

Initiative Measure No. 1001

Filed

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SECRETARY OF STATE

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8 AN ACT Relating to adopting an instant runoff election
9 system; and adding a new chapter to Title 29A RCW.

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11 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

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13 **1. NEW SECTION. Sec. 1** The people intend to adopt a
14 voting system that requires all victorious candidates to be
15 elected with a majority vote rather than a plurality of
16 effective votes, and allows voters to designate secondary
17 and other preferences for potential tabulation, in
18 accordance with specific procedures, if their first choice
19 candidate does not receive a majority of the votes cast.
20 The people recognize that the system known as instant runoff
21 voting achieves these purposes.

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23 **2. NEW SECTION. Sec. 2** By January 1, 2010, the
24 legislature shall:

25 (1) Take all necessary steps to adopt legislation
26 enacting an instant runoff voting system at the state and
27 local level as outlined in sections 3 through 5 of this act;
28 and

29 (2) Take all necessary steps to repeal, adopt, or amend
30 any laws necessary to carry out the purposes of this
31 chapter.

32 **3. NEW SECTION. Sec. 3** The definitions in this section
33 apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly
34 requires otherwise.

35 (1) "Candidates who remain" means all candidates who
36 have not been eliminated at a previous stage.

1 (2) "Choice" means an indication on a ballot of a
2 voter's ranking of candidates for a particular office
3 according to the voter's preference.

4 (3) "Continuing ballot" means a ballot that is not
5 exhausted.

6 (4) "Exhausted ballot" means a ballot on which all
7 choices indicated on the ballot have become votes for the
8 candidates so designated or when the ballot contains choices
9 only for eliminated candidates.

10 (5) "Instant runoff voting" means a system of voting in
11 which voters may designate as many as four candidates for
12 the same office in order of preference by indicating a first
13 choice, a second choice, a third choice, and a fourth
14 choice.

15 (6) "Last place candidate" means a candidate who has
16 received the fewest votes among the candidates who remain at
17 any stage. Two or more candidates simultaneously become
18 last place candidates when their combined votes are equal to
19 or fewer than all votes for the candidate with the third
20 highest number of votes.

21 (7) "Next choice" means the highest ranked choice for a
22 remaining candidate that has not become a vote at a previous
23 stage.

24 (8) "Remaining candidate" means a candidate who has not
25 been eliminated.

26 (9) "Stage" or "stage in the counting" means a step in
27 the counting process during which votes for all remaining
28 candidates are tabulated for the purpose of determining
29 whether a candidate has achieved a majority of the votes
30 cast for a particular office, and, absent a majority, which
31 candidate or candidates must be eliminated.

32 (10) "Vote" means a ballot choice that is counted toward
33 election of a candidate. All first choices are votes.
34 Lower ranked choices are potential votes that may, in
35 accordance with the requirements of this chapter, be
36 credited to and become votes for a candidate.

1 **4. NEW SECTION. Sec. 4** The following provisions, subject
2 to the conditions of section 5 of this act, govern how votes
3 for candidates shall be tabulated under the instant runoff
4 voting method:

5 (1) All first choice votes cast for a particular office
6 shall be tabulated in the first counting stage. If,
7 following this first counting stage, a candidate receives a
8 majority of the votes cast for the office, that candidate is
9 deemed elected to the office and counting ends.

10 (2) If no candidate receives a majority of the votes
11 cast for a particular office during the first counting
12 stage, the second counting stage begins by eliminating the
13 last place candidate. On ballots that indicate a first
14 choice preference for the eliminated candidate, the second
15 choice preferences are counted as votes for the candidates
16 so designated. If, following this second counting stage, a
17 candidate receives a majority of the votes cast for the
18 office, that candidate is deemed elected to the office and
19 counting ends.

20 (3) If, following the second counting stage, no
21 candidate receives a majority of the votes cast for a
22 particular office, the third counting stage begins by
23 eliminating the last place candidate. On ballots that have been
24 allotted to the eliminated candidate (by first preference or redistribution from the first
25 runoff), the next choice preferences are counted as votes for the candidates so
26 designated. If, following this third counting stage, a
27 candidate receives a majority of votes cast for the office,
28 that candidate is deemed elected to the office and counting
29 ends.

30 (4) If, following the third counting stage, no candidate
31 receives a majority of the votes cast for a particular
32 office, the counting process provided by subsection (3) of

1 this section continues in succession until either a
2 candidate receives a majority of the votes cast for the
3 office or all but one candidate has been eliminated. In
4 accordance with the provisions of this subsection, a
5 candidate who receives either a majority of the votes cast
6 for the office or who is the sole remaining candidate shall
7 be deemed elected to the office.

8 (5) If at any stage in the counting there are two or
9 more last place candidates, these candidates must be
10 eliminated simultaneously. On ballots that indicate a first
11 choice preference for the eliminated candidates, the next
12 choice preferences are counted as votes for the candidates
13 so designated.

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15 **5. NEW SECTION. Sec. 5** (1)(a) Once a ballot is
16 exhausted, it is disregarded and not subject to additional
17 tabulation procedures.

18 (b) A ballot assigning the same ranking to more than one
19 candidate for an office is exhausted when the duplicate
20 ranking is reached. No vote may be recorded for any
21 candidates designated with the same ranking on the same
22 ballot.

23 (2) Only four choices for any one office may be counted.

24 (3) If the total number of votes for all write-in
25 candidates in each race during any counting stage is fewer
26 than the last place candidate among the candidates appearing
27 on the ballot, all write-in candidates must be eliminated
28 for the current and subsequent counting stages.

29 (4) If, following the conclusion of the counting stages,
30 the tabulated ballots do not contain a sufficient number of
31 effective second and lower choices for a candidate to
32 receive a majority of the votes cast for a particular
33 office, the candidate with the greatest number of votes
34 credited to him or her shall be deemed elected.

35 (5) No votes may be counted for a candidate who has been
36 eliminated.

1 (6) Voters may rank up to and including four candidates. Any ballot with only
2 one mark in any position next to any single candidate's name, and no mark next to any
3 other candidate's name, shall be counted as a first and only preference vote for candidate
4 so indicated. Such single preference votes will be deemed exhausted after the first vote,
5 and shall not enter any subsequent runoff.

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7 **6. NEW SECTION. Sec. 6** If any provision of this act or
8 its application to any person or circumstance is held
9 invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the
10 provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

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12 **NEW SECTION. Sec. 7** Sections 1 through 6 of this act
13 constitute a new chapter in Title 29A RCW.