



Media Memo

August 12, 2022

To: Media and Other Interested Parties

From: Amanda K. Moser, Chief Strategy Officer

Re: Alaska's Election System, Pick 1 Primary and Ranked Choice Special General Elections

Alaskans for Better Elections has been committed to educating voters, candidates, campaigns, and members of the media about Alaska's Election System to help ensure our upcoming elections run smoothly and successfully. We want everyone to understand and take advantage of the power to RANK YOUR VOTE.

How the Alaska Election System works.

Alaska's Election System is a 2-part system that begins with a Pick 1 Primary. The top four vote-getters advance to a Ranked Choice General Election. Voters have the opportunity to rank the candidates in order of preference: 1st choice, 2nd choice, and so on. Voters can rank as many candidates as they like.

To win a ranked choice voting election, a candidate needs to earn more than half of the votes. If a candidate receives more than half of voters' 1st choices, that candidate wins. If no candidate has enough 1st choices to win, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated and voters who ranked that candidate 1st have their vote counted for their next choice. This process continues until one candidate receives more than half of the continuing votes.

Importance of ranking candidates: While voters can choose to rank just one candidate, they are encouraged to rank as many candidates as they prefer. The more a voter ranks, the more voice they have in their representation.

- 2nd, 3rd, etc. choices on a voter's ballot serve as backups in case their 1st choice doesn't have enough support to stay in the race.
- If a voter's 1st choice candidate doesn't have enough votes to win, their vote will continue to count for their second and subsequent choices, and they will still have a say in deciding the election.
- Voting only for one candidate (or ranking the same candidate more than once) will not improve that candidate's likelihood of winning.

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- If voters rank only one candidate, and that candidate is defeated in the 1st round of counting, they have lost their opportunity to have a preference among the remaining candidates.

There is no downside to ranking candidates: Ranking a 2nd, 3rd, or 4th choice will never harm a voter's favorite or higher-ranked candidate. A voter's 2nd choice will count only if their 1st choice is eliminated. A voter's 3rd choice will count only if 1st and 2nd choices have been eliminated.

Better choices and more competition: Multiple candidates appealing to the same community or similar voter bases can run without worrying that they will split the vote - as long as like-minded voters rank candidates in order of preference. **To avoid vote-splitting, candidates should actively encourage voters to rank.** Voters can rank their favorite candidate 1st. If that candidate doesn't have a chance at winning, their vote will count for their next-ranked choice. This allows voters to vote their conscience without fear that they'll actually help elect the candidate they like the least.

What it takes to win under Ranked Choice Voting

The Winning Threshold

Winning a Ranked Choice Voting election requires that a candidate receive a majority (at least 50%+1) of continuing votes in the final round. If no candidate is the 1st choice of a majority, the tabulation process begins: the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated and voters who ranked that candidate 1st will have their votes count for their next choice. The process continues until there are two candidates and the candidate with the majority wins.

Campaigning under Ranked Choice Voting

Campaigning is different under Ranked Choice Voting. While earning a voter's 1st choice is the most important, 2nd and later choices are essential for candidates to earn enough support to win.

In a close Ranked Choice Voting contest, a candidate needs both deep (1st choice) and broad (backup choice) support. Accordingly, candidates must reach out to various communities of voters to secure those rankings and build broad coalitions of support. The most successful Ranked Choice Voting candidates focus more on the issues rather than negative attacks on their opponents to avoid alienating their opponents' supporters. With so many critical issues on ballots this year and with increasing political division in the electorate, it is more important now than ever to reach as many voters as possible and build

broad winning coalitions of support.

Alaska Election System Resources and Information

Alaskans For Better Elections

For more resources on Alaska's Election System, see the Alaskans For Better Elections website:

<https://alaskansforbetterelections.com/resources/>

Alaskans For Better Elections Education Effort

Voter education and outreach are crucial to implementing a successful Alaska Election System. Alaskans for Better Elections is partnering broadly to conduct voter outreach and education at community and candidate events and through media and messaging efforts. Alaskans For Better Elections has partnered with Democracy Rising, a national Ranked Choice Voting educational program, to provide Train-the-Trainer to support peer-to-peer educational opportunities.

Candidate Education

In addition to our ongoing voter education efforts, Alaskans For Better Elections has partnered with Democracy Rising, a national Ranked Choice Voting educational program, to provide education and training for candidates in the Alaska Election System.

Look for additional Alaska Election System memos and updates throughout the election cycle.

Please contact Amanda K. Moser, Chief Strategy Officer, at 907-830-7560 or Amanda@AlaskansforBetterElections.com if you have any questions or need additional information.