

IRV Would *Prevent* Greens from Winning

In the 2000 presidential election, you got to choose just one candidate. Some people who considered voting for Nader voted for Gore instead, since they didn't want Bush to win. They felt that a vote for Nader would be wasted because it would have no effect on the race between Gore and Bush.

The Green Party has long promoted Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) as a solution to this problem. But they are mistaken.

Instant Runoff Voting provides you the opportunity to choose a third party on the ballot only as long as it actually has no chance of winning. Once that party becomes a real contender, **IRV would force votes to be wasted just as they are wasted now.**

Suppose Nader, Gore, and Bush run again in an IRV election, and your favourite is Nader, but you still prefer Gore to Bush. Nader has more support this time. The polls say 40% will rank Bush first, with the rest split between Gore and Nader. Nader supporters rank Gore second to reduce the risk of Bush.

30%	30%	40%
1. Nader	1. Gore	1. Bush
2. Gore		

Who will you vote for? **Nader and Gore still split the vote.** If you rank Nader first, then Gore will be eliminated and Bush will win. If you rank Gore first, Nader will be eliminated and Gore will win.

Once again, Greens who dislike Bush will be fighting with loyal Green voters to persuade them to vote for Gore instead.

IRV Could Make Greens Vote Bush

With IRV, ranking a candidate *higher* can cause him to lose; ranking a candidate *lower* can cause him to win!

This crazy behavior makes IRV *worse* than the current system.

Here's an example. Suppose Nader is doing really well and the votes come out like this:

30%	31%	39%
1. Bush	1. Gore	1. Nader
2. Gore	2. Nader	2. Gore

In the above election, Bush is eliminated because he has the least first-place votes. So Gore wins.

Now suppose 2% of the Nader supporters change their ballots so they rank Bush first — *ahead of Nader*:

30%	31%	37%	2%
1. Bush	1. Gore	1. Nader	1. Bush
2. Gore	2. Nader	2. Gore	2. Nader
			3. Gore

Now among first-place votes, Bush has 32% and Gore has 31%. So Gore is eliminated and Nader wins.

Voting for Bush *instead of Nader* caused Nader to win!

IRV is Complicated and Hard to Sell

Here is a description of IRV (from fairvote.org):

Voters rank candidates in order of choice: 1, 2, 3 and so on. It takes a majority to win. If anyone receives a majority of the first choice votes, that candidate is elected. If not, the last place candidate is defeated, just as in a runoff election, and all ballots are counted again, but this time each ballot cast for the defeated candidate counts for the next choice candidate listed on the ballot. The process of eliminating the last place candidate and recounting the ballots continues until one candidate receives a majority of the vote.

Here is a description of Approval Voting:

Vote for as many candidates as you like. The candidate with the most votes wins.

Which would you rather explain?

Widespread understanding of how the electoral system works is essential to establishing voter confidence.

Instant Runoff vs. Approval

Hard to explain.

Simple to explain.

Requires a new ballot design.

Works with existing ballots.

In an election with ten candidates, there would be over 3.6 million ways to fill out a ballot. Each precinct might have to report each individual ballot separately.

To run an election with ten candidates, each precinct would add up and report ten numbers.

Some votes may count or not count, depending on the rest of the ballots.

Every vote counts.

Voting for a candidate can hurt that candidate's chances of winning.

Voting for a candidate always improves that candidate's chances of winning.

Lets you vote for a third party without spoiling the election *only if* the third party is far behind. Works *against* the third party when it becomes a contender.

Lets you vote for a third party with no risk of ever spoiling the election.

Approval Voting

Vote for as many candidates as you like.
The candidate with the most votes wins.

Approval Voting works better for third parties.

Approval Voting counts every vote.

Approval Voting is easier to implement.

Approval Voting is simpler to explain.

Approval Voting is easier to promote.