OVERVIEW OF IRV

THE PROBLEM: "Provisional" ballots were instituted in Colorado in 2002, allowing people to cast paper ballots if their names were not in the poll book at the precinct location where they chose to vote. If the person's registration was later verified, his or her ballot was counted. This allowed residents to vote despite mistakes in the official voter records.

In the Denver municipal election of 2003, however, provisional ballots were not offered. The Denver Election Commission determined that there was not enough time to verify and count provisional ballots between the May municipal election and the June runoff a month later.

To address this issue, the Election Commission asked City Council to consider lengthening the period between the May municipal election and the runoff so that provisional ballots could be included in the 2007 municipal election. Councilmembers did not support lengthening the election season, and were reluctant to tamper with the existing timeline. If the runoff election were held two weeks later, in mid-June, the Mayor, Auditor and Councilmembers would have less time to assemble a staff by the third Monday in July, the inauguration date.

Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) or Ranked Choice Voting would solve this problem. It would allow provisional ballots and avoid entirely the expense and political exhaustion of the runoff election. Plus, it has other advantages, as described below.

Also, vacancy elections in Denver are determined by a plurality as there is no runoff. This is inconsistent with regular elections where candidates must win by a majority.

MECHANICS: Voters rank candidates for each race in order of choice: first, second, third, and possibly more. If your first choice gets eliminated, your vote goes to your second-ranked candidate as your backup choice, and so on, until one candidate gets a majority. Thus, the runoff rankings are used to determine which candidate has support from a popular majority. In this way, a majority can be achieved in a single election.

WHERE (SO FAR):
- San Francisco municipal elections in 2004 and 2005.
- Burlington, Vermont mayoral election in March 2006.
- Colorado House District 26 vacancy election in March 2006.
- Australia, Ireland and London.
- IRV is being considered in Minneapolis and San Diego.
- The League of Women Voters of Larimer County has recently decided to support the use of Instant Runoff Voting in single seat elections because the voting system accomplishes the following objectives:
  - Every person's vote should count.
  - A winner should have majority support.
  - Maximize voter participation.
  - Be open to a variety of candidates and ideas.
  - Encourage positive, issue-based campaigning.

PHILOSOPHY:

- In partisan elections IRV allows independent-minded and third party candidates to run as well as introducing different ideas into electoral debate. These candidates can push issues that get ignored by the major parties.
- Alliances and civil campaigning increase. "I need to get enough No. 1 votes to get in the race, and then I have to collect No. 2s from other candidates as they drop out," said Susan King, a lesser-known candidate who was among the front-runners in San Francisco. "Rather than being more competitive, they're being more collaborative."
- Voters can vote for the candidates they really like, which eliminates spoiler candidates and "lesser of two evils" dilemmas.
- It's efficient and effective, avoiding the costs of runoffs and making individuals' votes count more.

COST: Saves cost of runoff. In addition, candidates don't need to raise more money for a second election and independent expenditures decline, significantly improving the campaign finance situation.

EXIT POLL INFO: Two exit polls in San Francisco showed that city voters generally liked IRV and found it easy to use, including voters across racial and ethnic lines.

- 87% of those San Franciscans polled understood ranked choice voting.
- 61% preferred the new system, 27% said it made "no difference" to them, and 13% said they preferred the former runoff system.
- Of three choices, a majority (59%) of voters surveyed reported ranking three candidates; 14% reported ranking two; and, 23% reported ranking only one candidate.

Suggested website information: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instant_run-off_voting.

The Instant Runoff Voting Solution

Instant runoff voting (IRV) is a well-tested voting method for single-seat offices, such as Mayor or Governor. The majoritarian system corrects the defects latent in plurality elections and two-round runoff elections, the two most widely used voting systems in the country. In the wake of citizen frustration with the consequences of "spoiler" candidacies and non-majority winners, efforts to replace plurality election laws with this more democratic alternative have made significant progress in various states. Instant runoff voting is an even more obvious improvement over traditional "delayed runoff" elections, as it ensures a majority winner in one election rather than two. This results in higher turnout in the decisive election, a sharp drop in election administration costs, more cooperative campaigning, and lower costs of winning campaigns. In 2002, San Francisco became the first major jurisdiction to replace "delayed runoff" elections with instant runoff elections.

How Instant Runoff Voting Works: IRV allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference (i.e. first choice, second choice, third, fourth and so on). Voters have the option to rank as many or as few candidates as they wish, but can vote without fear that ranking less favored candidates will harm the chances of their most preferred candidates. First choices are then tabulated, and if a candidate receives a majority of first choices, he or she is elected. If nobody has a clear majority of votes on the first count, a series of runoffs are simulated, using each voter's preferences indicated on the ballot. The candidate who received the fewest first place choices is eliminated. All ballots are then retabulated, with each ballot counting as one vote for each voter's highest ranked candidate who has not been eliminated. Specifically, voters who chose the now-eliminated candidate will now have their ballots counted for their second choice candidate -- just as if they were voting in a traditional two-round runoff election -- but all other voters get to continue supporting their top candidate. The weakest candidates are successively eliminated and their voters' ballots are redistributed to next choices until a candidate crosses a majority of votes.

Instant runoff voting allows for better voter choice and wider voter participation by accommodating multiple candidates in single seat races and assuring that a "spoiler effect" will not result in undemocratic outcomes. IRV allows all voters to vote for their favorite candidate without fear of helping elect their least favorite candidate, and it ensures that the winner enjoys true support from a majority of the voters. Plurality voting, as used in most American elections, does not meet these basic requirements for a fair election system that promotes cost-saving elections with wider participation.

IRV addresses the cost and negative effects of conducting run-off elections:

The costs of conducting this second round runoff can also be substantial, as jurisdictions must print ballots, recruit and train poll workers, locate precincts, and prepare voting equipment -- not once, but twice. In addition, second round runoffs are often held shortly after the first round election, creating numerous administrative hurdles for election officials. *For example, ballots must be printed quickly after the first round, but not until officials know who the top two vote-getters are. Likewise, this process can often disenfranchise overseas and absentee voters, who will not have enough time to return their ballots after they have been printed and mailed to them.*

Separate runoff elections typically produce lower turnout than in the first round election. Locales that use runoffs *after* the general election require voters to return to the polls a second time, often to vote in only one, low-profile race.

Impact on candidates: Two-round runoff elections require candidates to raise money twice, often requiring an influx of additional special interest contributions for the second round runoff.

Sample Legislation:

HR 2690 (2005) Federal legislation

 a) In General- Notwithstanding any other provision of law and except as provided in subsection (b), each State shall conduct general elections for Federal office held in the State during 2008 and each succeeding year using an instant runoff voting system, and shall ensure that the voting equipment and technology used to conduct the elections is compatible with such a system.

      (2) The term `instant runoff voting system' means a system for the election of candidates under which--

      (A) runoff counts of candidates are conducted in rounds;

      (B) voters may rank candidates on the ballot according to the order of preference;

      (C) if in any round no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast, the candidate with the fewest number of votes is eliminated and the remaining candidates advance to the next round;

      (D) in each round, a voter shall be considered to have cast one vote for the candidate the voter ranked highest on the ballot who has not been eliminated; and

      (E) the runoff counts are carried out automatically at the time the votes are cast and tabulated.

The information provided can be found www.fairvote.org

Progressive Wins Instant Runoff Vote in Burlington
by Ross Sneyd

BURLINGTON — Burlington's instant runoff voting system was called into action on its inaugural run Tuesday, electing Progressive Bob Kiss mayor on the second ballot.

"I think it ran really smoothly," said Jo LaMarche, the city's election director, just after the announcement of Kiss' win.

Under instant runoff voting, also known as ranked-choice voting, residents voted for their first choice for mayor, but then listed as well their second, third, fourth and fifth choices in the five-way race.

The aim is to settle highly competitive contests with a single trip to the voting booth, saving the city thousands on runoff elections. The city charter requires a winning candidate to get a majority vote.

The first tally Tuesday night showed Kiss, a state representative, with 39 percent of the vote, while Democrat Hinda Miller had 31 percent and Republican Kevin Curley had 26 percent.

Then Curley and two trailing independent candidates were dropped out of the count and their votes re-allocated according to voters' second choices.

Kiss won on the second count, with 4,761 votes to Miller's 3,986.

Cheers erupted in the city council chambers as the winning tally was being projected on screens.

"It worked," said Terry Bouricius, a former Progressive Party state legislator who has long promoted instant runoff. He said he had "several anxious moments" between the announcement of the first and second counts, wondering if Kiss' lead would hold up.

Kiss said he thinks he gained a fair share of Curley's votes because Curley, at a mayoral forum, had said that Kiss would be his personal second choice.

Advocates have been promoting the idea of instant runoff voting as a way of boosting voter turnout, encouraging more people to run for public office while eliminating the notion that a third-party candidate might be a spoiler.

Burlington was being closely watched by advocates of various election reforms because no other community currently chooses its chief executive using such a system. A small city in Michigan will start using the practice soon, some cities in Washington state have been given the option of using it and San Francisco already has elected some city officials under the system.

Although small itself, Burlington got attention because it's the largest city in Vermont and because it was the hometown of Democratic National Committee Chairman Howard Dean, a supporter of instant runoff voting who cast his ballot Tuesday morning.

Kiss will be assuming the mayor's office from Democrat Peter Clavelle, who is retiring. The new mayor assumes office the first Monday in April.

HOW RANKED CHOICE VOTING WORKS

➤ Rank candidates 1, 2, 3...

➤ (It's best to use all three of your rankings)

Voters Rank Candidates

Redistribute Votes from Eliminated Candidate to Voters' Next Choices

Eliminate Candidate with Fewest Number of Votes

Count the Votes
for each voter's highest ranked candidate that hasn't been eliminated

No

Is There a Majority?

Yes

➤ No need for December Runoff

Declare a Winner

OFFICIAL BALLOT / BALOTA OFICIAL /正式選票

CONSOLIDATED GENERAL ELECTION / ELECCIONES GENERALES CONSOLIDADAS /聯合普選
CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO / CIUDAD Y CONDADO DE SAN FRANCISCO / 三藩市市縣
NOVEMBER 2, 2004 / 2 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2004 / 2004年11月2日

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT 5

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS: Mark your first choice in the first column by completing the arrow pointing to your choice, as shown in the picture. To indicate a second choice, select a different candidate in the second column. To indicate a third choice, select a different candidate in the third column. To vote for a qualified write-in candidate, write the person's name on the blank line provided and complete the arrow.

INSTRUCCIONES PARA LOS ELECTORES: Para marcar su primera opción en la primera columna, complete la flecha que apunta hacia su selección, tal como se indica en la imagen. Para indicar una segunda opción, seleccione un candidato distinto en la segunda columna. Para indicar una tercera opción, seleccione un candidato distinto en la tercera columna. Para votar por un candidato calificado no listado, escriba el nombre de la persona en el espacio en blanco provisto, y complete la flecha.

選民指南： 在第一列中標記你的第一個選擇，將指向你的選擇的箭頭畫線連接起來，如圖所示。 標記第二個選擇時，在第二列中選擇一位不同的候選人。標記第三個選擇時，在第三列中選擇一位 不同的候選人。投選合格寫入候選人時，在提供的空位上填寫此人的姓名，並將箭頭畫線連接起來。

MEMBER, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS / MIEMBRO, CONSEJO DE SUPERVISORES / 市參議員
DISTRICT 5 - DISTRITO 5 - 第 5 選區
VOTE YOUR FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD CHOICES / VOTE POR SU PRIMERA, SEGUNDA Y TERCERA SELECCIÓN / 投選你的第一、第二和第三選擇

FIRST CHOICE / PRIMERA SELECCIÓN / 第一選擇	SECOND CHOICE / SEGUNDA SELECCIÓN / 第二選擇	THIRD CHOICE / TERCERA SELECCIÓN / 第三選擇
Vote for One / Vote por Uno / 請選一名	Vote for One - Must be different than your first choice / Vote por Uno - Debera ser diferente de su primera selección / 請選一名 / 必須與第一個選擇不同	Vote for One - Must be different than your first and second choices / Vote por Uno - Debera ser diferente de su primera y segunda selección / 請選一名 / 必須與第一個選擇和第二個選擇不同
ROSS MIRKARIMI 羅斯·莫卡里密 District Attorney Investigator Investigador en la Fiscalía del Distrito 地方檢察官辦公室調查員	**ROSS MIRKARIMI** 羅斯·莫卡里密 District Attorney Investigator Investigador en la Fiscalía del Distrito 地方檢察官辦公室調查員	**ROSS MIRKARIMI** 羅斯·莫卡里密 District Attorney Investigator Investigador en la Fiscalía del Distrito 地方檢察官辦公室調查員
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PHILLIP HOUSE 菲利浦·豪斯	**PHILLIP HOUSE** 菲利浦·豪斯	**PHILLIP HOUSE** 菲利浦·豪斯
ROBERT HAALAND 羅拔·夏龍德 Labor/Housing Organizer Organizador Laboral/de Vivienda 勞工/住房權益組織者	**ROBERT HAALAND** 羅拔·夏龍德 Labor/Housing Organizer Organizador Laboral/de Vivienda 勞工/住房權益組織者	**ROBERT HAALAND** 羅拔·夏龍德 Labor/Housing Organizer Organizador Laboral/de Vivienda 勞工/住房權益組織者
EMMETT GILMAN 埃莫特·吉爾曼 Attorney Abogado 律師	**EMMETT GILMAN** 埃莫特·吉爾曼 Attorney Abogado 律師	**EMMETT GILMAN** 埃莫特·吉爾曼 Attorney Abogado 律師
JULIAN DAVIS 朱利安·戴維斯 Doctoral Student Estudiante para Doctorado 博士學位攻讀者	**JULIAN DAVIS** 朱利安·戴維斯 Doctoral Student Estudiante para Doctorado 博士學位攻讀者	**JULIAN DAVIS** 朱利安·戴維斯 Doctoral Student Estudiante para Doctorado 博士學位攻讀者
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H. BROWN H·布朗	**H. BROWN** H·布朗	**H. BROWN** H·布朗
JOSEPH BLUE 約瑟夫·布魯 Loan Consultant Consultor en Préstamos 貸款顧問	**JOSEPH BLUE** 約瑟夫·布魯 Loan Consultant Consultor en Préstamos 貸款顧問	**JOSEPH BLUE** 約瑟夫·布魯 Loan Consultant Consultor en Préstamos 貸款顧問
BILL BARNES 比爾·巴恩斯 District Supervisor's Representative Representante de Supervisor en el Distrito 市參議員選區代表	**BILL BARNES** 比爾·巴恩斯 District Supervisor's Representative Representante de Supervisor en el Distrito 市參議員選區代表	**BILL BARNES** 比爾·巴恩斯 District Supervisor's Representative Representante de Supervisor en el Distrito 市參議員選區代表
WRITE-IN / ESCRIBE EN / 寫入	WRITE-IN / ESCRIBE EN / 寫入	WRITE-IN / ESCRIBE EN / 寫入