

Proportional Representation Importance

- Vision: voters form voluntary constituencies
 - Not just by geography, in districts
- US hasn't upgraded its democracy since Alpha version from 1700's
 - Except for successful local movements 100 years ago (National Municipal League)
 - Beaten back by political operatives, McCarthy era
 - Analogy to using a 1950's era mainframe or DOS, instead of an android or laptop or GUI
- For councils and boards and legislatures, both at-large elections and ward systems distort representation
- Fair redistricting initiatives on the way in Colorado, but inherently limited

Avoid Wasted Votes

- Current system throws votes for losing candidates away, sometimes more than half of all votes
- In PR systems, votes remain active, nearly always eventually supporting a candidate the voter prefers
- Incentives for campaigns and voters to increase turnout and reduce negative campaigning.

Many approaches all yield Good PR

- Not literally impossible, like single-winner methods
- Ongoing worldwide movement to upgrade democracy
- US now poised to move forward
 - Losing party in power in Congress as well as presidency
 - Underrepresentation of women, minorities
 - Head off discontent in urban/rural divide as well

Any PR system is a major improvement

- Mixed Member PR with leveling seats, ala Germany
- STV: Single Transferrable Vote (Boulder 1917-1947)
- STAR (Single Transferable Assigned Representative) (Jameson Quinn at Harvard)
- Mix and match options for:
 - Ballots
 - Districts
 - Lists
 - Tallying

Ballot options

- STAR ballots:
 - Like current ballots, but allow nonlocal write-ins
- MMP: 1 district vote for candidate, 1 national vote for party
- STV: Rank each candidate in multi-member district

Districting options

- PR does not need multiple-winner districts!
- Just use existing districts with STAR voting
- Somewhat bigger districts with MMP system for overall proportionality
- For council one big district, but with PR. People will vote geographically if they want

Lists: predeclarations and delegation

- STAR: Candidates each publish their list
- Party lists, adjusted by tally results

Tally method - lots of good options

- STAR: Single Transferrable Vote (state-wide)
- Councils: Proportional Approval Voting, Reweighted Range Voting

STAR voting

- Every party assigns a representative to every district
 - Nearly everyone is represented by someone they supported
- What if it works too well: lots of parties? Many options
 - Require minimum percentage

Proportional Representation Advantages

- Jesse's list mostly applies to all PR systems

Status, Momentum

- 10 State legislatures have multi-member districts
- Potomac Compact proposal: Maryland and Virginia
- Real interest in Oregon on redistricting panel
- Study alternatives
 - But nearly any PR system is better than current system
 - Avoid perfectionism

1. Candidates declare preferences



Themselves

Their party
faction

Rest of
their party

Other
independents
and/or parties
(in order of
preference)

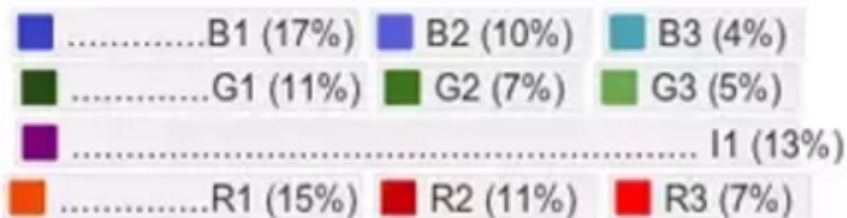


2.

Each voter chooses a candidate

Each voter may simply put a check next to a local candidate, or write-in a candidate from far away.

Here are some possible
ballot results for an
election with 3 parties
and 1 independent
candidate.



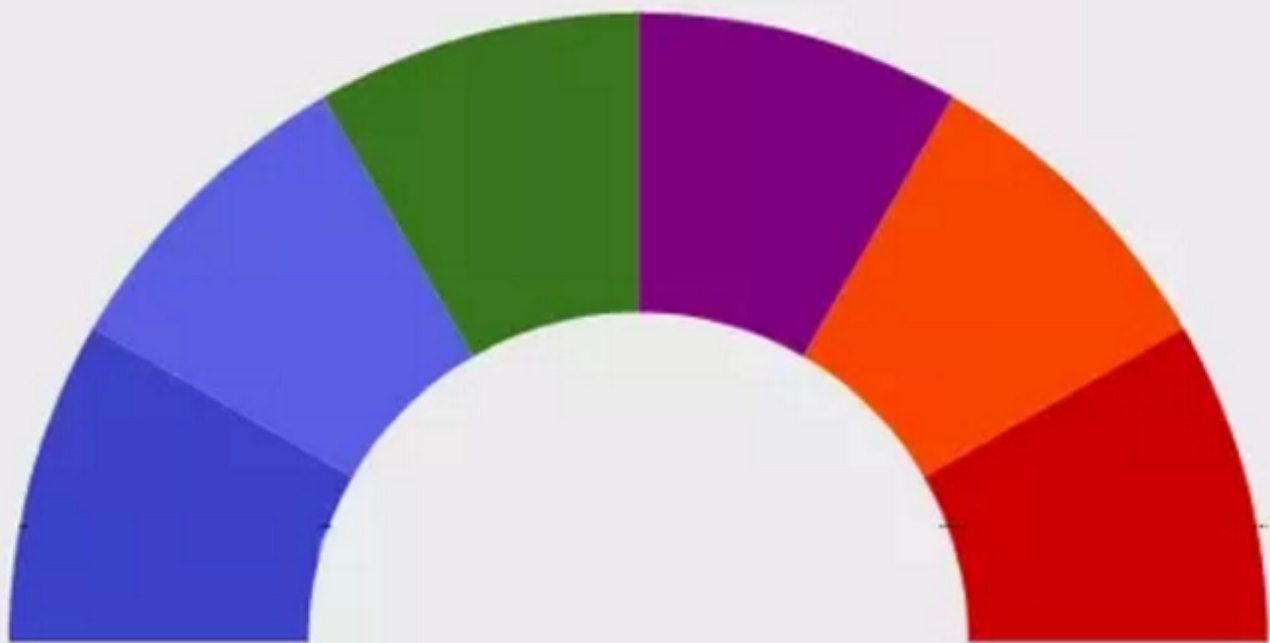
3. Eliminations and vote transfers to find winners

Assuming there are 6 seats in the legislature, the threshold to win is $1/(6+1) = 14.29\%$ of the vote. Candidates which meet that threshold are elected and their excess votes transferred according to the predeclared preferences of the voters' favorite; the weakest ones who don't are eliminated and their votes transferred. (For voting geeks: this step uses Single Transferrable Voting with equal rankings.)

Here is a graphical representation of the process, with dark fringes representing elected candidates.



Here is the final result.



4. Assign territory

Each representative gets a multi-district territory, so that each district has one representative per party.

Imagine the above election were in Australia, and the regions of Australia were equal-population districts. Depending on how party support was distributed, the representatives' territories might be something like this:



So no matter where you lived and whom you'd voted for, you'd have a representative from your party accountable to you. The bigger your party, the more "local" that representative would be.