 25 No – 8 undecided - 1

Better than closed, better than 'bloc'....Asked if preferred to those systems, so 'yes' just not preferred in general....Not practical for US....Track record for electing more women, but so do other PRs.....Rather spend energy focused on other PR.....Better than plurality but rather work on RCV.....Hard on Independents...strength (maybe too much) to parties..."

Question 3e. **mixed member proportional.**

Yes – 19 No – 1 Undecided – 16

"Asked if better than current, so yes, but BIG CAVEAT.....Those 'undecided' leaned toward 'yes' supporting system theoretically, but not practically....Conferring too much power to parties still....Getting closer to helping the Independent, but how do we get around party-issues and those unaffiliated voters...Certainly better than what we have, but still concerns..."

Question 3f. **single transferrable vote.**

Yes.

“all the AKAs are annoying”.....(Much discussion could be summarized as) “regardless of the negatives (non-monotonicity and complexity) it has many advantages.... Discourages gerrymandering, which is huge....encourages non-partisan (good), smaller parties less chance of being spoilers....Aids non-affiliated voters as can be used in non-partisan elections; the other PR systems can’t....Good chance in these times for this to pass, so worth our effort.”

Question 3g. **Semi-proportional systems** (Limited and Cumulative)

Yes – 5 No – 6 Undecided – remainder (approx. 15)

Members didn’t like systems put together. “If we think RCV is better – why go with this?...It is more effort for minorities and they may or may not achieve fair representative. ...Ultimately prefer RCV – don’t want to confuse issues....Don’t like strategic nature (called ‘rigged’) ...(Overarching point was summarized as) ‘why bother’ improvement less assured. ...Voters may reject and then revert back to FPTP if doesn’t work well ...Like the other systems, they would be ‘preference to the current single-winner majority or bloc system’ but that isn’t good enough.”

THE PARTY PROCESS IN OREGON

Question 4a. Fusion - Would you approve of full fusion voting for Oregon?

YES. “If you are going to use Fusion – use full.more fair to smaller parties.....Don’t care if longer ballot.”

Question 4b. Oregon Primaries.

(NOTE: Concerns on Limited open and Open as to how they would work with Oregon’s Vote By Mail system, but answered it under the idea that the ‘how’ would be figured out later.)

Closed: No (approximately 3 people supported this)

Limited Open Yes – 22 No – 6 “Gives independents unfair advantage over others”

Open YES (although approximately 3 opposed).

Top –Two Yes – 9 No – 13 stated abstain – 2 others – Undecided approx..3
“At least more people would be able to vote.....we could eliminate primaries, save money and use RCV in NOV....When it happens that only one party is on the Nov ballot that is bad for everyone.....would help independents....Hasn’t worked out as well as expected where adopted – and not fair to smaller parties....more money pours into primaries and parties can push people out, force not to run...split votes can be a disaster”

ADMINISTRATION OF ALTERNATE METHODS

Question 5. Any new voting method should be instituted only after voters in the district affected agree to provide the financial support necessary to the appropriate elections administrators to make technical changes and to educate voters.

FALSE