

MAY 02 2007

RULES & ELECTIONS

MOTION

The City of Los Angeles currently uses a two-round runoff system to elect its Mayor, City Attorney, City Council, and Controller. One election is held in early March, and if no candidate wins a majority of the vote, a second election between the top two finishers is held in May.

This approach poses several challenges for the City. Voter participation in runoff elections is usually low. In fact, since 1997, voter turnout has declined in more than half of the City's runoff elections. In addition, runoff elections are expensive to conduct. Since 1993, Los Angeles, LAUSD, and the LA Community College District have spent \$30.9 million administering runoff elections. From 2001 to 2005, the City of Los Angeles alone spent \$9.2 million. In 2005 the cost was \$4.7 million.

Instant runoff voting, which allows voters to rank a first, second and third choice, would elect majority winners in a single election. This approach has the potential to save Los Angeles significant expense and the difficulty of conducting runoff elections. With Instant Runoff Voting, Los Angeles could combine the primary and runoff into one effective election.

According to the New America Foundation, a nonpartisan, public policy institute that has studied the issue, Instant Runoff Voting is widely used around the world and is spreading in California. It has been used in San Francisco for local elections since 2004, and voters in Oakland, Davis and Berkeley, and Santa Clara County recently passed ballot measures to adopt Instant Runoff Voting.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Chief Legislative Analyst and City Clerk be requested to report to the City Council with an analysis of Instant Runoff Voting and recommendations for possible adoption of this election reform in the City of Los Angeles.

PRESENTED BY


JOSE HUIZAR
Councilmember, District 14

SECONDED BY


ERIC GARCETTI
Council President, District 13

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