

Voting Choices

Alternate methods of voting have always been a question in American democracy. Measures like Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV), Approval Voting, and the congressional district system are grabbing attention as possible ways to enhance representation and voter approval.

Ranked-Choice Voting lets a voter rank the candidates in order of preference so that the winner would have majority support. If no candidate receives more than 50% of the first-choice votes, then the candidate with the lowest total votes is removed and their votes distributed. This process is then repeated as necessary until one person has a majority and crosses the 50% threshold. RCV has been used in Maine and Alaska, and it is praised for aiding third-party candidates in a seemingly impossible system. But, it has not come without criticism, because some say that the system's complexity could be confusing to voters unfamiliar with ranking multiple candidates.

Another option that has been suggested is Approval Voting, which offers another approach and allows voters to vote for all the candidates they favor rather than only voting for one. Simply put, the most approved-of candidate wins. The argument for this system is that it encourages candidates who appeal to the broad population rather than those who are only focused on a specialized constituency. It's not that common yet, however, St. Louis, Missouri, gave Approval Voting a try in recent years and they reported it as an overall success.

The second proposed change — the congressional district system — is already in place in Maine and Nebraska. Rather than giving a state's whole number of electoral votes to the winner, this system distributes them based on the performance of a candidate in different congressional districts. Advocates say it can more accurately reflect political diversity within states. Opponents fear it would further gerrymandering.

With more elections, talks about alternate methods to vote will continue. Those in favor of change see the possible reform as a way of making elections true to what people want, while critics warn against new problems if changes happen — in addition to messing up a system that's already hard to deal with. Given the country's next elections (local, national, etc.), the question about how we vote remains part of the democratic process.

Sources

- (1) [ElectionScience](#)
- (2) [FairVote](#)
- (3) [NationalPopularVote](#)