

b. Communications

1. PhoeBe (sorgen)
2. Jeffrey McKnight
3. Richard E. DeLeon

Kelly, Sherry

24b 1 —

From: Spring, Dona
Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2003 1:07 AM
To: Kelly, Sherry
Subject: FW: IRV YES!

-----Original Message-----

From: PhoeBe ANNE (thomas/sorgen) [mailto:phoebes0@earthlink.net]
Sent: Tuesday, November 11, 2003 6:28 AM
Subject: IRV YES!

Hello:

Instant runoff voting will ensure that Berkeley's elected representatives have the support of a majority of voters. It will get the election over in one election. That will save Berkeley taxpayers thousand of dollars currently wasted on runoff elections, plus spare voters the trouble of voting twice. It will save candidates the cost of a second election, so IRV is more supportive of campaign finance reform. IRV also will provide incentive for positive, issue-based campaigns, since candidates may need #2 or #3 rankings from the supporters of other candidates, and so negative campaigning might backfire. Instead, successful candidates will get elected by building coalitions, not by tearing down their opponents.

This an extremely important pro-democracy reform. Thus, I know you will vote YES to put IRV on the ballot. Let the voters decide this important issue.

Sincerely,
PhoeBe (sorgen)
Berkeley

Kelly, Sherry

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From: Spring, Dona
Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2003 12:30 AM
To: Kelly, Sherry
Subject: FW: put IRV on the ballot

for agenda packet

-----Original Message-----

From: Jeffrey Mcknight [mailto:jeffreymcknight@mac.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 11, 2003 8:35 PM
To: Spring, Dona
Subject: put IRV on the ballot

Dear Council Member Spring,

Instant runoff voting is an important pro-democracy reform. It will make sure that Berkeley's elected representatives have the support of a majority of voters, and get the election over in one election. That in turn will save Berkeley taxpayers thousand of dollars currently wasted on runoff elections, plus spare voters the hassle of a second election. It also will save candidates the cost of a second election, so IRV is more supportive of campaign finance reform. IRV also will provide incentive for positive, issue-based campaigns, since candidates may need

#2 or #3 rankings from the supporters of other candidates, and so negative campaigning might backfire. Instead, successful candidates will get elected by building coalitions, not by tearing down their opponents.

For all these reasons, I urge you to vote YES to put on the ballot. Let the voters decide this important issue.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey McKnight
5233 Shafter Ave
Oakland, CA 94618

Kelly, Sherry**24b 3**

From: Spring, Dona
Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2003 1:07 AM
To: Kelly, Sherry
Subject: FW: IRV

-----Original Message-----

From: Richard DeLeon [mailto:rdeleon18@comcast.net]
Sent: Tuesday, November 11, 2003 4:13 AM
To: Spring, Dona
Subject: IRV

Dear Council Member Spring,

I understand that the Berkeley City Council will soon be discussing whether it should place Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) for city elections on the March 2004 ballot.

I strongly urge you to put IRV on the ballot for voter debate and decision.

I'm sure you will hear many IRV advocates give the standard arguments favoring this pro-democracy electoral reform. Specifically: IRV will insure that elected representatives have majority voter support. IRV will reward positive, issue-based campaigns, discourage negative campaigning, and promote coalition-building. IRV will require only one election rather than two, thus maximizing turnout (runoff elections typically draw fewer voters) and minimizing costs. These are all good reasons for allowing the voters to decide for themselves whether IRV is worth doing.

I'd now like to offer four additional arguments in favor of IRV.

(1) IRV is as American as apple pie. In my advocacy of IRV in San Francisco, I often heard the objection that IRV - in particular, the use of ranked-choice ballots and transferable votes -- seemed strange, foreign, even vaguely (and unpleasantly) European, definitely not American. Plus it seemed "too complicated" for the average voter to figure out. To the contrary, over the period 1915 to 1960, voters in 22 American cities (including big ones like Cleveland and Cincinnati) used ranked-choice ballots and transferable votes in proportional representation systems to elect their city councils. Voters had no trouble figuring out how to do it - and this was before computers and with lower average schooling - and turnout in some cities increased. In an era still dominated by urban political machines, these electoral reforms were a good idea far ahead of their time, and memory of their use has since been buried under two generations of collective political amnesia. It is still a good idea, it is 100% American, and now is the time. (For a superb historical study, read Kathleen Barber's Proportional Representation and Election Reform in Ohio [Ohio State Univ. Press, 1995].)

(2) IRV will encourage full political disclosure and discourage two-faced sequential electoral campaigns. In my own studies of San Francisco elections over the last four decades, I observed the recurring pattern of a candidate showing one personality & agenda to the voters in November (to make it into the runoff), and then an entirely different personality & agenda in December (carefully crafted to win the runoff against a targeted single rival). An election under IRV, on the other hand, is truly a one-day sale. Candidates can run only one campaign & must lay all their cards on the table at once for all the voters to see. The old Jekyll-Hyde strategies won't work. This is a good thing.

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(3) IRV will help to expand voter choice, activate voter interest, encourage greater (but kinder & gentler) political competition, and restore legitimacy to a political system (at least at the state and national levels) that seems perversely designed by controlling elites to limit choice, eliminate competition, and minimize citizen participation. (Two useful books on these themes: Matthew Crenson and Benjamin Ginsberg, *Downsizing Democracy: How America Sidelined Its Citizens and Privatized Its Public* [John Hopkins Univ. Press, 2002]; Steven Hill, *Fixing Elections: The Failure of America's Winner Take All Politics* [Routledge, 2002].)

(4) After San Francisco, less grief and lower start-up costs for Berkeley. In the wake of San Francisco's struggles to implement IRV, the sailing for Berkeley should be smoother, quicker & less costly. Learning from San Francisco's early trials with IRV will minimize Berkeley's errors & generally reduce current uncertainties about technological feasibility, administrative procedures, legal challenges, and voter acceptance.

For all these reasons, please vote yes to put IRV on the Berkeley ballot. Let your voters decide this important issue.

Sincerely,

Richard E. DeLeon, Ph.D.
Professor
Department of Political Science
San Francisco State University

[Institutional affiliation is provided for identification purposes only.]

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