

What Is Ranked Choice Voting?

Important FAQs

An initiative is *already underway* to replace our current method of voting with a new system called Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). It is estimated that roughly 80% of Michiganders are not familiar with RCV, so we of the Cass County Republican Party want to educate citizens about this push to overhaul our election system—and what this **confusing, expensive, and results-delaying method** could mean for your vote should it become law. A petition is being circulated by RCV supporters (such as Rank MI Vote) to secure enough signatures (446,198) to alter the Michigan Constitution and have this proposed amendment appear on the 2026 midterm ballot. If passed, RCV would become the law of the state, beginning in 2029.

What is the language of the proposed amendment?

Below is the language of the proposed amendment that would appear on the November 2026 ballot **IF** the petition drive is successful. Even the language of the amendment is vague and confusing!

Constitutional amendment to: require ranked-choice voting (RCV) for federal offices, Governor/ Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General and Secretary of State, allowing voters to numerically rank candidates by voter preference starting in 2029; count votes in rounds, eliminating lowest ranked candidate and reallocating their votes to remaining ranked candidates until candidate with most final-round votes is declared the winner; allow voters to rank at least 4 more candidates than positions to be nominated/elected unless insufficient number of candidates; authorize local jurisdiction to adopt use of RCV in local elections; move August primary to June or earlier in even year elections; require legislative funding and implementing legislation.

How does RCV work?

With RCV, ballots are marked in order of preference of ALL candidates on the ballot (sometimes referred to as non-partisan voting). Voters select their first-choice candidate in the 1st Choice column. If voters wish to choose a second candidate, they can mark that candidate's name in the 2nd Choice column. Same for their 3rd choice. This process continues until voters run out of allowable rankings or run out of candidates. Voters can rank as few or as many candidates as are allowable. There can only be ONE MARK per column; mismarking the ballot can lead to it being "spoiled" and uncounted.

Voters' first choices are counted. If any one candidate receives more than 50% of the vote in the first round, they are declared the winner. If there is no majority winner after the first round, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and voters who ranked that candidate first would have their vote transferred to their second choice. This process continues until a candidate receives a majority of the votes in a round of counting. Below is an example of an "exhausted" ballot (all three of the voter's candidates eliminated by the 4th round):

	CANDIDATE A	CANDIDATE B	CANDIDATE C	CANDIDATE D	CANDIDATE E
ROUND 1	22%	13%	35%	19%	11% ELIMINATED
ROUND 2	27%	14% ELIMINATED	37%	22%	
ROUND 3	35%		39%	26% ELIMINATED	
ROUND 4	51% ☒		49%		

From: Michigan Fair Elections Institute

How could RCV affect my vote?

With RCV, your vote can be lost if your ballot becomes “exhausted,” meaning that all of the candidates you ranked are eliminated before the final round. Your ballot can also be spoiled if filled out incorrectly, which could cause your vote to be uncounted, especially after the first round. The winner under RCV might not be anyone’s first choice—just the least disliked!



What are the claims being made in favor of RCV?

Claim #1: “RCV ensures majority rule because the winner has to get over 50%.”

Response: Not necessarily! RCV doesn’t count all the ballots in the final round, because thousands of votes are often exhausted or spoiled by ballot-marking errors. A recent analysis by Cornell University showed that of 182 RCV elections studied, **more than half** failed to elect candidates with majority support from all votes cast. That’s ballot manipulation, not real majority rule.

Claim #2: “RCV saves money by avoiding costly runoff elections.”

Response: RCV costs **more**—new machines/software, retraining of poll workers, not to mention multiple rounds of vote counting, which takes extra time, and time is money. Runoffs are simple and already work.

Claim #3: “RCV is working well in Maine and Alaska.”

Response: Alaska elected a liberal in a deep-red district because of ballot-marking errors and exhausted ballots; there has already been a vote to rescind RCV in Alaska. Maine has seen backlash and lawsuits; 90% of Maine clerks surveyed favor repeal. RCV has a history of rejection—39 U.S. localities have repealed it after implementation; of 24 municipalities that adopted RCV by 1947, only one retained it by 1962.

Claim #4: “RCV increases voter turnout by making elections more engaging.”

Response: There’s no proof that RCV boosts turnout. It may actually lower participation due to confusion and ballot mistakes, especially among older voters.

From: Michigan Republican Party, Michigan Fair Elections Institute

What can voters do now to reject RCV?

DO NOT SIGN the petition that is being circulated to get the proposed amendment on the November 2026 ballot. Create awareness with family, friends, and neighbors about RCV and how it could negatively impact (even eliminate!) their vote, create confusion, cause delays in reporting results, and increase the cost to taxpayers.

DECLINE TO SIGN!