

Pros & Cons on Ranked Choice Voting/Instant Runoff Voting

PROs	CONs
<p>Promotes majority support - The voting continues until one candidate has the majority of votes, so the final winner has support of the majority of voters</p>	<p>It is new - A certain percentage of people don't like change. This can make them unhappy or might make them decide to not participate.</p>
<p>Discourages negative campaigning - Candidates who use negative campaigning may lose the second-choice vote of those whose first choice was treated poorly.</p>	<p>It will require education about how it works - We don't want spoiled ballots! We don't want uninformed people coming to exercise their right and responsibility to have a bad experience, or to leave without voting properly.</p>
<p>Provides more choice for voters - Voters can vote for the candidate they truly feel is best, without concern about the spoiler effect.</p>	<p>You could still fail to get a candidate with a majority. If enough voters did not give any votes to their lower choices, then you could fail to get a candidate who ends up with a majority, after all. Australia requires that voters do rank every candidate, even if they really don't want some of the candidates. This might be interpreted as reducing your choice or forcing you to vote against your conscience.</p>
<p>Discourages negative campaigning - Candidates who use negative campaigning may lose</p>	
<p>Minimizes strategic voting - Instead of feeling compelled to vote for "the lesser of two evils," as in plurality voting, voters can honestly vote for who they believe is the best candidate.</p>	
<p>Saves money compared to running primary elections (to narrow the field before the general election) or run-off elections (to choose a final winner, if no candidate has a majority and the law requires a majority for that office). With IRV, the result can be obtained with one ballot.</p>	<p>The ballots and the counting of the ballots will be more expensive - It either requires a computer system, or is labor intensive to count by hand, with risk of errors. But security and integrity of our elections will require having a "paper trail" so that we can do recounts, and know the results are valid.</p>
<p>Provides outcomes more reflective of the majority of voters than either primaries (candidates "play to their base") or run-off elections (typically lower turnout).</p>	<p>The "vetting" is less clear - In the U.S., we have very few requirements for what a person must do to run for office and be on a ballot. With primaries, the idea is that there is so much publicity that voters in later primaries, and then in the general election, will have learned the candidates' weaknesses and be better informed before voting. If there are no primaries, we may need to figure out how to "vet" candidates better or pass more requirements for candidates to qualify to run.</p>