

Approval Voting

Simple, Effective Voting Method Reform

Neal McBurnett

for the League of Women Voters, Boulder County

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too much in overview slide double spaced bullets bullets vs flow, subset, etc story, consequences, vs principles

e.g. slide 3 a jumble

after approval voting - ask for questions? is it clear? slide 6: title "Advantages"

end of approval voting - upheaval in greece or what? oxi vs nai yes

do graph

more gentle on irv just complicated!

Overview

- Consensus: Bad voting method causes problems with US elections
- Approval voting: "Vote for one or more"
 - Big improvement
 - Simple to understand
 - The only really easy to implement alternative
- We should allow Approval Voting in Colorado and elsewhere!
- Other worthy alternative methods for single-winner contests
- Use Proportional Representation for multi-winner contests!

US Voting method Problems

We use Plurality Voting, AKA Choose-One Plurality Voting, "First Past the Post", which causes many problems:

- Spoiler effect: getting mad at good candidates!
- Accusations "You're wasting your vote, helping enemy"
- Negative campaigning
- Good candidates avoid running
- Disillusioned voters disengage, low turnout
- Very little information from the electorate

Approval Voting Intro

- Introductory video: [What Is Approval Voting? Plantsville](#)

Vote for one or more

Vote for one or more candidates The candidate with the most votes wins	
ELEANOR ROOSEVELT Incumbent	☐
CESAR CHAVEZ Labor Organizer	☒
WALTER LUM Publisher	☐
JOHN HANCOCK Physician	☐
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. Minister	☒
ANNA MAE PICTOU AQUASH Indigenous Rights Organizer	☒

Approval Voting

- Voters can show support for all of their preferred candidates
- More positive elections
- Increases participation from candidates and voters
- Generally better outcomes for the electorate as a whole
- Simple, clear ballot tallies
- Ballots are the same
- No changes to standard election systems in wide use
- Easy to audit

Approval Voting History



Used for parliamentary elections in Greece, 1864-1926

Approval Voting Recent History

- Re-invented independently several times in 1960's and '70's: Otteweil, Kellett & Mott, Brams & Fishburn, Weber
- Used in straw polls for United Nations Secretary General
- Used by professional societies like the American Mathematical Society, American Statistical Association
- Used to elect University of Colorado student government twice each year

Approval Voting opportunities

- Great for primaries
 - Choose the best candidate
 - More post-primary party unity
- Usable now by vacancy committees and other straw polls

Colorado a Leader in Election Innovation

- Proportional Representation in early 20th century
- Bucklin voting method very popular, invented in Grand Junction

Approval Voting Bill - Jonathan Singer

- Very modest bill: just defines rules for using Approval Voting
- Use of Approval Voting is Optional
- Voluntary use by cities, town, school districts, special districts etc
- Rob Richie of Fairvote (IRV) recommends passage of our bill

Score voting

AKA Range voting

- Like in the Olympics, Internet Movie Database
- Voters rate candidates on a scale
- Candidate with the highest rating wins
- Approval Voting is Score with just two possible ratings

CES Survey Results

Approval voting criticisms

- "Bullet voting"
 - Simulations suggest that if up to 70% of the electorate bullet votes, it actually improves the outcomes.
 - Political scientists in France and Germany conducted two large-scale approval voting surveys based on their real elections. These studies further support the positive effects of approval voting. For instance, voters using approval voting largely chose to vote for more than one candidate (i.e. they didn't widely bullet vote).
- Strategy (Tideman, Green-Armytage)
- Later-no-Harm vs Favorite-Betrayal cf. [discussion](#)
- Good: e.g. oregon independent party - internet primary, asked for priorities for legislature

Use vs Runoff, e.g. in Denver

Vs Instant-Runoff Voting, aka Ranked Choice Voting

- Much better than Choose-One Plurality Voting!

Instant-Runoff Voting

- Very confusing terminology
 - Alternative vote
 - Transferable vote
- Ballot design issues
- Most of most people's votes don't count
- Most voter preferences aren't reported, or reflected in even the complicated run-off round details
- Hard to understand
- [Maine's Ranked Choice Voting: It's Not Plurality | The Center for Election Science](#)

Approval Voting is better than Instant-Runoff Voting

- Better Voter Satisfaction
- Less confusing
- Easy to do with current equipment
- Transparent
- Efficient to audit
- Always good to support your favorite
- Difficult to tally

Better Ranked Choice Voting methods

- Any Condorcet method
 - Ranked Pairs
 - Schulze, aka Beatpath
 - Game Theory (Rivest and Shen)
- Bucklin: accumulate top ranks until majority

Instant-Runoff has been Rejected or Repealed

- Fort Collins (2011)
- Aspen (2010)
- Burlington, Vermont (2010)
- Cary, North Carolina (2009)
- Pierce County, Washington (2009)
- Ann Arbor, Michigan (1976)

to cover:

talk about complaint that it is "prone to strategic voting" vs
use for honest

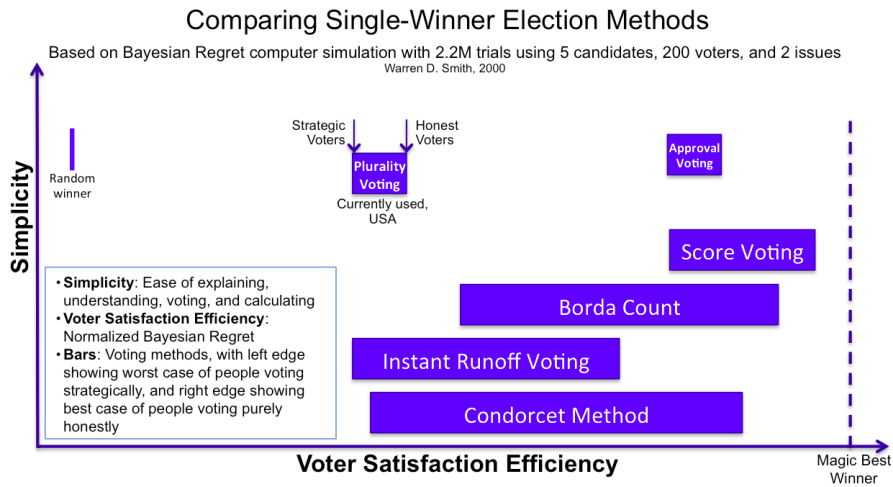
Election Integrity

- Hard to audit IRV

There is No Perfect Voting Method

- Mathematically proven
- What about "Arrow's Theorem"?
 - Only applies to ranked-choice methods
 - Doesn't apply to Approval Voting and other not rating methods
- Gibbard-Satterthwaite theorem does apply
 - Strategic voting inevitable outside of dictatorship

Effectiveness of Different Voting Systems



Warren Smith simulations, 2000

The Best Voting Method

What if we could read voter's minds, know their positions on issues, their honest assessments of the candidates?

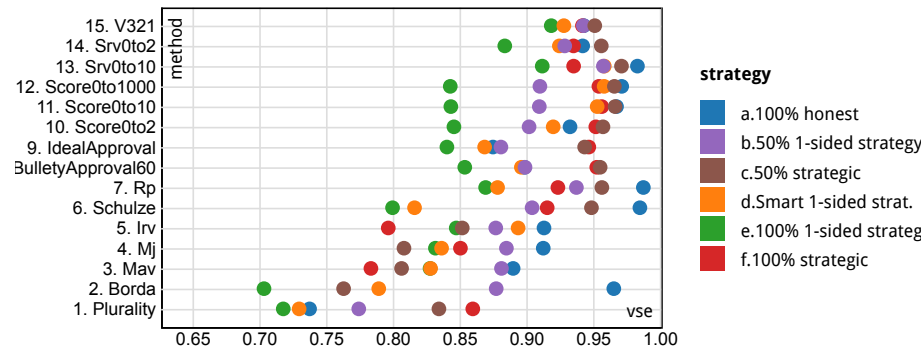
We could pick the candidate that represented the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

The one made the most people the happiest.

Well, we can get very close, via computer simulations of voters and candidates! Then we can see how happy voters are, on average, after each simulated election. In theory, a voting system could pick the optimum candidate 100% of the time. In practice, ballots don't let voters't express their views clearly enough, and easy-to-understand voting methods sometimes miss the best winner.

Good simulations even model the likelihood that each voter will vote "honestly" or "strategically", and might, e.g. see what would happen in a wide range of situations, e.g. if the voters who support the top frontrunner vote honestly, but those who

Effectiveness of Different Voting Systems



Voter Satisfaction Efficiency: Jameson Quinn simulations, 2017

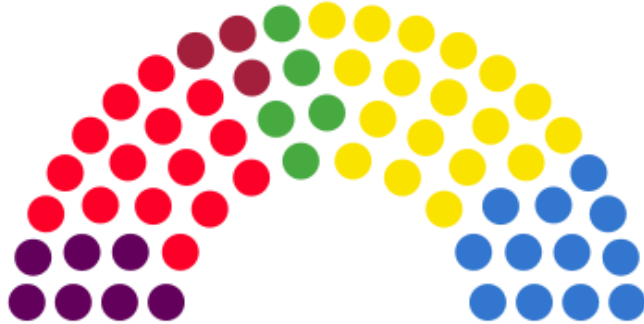
When there's good polling, voters might be more strategic.
Otherwise, don't worry so much about vulnerability to
strategy

Even Better Methods that require Modified Ballots

- 3-2-1 voting is a voting method where voters
 - give each candidate one of 3 ratings good, acceptable, or bad
 - find the winner in 3 steps: top 3 good; top 2 not bad; best rated
 - First, the 3 semifinalists are the candidates rated “good” the most
 - second, the 2 finalists are the semifinalists rated “bad” the least
 - and third, the winner is the finalist who’s rated higher on more ballots (ie, the winner of a virtual runoff)
- Score runoff voting (SRV), also with different possible score levels. This is like score voting, except that you

Proportional representation

- US is an outlier in having a terrible voting system
- Single Transferrable Vote
- Reweighted Range Voting (based on Score voting)



Summary

- Approval voting: simple fix
- Advantages - use with current equipment, ...

For more information

- [Center for Election Science: electology.org](http://electology.org)
- [Approval Voting for Colorado](#)

- Questions about "One Person One Vote"
 - One voter, one ballot
- The phrase "one person one vote" is about franchise to vote, and voter registration, not about method of voting
- History is different in europe vs US
 - Europe: involve everyone in election - not just property owners
 - and not allow people with property in multiple places to vote multiple times
 - US: about redistricting - senate is not one person one vote
 - Supreme Court requires state and local elections to be one person one vote in redistricting

one person one vote =>

court cases about IRV which answer this objection, which failed

Being able to vote for two candidates does not mean being given two ballots.

each approval voter gives an opinion about each candidate.
equal opportunity to influence outcome they've made an
equal participation about each person on the ballot whether
they vote for 1 or for 5