RANKED CHOICE VOTING

Kat Miller | August 27, 2025

RANKED CHOICE VOTING DISENFRANCHISES THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is a confusing and unpopular system that most Americans reject. Instead of making it easy to vote but hard to cheat, RCV complicates elections, misleads voters, and can deny victory to the candidate with the most votes.
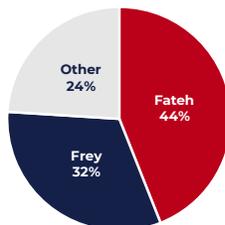
FACTS AND NUMBERS

★ **Current Utilization:** As of mid-2025, only Maine and Alaska use RCV statewide, though numerous cities employ it locally. Since 2022, seventeen states—including Florida, Tennessee, South Dakota, Montana, Alabama, Missouri, and Iowa (June 2025)—have enacted statewide bans.

★ **Americans' View of RCV:** A Rasmussen poll found 42% had never heard of it, but once explained, 60% opposed, 23% supported, and only 8% viewed it favorably when told it could let a candidate with fewer first-choice votes win. In places that have tried it, voters often call it confusing and limiting. A 2023 University of Minnesota study found little evidence RCV delivers on its promises—reducing polarization, boosting diversity or turnout, or improving campaign civility—fueling voter skepticism.

★ **Impacts on Voter Experience & Representation:** A 2025 *Political Behavior* study of over 3 million ranked-choice ballots found nearly 1 in 20 mismarked—errors more common in lower-income areas—making them about ten times more likely to be rejected than traditional ballots, largely due to confusion over ranking. A 2021 MIT study in Maine likewise found RCV lowered voter confidence, made ballots harder to use, and increased voting time. In New York City's 2021 mayoral primary, about 140,000 ballots—15%—were excluded because voters did not rank remaining candidates, leaving thousands without a voice in the final outcome.

★ **Erosion of Transparency & Voter Empowerment:** RCV prevents voters from knowing which candidates remain in later rounds, making it impossible to reassess choices as the field changes. Because rankings must be decided before counting begins, voters cannot adjust after eliminations, leaving many unable to show a clear preference between finalists and losing their voice in the final outcome.

★ **Longer Election Cycles:** A 2022 analysis on RCV's vote-counting process found that round-by-round counting often delays results because counting cannot start until all ballots—including absentee votes—are processed. This built-in delay means outcomes may not be known for days or even weeks after Election Day. In New York City's 2025 mayoral primary, elimination-round counting began a week late, with weekly updates leaving voters without a clear winner for an extended period.

★ **Non-Majority Winners & Distorted Outcomes:** RCV can produce winners without majority support when ballots drop out in later rounds or transfers benefit a candidate opposed by most first-choice voters. In Oakland's 2025 mayoral race, nine rounds of counting declared Barbara Lee the winner despite not leading initially, undermining voter confidence in the process

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CASE STUDY: RCV MAYORAL BREAKDOWN IN MINNEAPOLIS

**[5:00 PM] First Ballot —
Tech Failure (170+ votes missing)**

**[7:00 PM] Rule Change —
Switch to Hand Count**

**[9:00 PM] Walkout Attempt —
Quorum Questioned**

[10:30PM] Endorsement Declared

**First Ballot –
No Candidate
Reaches 60%**

Other 24%
Fateh 44%
Frey 32%

Key Takeaways

★ Technical failure, machines down 2 hours
★ Midstream changes → hand counts mid-process
★ Disputed outcome, missing votes, legal challenges

Conclusion

Minneapolis' 2025 DFL endorsement shows how RCV's complexity can cause delays, confusion, and disputes—undermining trust in the process