



ARTICLE 28. Ranked Choice Voting for Concord Municipal Elections

Mr. Bader moves: That the Town take affirmative action on Article 28 [to authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court] as printed in the Briefing Book.

Ranked Choice Voting



Continuing Concord's proud tradition of trailblazing for democracy

Current system

- **Winners do not need a majority of the vote to win**
- **Newcomers can be vote splitters and discouraged from running**
- **Campaigns can be divisive and negative**
- **Most elections are unexciting for many voters**

Ranked Choice Voting

Ranked choice voting is a **simple change to the ballot** that enables a better voter experience and better campaigns.

Ranked Choice Voting gives voters **more freedom, more expression, and more power**. Instead of picking just 1 candidate, a voter can rank their candidates in order of **preference** — 1st, 2nd, 3rd...

Concord's second bite at the apple

5/22 Concord Town meeting **overwhelmingly passed** Ranked Choice Voting

8/22 Home rule petition filed with state legislature for approval

1/23 Home rule petition re-filed at State House

6/23 The Joint Committee on Election Laws held a well-attended hearing

8/24 193rd session ended. No action taken

Cannot simply refile as before. Needs Town passage again.

Concord for RCV

League of Women Voters (Concord-Carlisle) supports Article 28

Select Board, Town Clerk & Board of Registrars supported 2022 RCV
article

State Ballot Question 2 in 2020

- **63%** of Concord residents voted (12/19K)
- **61.4% Voted YES!**

Who Else Is Using?

- MA
 - **Cambridge** (1941)
 - **Easthampton** (2021) - same size & number of precincts as Concord
 - **Acton, Amherst, Arlington, Brookline, Lexington & Northampton**
all filed RCV home rule petitions
 - **Boston** (2025) - anticipated this week
- Alaska (2020) & Maine (2018)
- Australia & New Zealand, Northern Ireland & Scotland (for decades)

Current: 1-Vote → 1-Chance

Your candidate wins or loses. Period.

Vote for not more than ONE	
LOUISA MAY ALCOTT	<input type="radio"/>
HENRY DAVID THOREAU	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
RALPH WALDO EMERSON	<input type="radio"/>
MARGARET FULLER	<input type="radio"/>

Vote for not more than TWO	
LOUISA MAY ALCOTT	<input type="radio"/>
HENRY DAVID THOREAU	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
RALPH WALDO EMERSON	<input type="radio"/>
MARGARET FULLER	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Current System: Vote splitting or bullet-voting can cause your vote to be wasted.

With RCV: 1-Vote → MULTIPLE Chances

...to have elected representative that reflects YOUR view.

Rank the candidates in order of preference	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
LOUISA MAY ALCOTT	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
HENRY DAVID THOREAU	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
MARGARET FULLER	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
RALPH WALDO EMERSON	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

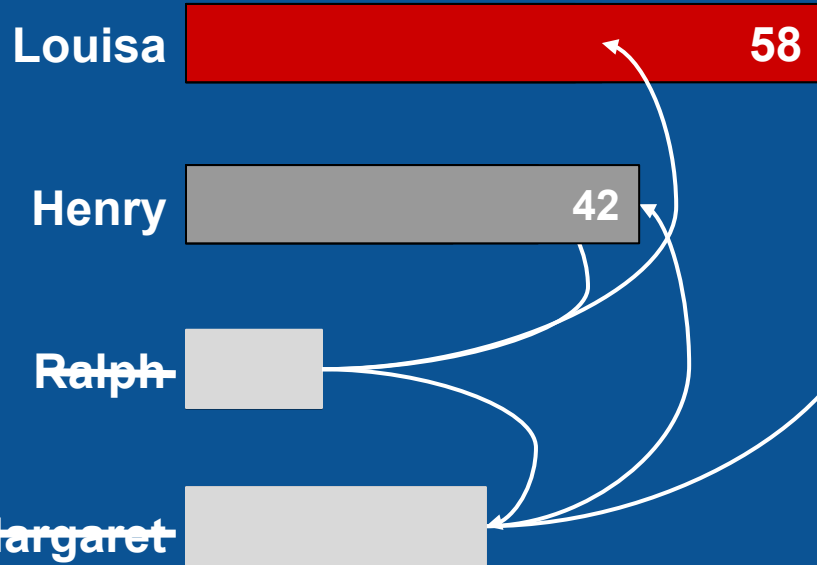
You state your preferences: 1, 2, 3...

The software applies all your preferences for an immediate, accurate, transparent outcome.

Counting the Votes

Select Board Race with 100 Ballots

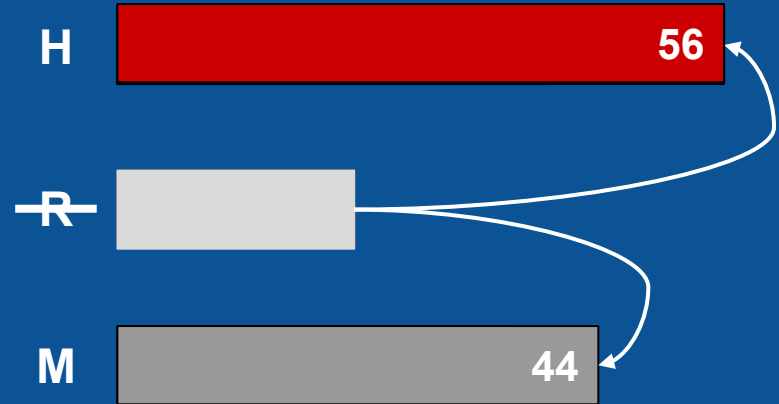
Louisa wins with a majority



To Fill a Second Seat ...

⊥

Henry wins with a majority



Implementation

In collaboration with the Town Clerk & Board of Registrars

- **Current voting machines are RCV-compatible.**
- **Town clerk will get a dedicated laptop to run software (which will expedite ALL elections).**
- **If State House approval comes within 90 days of next election, will use RCV in NEXT election.**
- **First usage could be overseen/audited by expert consultant.**



Concord:
It's time to
trailblaze
for
democracy
again

Mr Bader moves
that the Town
take affirmative action on Article 28
Ranked Choice Voting for Concord Elections
(as printed in the Briefing Book)



ARTICLE 28. Ranked Choice Voting for Concord Municipal Elections

Mr. Bader moves: That the Town take affirmative action on Article 28 [to authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court] as printed in the Briefing Book.

EXTRA SLIDES MIGHT
NEED FOR Q & A

Article 28: Ranked Choice Voting

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. RANKED CHOICE VOTING

(a) For the purposes of this section, the following terms shall, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:

"Concluded ballot", a ballot that does not rank any continuing candidate or contains an overvote at the highest-ranked continuing candidate.

"Continuing candidate", a candidate who has not been defeated.

"Highest-ranked continuing candidate", the continuing candidate with the highest ranking on a voter's ballot. Where a ballot omits 1 or more rankings, the next highest ranking shall be used for determining the highest-ranked continuing candidate.

"Overvote", a circumstance in which a voter ranks more than 1 candidate at the same ranking.

"Ranking", the number assigned on a ballot by a voter to a candidate to express the voter's preference for that candidate. Ranking number 1 shall be the highest ranking, ranking number 2 shall be the next-highest ranking, and so on.

Article 28: Ranked Choice Voting

■) All elected town offices shall be elected by ranked choice voting, except for single-seat offices when the number of candidates printed on the ballot is less than or equal to 2 or multi-seat offices when the number of candidates printed on the ballot is less than or equal to the number of seats to be elected. Ranked choice voting elections shall be tabulated in rounds pursuant to this section.

(c) In any single-seat election, each round shall begin by counting each ballot as 1 vote for its highest-ranked continuing candidate. Concluded ballots shall not be counted for any continuing candidate. Each round shall proceed sequentially as follows:

(1) If there are 2 continuing candidates, the candidate with the most votes shall be elected, and tabulation shall be complete.

(2) If there are more than 2 continuing candidates, the candidate with the fewest votes shall be defeated and a new round shall begin.

(d) In any multi-seat election, the first seat shall be filled pursuant to the tabulation process established in subsection (c). The remaining seats shall be filled by repeated application of the tabulation process established in subsection (c); provided, however, that all rankings marked for candidates who have already been elected shall be disregarded and ballots shall be counted as 1 vote for their next highest-ranked continuing candidate.

Article 28: Ranked Choice Voting

(e) If 2 or more candidates are tied with the fewest votes such that tabulation cannot continue until the candidate with the fewest votes shall be defeated, the tied candidate with the fewest votes in the prior round shall be defeated. If 2 or more such tied candidates were tied with the fewest votes in the prior round, the second tie shall be decided by referring similarly to the number of votes for each candidate in the second-prior round. This process shall be applied successively as many times as necessary. The town clerk shall establish a method of tie-breaking that will be used if 2 or more candidates are tied with the fewest votes in the first round of tabulation.

(f) The town clerk shall have the authority to promulgate whatever rules are necessary to implement this act.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon its passage, provided there are at least 90 days until the next election, to allow for proper implementation.



Key Concepts

Plurality (current): winner has the MOST FIRST CHOICE votes

Majority (RCV): winner has MORE THAN HALF OF ALL votes

Threshold: percentage of votes needed to win

What Article 28 will do

- Implement Ranked Choice Voting for town elected offices
 - Select Board, School Committee, Housing Authority, Moderator
-

What Article 28 will not do

- Change the current structure of elected offices
- Affect state elections or the state ballot

US RCV Usage

9

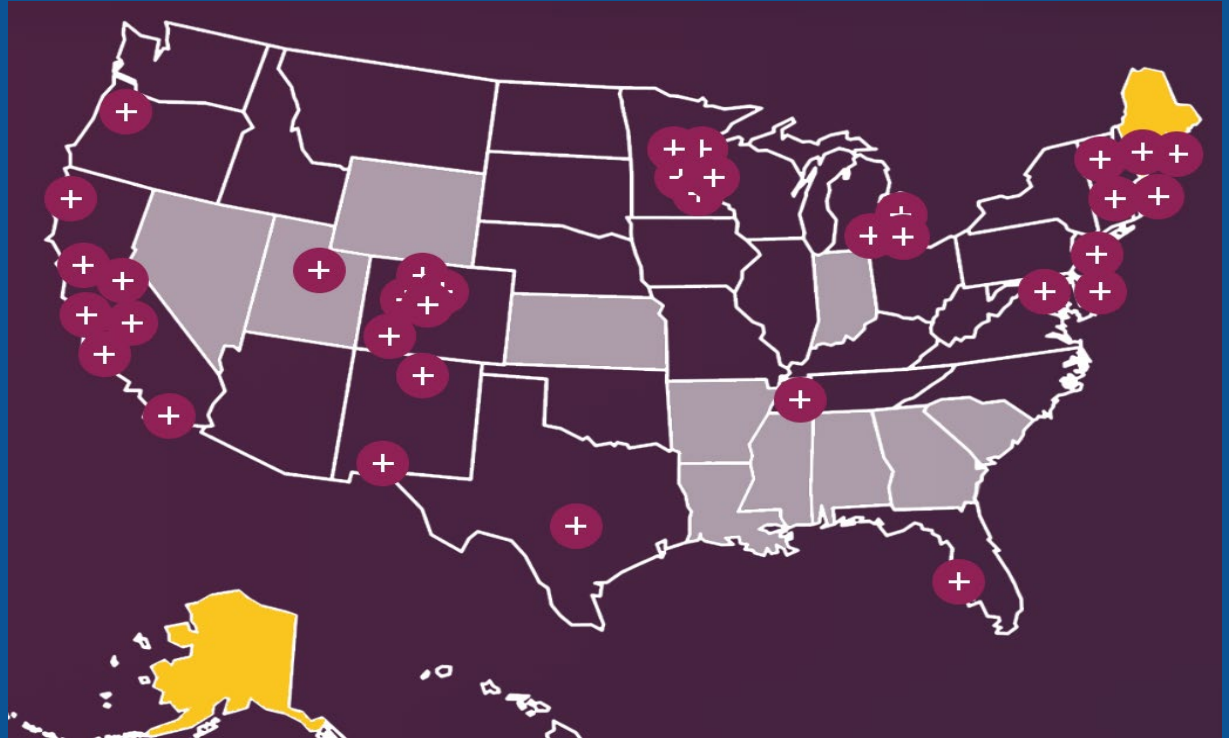
Million voters live in RCV communities.

28

States include at least one jurisdiction that uses RCV.

425

Elections have used RCV since 2004.



Let's Say - Your 1st Choice...

Crosses the threshold - 51% for 1-seat / 34% for 2-seat
Game over. Your candidate wins.

Gets fewest votes - with no chance of winning
Your vote goes to your 2nd choice.

NO VOTE WASTED

Why Do It?

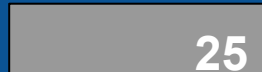
- Track record of success where in use (domestically & internationally)
- More institutions, organizations, states & municipalities using RCV
- Enthusiastically endorsed by LWV (national and local)
- Modest expense to town: (check with Kai on latest price!)
- Metrowest neighbors (Acton, Wayland, Natick and Newton) are also moving in the RCV direction

RCV will give us MORE

- First-time candidates
- Positive campaigning
- Interest in elections
- People voting

More Democracy - More Better

The Problem of Vote-Splitting

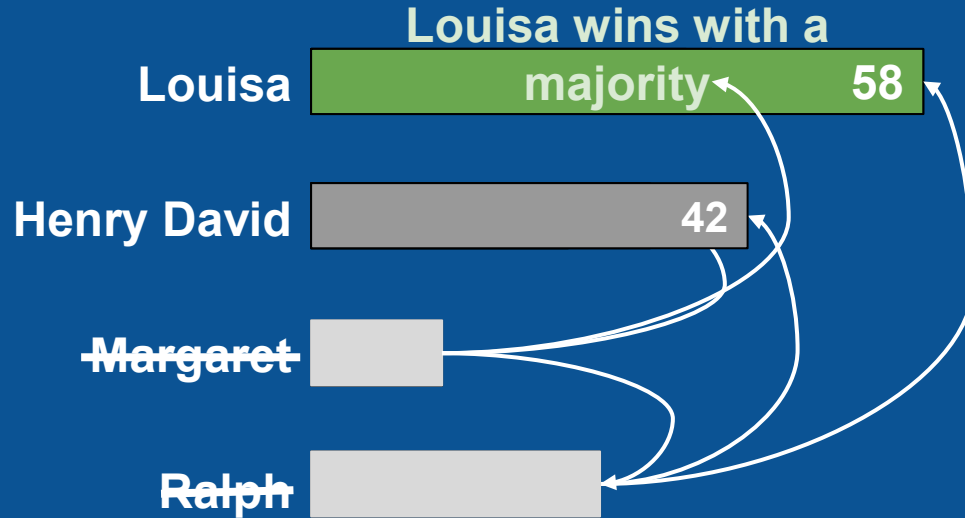


Peeps wins with less than a majority (< 50%) of support



Counting the Votes

Select Board Race with 100 Ballots



Reasons given NOT to

“It’s too complicated”

- Cambridge has been using 1941.
- Easthampton - same size and # of precincts - used last November.
- Concord Voters can handle the voting. Machines handle the counting.

Do you know how your car works or how to program a computer?

But... we happily use our car and computers.

Reasons given NOT to

“It’s too liberal/partisan”

- **Whichever party - takes advantage away from incumbent insiders**

“It’s too radical.”

- Actually has more of a **centrist** impact.
- Those who’ve been using wouldn’t go back. ME, AK, NY, UT
- It is the **wave** of the future!

“It will cost \$”

- The amount is **modest**.