

# Comment Report

SSB 3161

A bill for an act relating to the duties of the secretary of state, including the address confidentiality program and the conduct of elections.(See SF 2380.)

Subcommittee Members: Schultz-CH, Driscoll, Weiner

Date: 02/12/2024

Time: 12:30 PM

Location: Senate Lounge

**Name:** Darrow Center

**Comment:** As a conservative on some topics and liberal on other topics, I have longed hoped for the possibility of ranked choice voting because I've heard so many fellow Iowans of ALL different political beliefs agree that ranked choice voting can make elected people more civil and accountable, AND save cities money from other costly types of elections. Outofstate lobbying groups are the only people who I've heard want to prevent cities the freedom to use ranked choice voting. So, I urge you to remove Division 3 from this Bill.

**Name:** James Eliason

**Comment:** I urge the removal of division III from SSB3161. Ranked choice voting (RCV) is a wellestablished mode of election used in several states including Maine and Alaska. Over 600 elections have been conducted in the USA using it. It has several benefits: 1) When there are more than 2 candidates it avoids a "spoiler effect" when two similar candidates split the vote so that an undesirable candidate wins. 2) It eliminates expensive runoff elections, 3) It promotes more voter choice since voters don't vote for candidates not in a major party even if they are popular since they perceive this as "wasting" their vote. 4) There is less negative campaigning since candidates need to attract voters to choose them as their second choice. 5) The current primary system promotes both major parties to nominate an extremist leaving many independents frustrated.RCV is not difficult to implement. Voters find it easy to use. The required software is available in nearly every IA county. I have personally used RCV in running an election and it worked well. I am unable to attend the subcommittee meeting. Please support HSB183, which explicitly allows RCV to be used.

**Name:** John Stinogel

**Comment:** Please remove the ban on ranked choice voting (RCV) in division III of this bill. Iowans cannot be sorted into two distinct political groups, yet our election system forces us to choose between, for all intents and purposes, only two candidates. This leads to elections based on fear of the other candidate, rather than true preference for the candidate we vote for. RCV gives voice to the many Iowans dissatisfied with their two choices. That said, no government in Iowa has RCV. The ban in this bill would end the conversation before it even begins before Iowans are able to even see the outcome. Special interests seeking to keep the status quo should not be allowed to prevent our homerule cities from experimenting with a system that has been proven beneficial in other places.

**Name:** Joshua Meyers

**Comment:** 1. It makes perfect sense to discard ballots of people we are certain have died. But I see no mention of who these reliable sources might be, or who would hold them accountable for abuse of that trust. Please add, at least, the requirement of an

auditable paper trail for any votes discarded this way.<sup>2</sup> It's not clear to me why "early" ballots should have to be delivered A) during the business day, and B) an entire day before election day. Perhaps I lack imagination, but I don't see how accepting even "early" votes until the polls close is more prone to abuse than otherwise. And if we're disallowing other dropboxes, we can at least have a secure afterhours drop for early ballots at the proper office.<sup>3</sup> As I understand it, Ranked Choice Voting is already not permitted. That section is redundant, and also the opposite of what I'd want. I don't feel I'm best represented by choosing between the fighter in the Red or the Blue corner, I'd rather have the medic beside the ring.

**Name:** Tim Clay

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this bill. Ranked Choice Voting is a form of voting worth considering and should not be banned. It should be used more. Don't limit our voice when it comes to voting.

**Name:** Daniel Worrell

**Comment:** I would respectfully request that Division III be removed from SSB3161. Ranked choice voting (RCV) / instant runoff voting is already used in multiple states, municipalities, and as part of the internal party presidential selection process by both the Republican and Democrat parties. Using RCV eliminates expensive runoff election processes (which any fiscal conservative should support), eliminates spoiler effect to more accurately represents voter wishes, encourages more positive campaigns (as candidates will still vie for higher ranking for nonprimary votes), reduces political animosity (which we sorely need in this day and age), and leads to higher voter engagement (which should absolutely be a goal, regardless of where someone sits politically). Everything I have read indicates that this is a preemptive attempt by out of state lobbying groups, which is shameful. One must wonder why out of state groups are so concerned about RCV in Iowa, of all things. Iowans should make these decisions for Iowa. As a lifelong Iowa resident, the vast majority of people I have spoken with in Iowa, when RCV is described, were either interested in further discussion, if not outright supportive. I have spoken with no Iowan who was outright dismissive. In fact, the only Iowans I see outright opposed are politicians in Des Moines. The right thing to do is to have an honest discussion with constituents and represent their wishes, not attempt to squash it before the conversation happens. Most arguments against RCV that I have seen are fear mongering at best, and total misrepresentation / lies at worst. RCV has the potential to be more representative and democratic, a more accurate government of the people, by the people, for the people. Remove Division III and allow Iowans to have the discussion and decide for themselves.

**Name:** Morgan Vest

**Comment:** Please remove division 3 from this Bill. Ranked choice voting will give us a real voice and improve our democracy. We deserve to be able to choose our elected leaders, and ranked choice voting is the most effective way to do so. Out of state lobbyists shouldnt get to decide this for us.

**Name:** Emmett McCormick

**Comment:** I respectfully request that Division III be removed from SSB3161. Ranked choice voting allows independents, Libertarians and Green Party members to participate in primaries and to express their choice in general elections without the possibility of their vote being wasted. This section is just a ploy to entrench the two dominant parties.

**Name:** Brad Schabel

**Comment:** I'm a big fan of ranked choice voting. In line with that, please remove Division III from this Bill. Iowans are strong proponents of Democracy and I think we should have a deep conversation about how we can improve our processes for selecting officials. In my opinion, ranked choice voting would be a large improvement for ALL

voters. How it works: With ranked choice, the race is over if any candidate nets more than half of the firstplace votes that are cast. If no candidate exceeds 50 percent, the candidate with the fewest firstplace choices is discarded, and the votes for the others are tallied. The lowestranking candidate continues to be tossed out until one candidate gets more than half of all top preferences. Another benefit: The system allows voters to support outsider candidates without worrying about using their vote on a candidate who cant win. Candidates can win only with support or at least tolerance from a majority of the electorate, thus reducing polarization. It also lessens the chance that minor candidates become spoilers in close elections.

**Name:** Claudia Schabel

**Comment:** I think this is a no brainer. Please exclude Division 3 from this bill. Ranked choice voting would be a vast improvement on our current processes for executing Democracy. Thanks for your consideration.

**Name:** Sheila Gregan

**Comment:** I urge the subcommittee to remove Division 3 from this bill so Iowans can continue to learn about the benefits of Ranked Choice voting.

**Name:** Riley Mattice

**Comment:** I strongly advocate for the removal of Division 3 from the Bill to keep the momentum of our vital statewide dialogue on enhancing our electoral process. It's disheartening when the options on our ballot feel limited or inadequate, and the tone of campaigning leaves much to be desired. Like many of you, I yearn for an electoral system where every vote truly counts and contributes to a more representative outcome. Through my exploration of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV), I've become convinced of its potential to alleviate these common grievances. RCV promises a more inclusive, civil, and satisfying electoral experience, addressing the very issues we're all passionate about. Let's not hinder this promising discussion on RCV. We're on the brink of something transformative, and it's crucial we continue this conversation with open minds and hearts.

**Name:** Katie Roth

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from SSB3161. It accomplishes nothing legislatively Rank Choice Voting is already not legal in Iowa. We need to have additional and better choices in our election process so voting does not boil down to the lesser of two evils. A recent Pew Research Poll showed 63% of Americans say they are dissatisfied with the candidates who have emerged so far. Unfortunately the current process protects those who benefit the most from it not the electorate.

**Name:** Terese Grant

**Comment:** I have learned about the benefits of Ranked Choice Voting. It is a mistake to ban this option in the state of Iowa. Please remove Division III from this bill.

**Name:** Sandy Wilson

**Comment:** Citizen Engagement declares IN FAVOR of SSB 3161. Please advance the bill.

**Name:** Paul Bognanno

**Comment:** Polls prove our country is currently in a position where neither candidate for its highest office is respected by the public. The answer to this problem is complex but starts with presenting more, rather than fewer, viable candidates for public office. While I'm in favor of most of the provisions contained in SSB 3161, I'm particularly opposed to Division 3 of this bill which seeks to make ranked choice voting (RCV) illegal. RCV is not legal in Iowa currently so what is the purpose of Division 3? It would seem to be to preclude even considering RCV in the future. Why is RCV a threat? Rather than a receiving a preemptory ban, this concept should be studied and considered on its merits. It is currently used successfully and legally in two states,

many municipalities, and by the US Military for voting by overseas personnel. With this in mind, please do the responsible thing and remove Division 3 from SSB 3161. Respectfully submitted.

**Name:** Mitchell Heldt

**Comment:** I also recommend removal of the clause that would ban rank choice voting. I would also like to see a clause inserted that makes it illegal for anyone to hold office that votes to ban ranked choice voting.

**Name:** Parker Dougherty

**Comment:** Based on my research about ranked choice voting, I think it would be an excellent solution to provide better, more meaningful voting choices for our community. Current election processes and voting systems feel outdated and insufficient, but I am excited to see conversations about improving them. I ask the committee to please consider removing Division 3 from this bill, so that we can continue the important statewide conversation about improving our elections.

**Name:** Lisa Lima

**Comment:** Iowans want the opportunity to use Rank Choice Voting. It allows for a more fair and inclusive way to pick candidates.

**Name:** Aaron Labertew

**Comment:** We the People should have MORE options for voting, not less! Stop attacking our rights!

**Name:** Justin Whitty

**Comment:** Thank you for considering changes to our elections this legislative season. Please consider removing Division III of SSB3161 that bans Ranked Choice Voting. All sides can agree elections need to be secure, fair, and available to all registered and interested Iowans regardless of their means. As a concerned Iowa parent frustrated by partisan rancor, I take my civic responsibilities seriously; I have spent time understanding the limitations of our existing Plurality Voting system, and how Ranked Choice Voting (Instant Runoff Voting), Single Transferable Vote, Fusion Voting, Proportional Representation, Final Five Voting, "deep polling" and Citizen Assemblies can give voters more voice in policy decisions. Iowans are eager to learn more on these topics, and RCV enjoys wide support from the political science community. RCV gives voters more choice, encourages positive and issue focused campaigns, eliminates costly and low turnout runoff elections, and has potential to develop our democracy into something that can address issues that are currently intractable. It is time to thoughtfully adapt our system to face new challenges brought on by electronic media, not stifle the marketplace of ideas with confusing fear campaigns designed to protect the status quo.

**Name:** Zack Holt

**Comment:** Having lived and voted in several different states that don't offer RCV, I can totally understand why states are starting to do so. Countless times on every level where I haven't liked the primary representation of any party running. RCV would allow everyone to more accurately represent themselves. With how polarized the political climate currently is, removing the options to more accurately reflect choice will only exacerbate those issues. Please don't get rid of a good thing, don't ban ranked choice voting.

**Name:** Mary McDonald

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this bill. Rank choice voting (RCV) should be an option in the state of Iowa, which it currently is not. I have learned about RCV, which is in use in many areas of the United States, and its benefits for addressing many frustrations felt by voters, candidates, and members of all political parties. RCV

promotes healthy competition and more options for voters as well as civil discourse and issues focused campaigns. I urge you to strike this ban of a much needed alternative to the system we currently have. Please support HSB183, which explicitly allows RCV to be used.

**Name:** Samuel Walter

**Comment:** Please remove division 3 from this bill! There is no need for a ranked choice voting ban. It is already not a part of state elections, but I have spent a lot of time discussing it with my neighbors. We should consider adding it to our elections, not ban it. It is an excellent way to decrease extremism in elections and to allow multiple high quality candidates to run. Two members from the same party, an independent, or a third party candidate can run without fear of ruining the electoral chances of a candidate who is similar to them. Seriously, every regular person I've described this to thinks it's a good idea. Don't ban it prematurely.

**Name:** Brian Schmidtke

**Comment:** Division III is a step in the wrong direction. Ranked Choice Voting holds many merits to the democratic process and in my opinion, increased voter engagement being one of the most important. Even in presidential election years, voter turnout is abysmal and I believe that RCV is one of the many routes that voters can participate in and feel that their voices are more clearly heard to those that represent them. I have no issues with the other six divisions of this bill.

**Name:** Bruce Grady

**Comment:** Please remove division three from SSB 3161. Our country is being ruined by the intense double-edged hatred into which our two party system has devolved. Our country has become the laughingstock of the world, and we have lost her two minutes amount of respect because our system, is not working anymore. Ranked choice voting shows promise in reducing the paralysis of our system. Any legislator, who respects his country, or his state more than his party affiliation should disallow Division III From being included in SSB 3161. Thank you for your consideration.

**Name:** Benjamin Clark

**Comment:** Our politics would benefit immensely in this state from ranked choice voting. Please do not choose to eliminate it as an option in this bill.

**Name:** Scott Ehredt

**Comment:** Ranked choice voting is a better way of allowing the voice of citizens to be heard. I can only think of cynical reasons why someone would want to ban it. Please eliminate the RCV ban from this bill. Thanks!

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**Name:** Crystal Brugman

**Comment:** Please remove the ban on Ranked Choice Voting. It is a well established and proven method of providing voters a true voice.

**Name:** Cheryl Binzen

**Comment:** I've made a point of learning as much as I can about Rank Choice Voting and am very much in favor of this option. Please remove any ban or obstacle from the bill that would prohibit exploring possible improvements to the current situation.

**Name:** Holly Oppelt

**Comment:** Please remove Division III from this bill. I have attended to presentations on Rank

Choice Voting and Iowans need to hear more. Dont block it before they get a chance!

**Name:** Jason Streit

**Comment:** Why does this bill target ranked choice voting? Its a popular method to vote that is used in many states and cities, saves money and time as well as letting everyones voice be heard. Its bad enough that this bill limits the options to vote theres no need to outright ban a better and more representative way to run elections.

**Name:** Eric Hart

**Comment:** It is in the best interest of Iowa's citizens to remove this bill from consideration. Ranked Choice Voting has the potential to make elections more cost effective, more representative and more fair. For example, RCV would have eliminated a run off election due Cedar Rapids Mayor a few years ago they cost tax payers thousands of dollars. The only reason to ban a new system of voting would be to entrench those in power by creating system where they can stay in power without being responsive to their constituents demands. Remove this antidemocratic bill and replace it with one they allows for public referendums on topics the public cares about. Most certainly, creating a system that requires government officials to be accountable to their voters would need high in the list of voter concerns.

**Name:** Jamie Jensen

**Comment:** Please remove division 3 and allow ranked voting

**Name:** Anthony Brockshus

**Comment:** Our current voting system only seems to encourage division and polarization rather than solutions that work for all. Ranked choice voting shows potential as a way to move us to a more moderate and rational future. Please remove section 3 and continue to explore the benefits of ranked choice voting.

**Name:** Stephen Becker

**Comment:** Voting should be equitable for all regardless of party. Div. 3 of SSB3161 banning ranked choice voting destroys the equity of voting that is every citizens right. Please remove Div. 3 from this bill. It is unnecessary and unconstitutional.

**Name:** LINDA SCHNEIDER

**Comment:** Respectfully, I don't think Iowa should ban Ranked Choice Voting. Please remove Division III from the bill. I also think Iowa should make the return of early ballots as broad and convenient as we can, for all voters. Secure drop boxes should be mandatory and as long as possible to return the ballots. Only during working hours makes no sense in a 24/7 working society. Whose hours are working hours? Only the courthouse hours? The legislature has already shortened the early voting days, so more of that is not necessary. Thank you for your consideration.

**Name:** Emily Deitering

**Comment:** I am deeply concerned about DIVISION III in this amendment bill and the possible legal ramifications this could have on the caucus process. As the caucus is a form of instant runoff where if the candidate you first choose does not reach a viable portion of the votes you can choose to realign for a different candidate for your second vote or go home. This is exactly what a instant runoff or rank choice voting is doing. This would basically make primary caucuses illegal.

**Name:** Colton Sherwood

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this bill, ranked choice voting is important to me and would improve our elections. I want to be able to support who I want to support and ranked choice voting allows me to do that. Ranked choice voting could be something that is great for everyone and we should not be shutting it down.

**Name:** Elizabeth Christensen

**Comment:** Dear Iowa State Legislature,I urge you to remove Division 3 from Bill SSB3161. It's crucial to foster open dialogue about improving our elections, and banning Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) does a disservice to the democracy of Iowa State. As a constituent, I'm frustrated with the lack of meaningful choices and the divisive nature of current campaigning. RCV presents a promising solution to these issues, and we shouldn't halt discussions on its potential benefits.Let's keep the conversation going on RCV. We're onto something promising, and it's vital to explore avenues for better electoral systems. Our democracy deserves nothing less.Sincerely,Elizabeth Christensen

**Name:** Chris Ledo

**Comment:** It's a clear sign that the Iowa government has no intent for true democracy if they are intending to remove the one system that would put it in place. Ranked choice voting is the only weapon that can give Iowans true freedom to vote for someone who actually cares about the people, not the party, to take office.

**Name:** Dana Grosklags

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this bill. I believe Ranked Choice Voting is something that we need to explore further. Too many local races were decided with less than 50% of the vote. It is costly for runoff elections to be held so it is understandable that municipalities and school boards choose not to have them. RCV would eliminate the need for runoffs while still electing the candidate with the most support. No candidate is ever considered a "spoiler" when utilizing RCV.

**Name:** Michael Decker

**Comment:** There is absolutely no real reason for the banning of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in division III of this bill. Please remove and try doing things that actually help Iowans, not hurt them. Supposedly you care about the people in this wonderful state, so please prove it.

**Name:** Kay Pence

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this Bill, so we can continue this new and important statewide conversation about making our elections work better. Iowans want more choices and better choices when voting.

**Name:** Holly Hart

**Comment:** Please remove the portion prohibiting ranked choice voting! I was surprised to see this, as RCV/IRV is a reliable and democratic means of voting, used with increasing frequency throughout the country. This is not a partisan issue ranked choice voting received broad support across the political spectrum.

**Name:** Matt Laraon

**Comment:** Not that I believe the current majority in the statehouse gives a fig about what the people think, but the idea of restricting the ability to vote and the manner in which we conduct elections are we seriously banning ranked choice voting? reeks of disenfranchisement to ensure the party in power remains in power.The Iowa GOP has lost its way, and they remind anyone outside their base of that fact with almost every bill they introduce.Question is ranked choice voting a bad thing because you saw it work in Alaska and didnt like the result? And your response isnt to rethink legislative priorities but preemptively nip it in the bud? Real Profiles in Courage stuff, folks.

**Name:** Dwight Schumm

**Comment:** Please remove division 3 from this bill. Ranked Choice Voting would be a big improvement to Iowa elections and should explicitly be allowed for municipalities that want to avoid costly runoffs. It definitely should NOT be banned.

**Name:** Chance Lacina

**Comment:** Remove Division III

**Name:** Sheryl Jensen

**Comment:** I would like to see more civil political campaigns and believe that Ranked Choice Voting could be a viable alternative to the current method of voting. Please remove Division 3 from this Bill so we can make our elections work better.

**Name:** Brad Williams

**Comment:** I respectfully request that Division III be removed from SSB3161. As a lifelong Iowa resident (who recently retired to Missouri), I believe Ranked Choice Voting offers Iowans of all political persuasions the opportunity to vote for candidates that best represent their views rather than being forced to vote for "the lesser of two evils".

**Name:** Debbie Kyler

**Comment:** I support Rank Choice Voting as a better way to chose elected officials. It makes candidates more accountable to their platform and what they will do. It also prevents voting for the "lesser of the two evils" which happens a lot. Please vote against this bill which prohibits Rank Choice Voting in Iowa.

**Name:** CRAIG DALLEGE

**Comment:** Please remove division 3 of this bill, ranked choice voting is the only way we have a chance of improving our electionsI for one am more than disappointed that I never have a candidate that is truly worthy of my vote. its ALWAYS a choice of the lesser of two evils.

**Name:** Alexandra Stimson

**Comment:** I have been an Iowa resident for 49 years. I would love to see our progressive state consider rank choice voting, as this would allow more than two candidates on the ballet, and the result would reflect the voters choice better, rather than the frustrating and straining voting for the lesser of 2 evils. Please remove division III from the Bill SSB3161, so that at least ranked choice voting has a chance to become a reality in the future.

**Name:** Larry Kaster

**Comment:** I urge you to remove division III from this bill. Time and time again the people of Iowa have expressed interest in RCV as a means to efficiently elect our officials and representatives. It makes no sense to outlaw RCV in Iowa.

**Name:** Robert Gertsen

**Comment:** Ranked choice gives all a voice in an election, even if the electorate is slightly to heavily majority party controlled. Ranked choice also gives No Party voters an equal voice. Please remove Division III.

**Name:** Maria Lasagna

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this bill. Ranked Choice Voting has a lot going for it and to remove even the possibility of its ever being utilized in Iowa elections is wrong and a scary step in the direction of authoritarianism, reducing choices and freedoms. Thank you.

**Name:** John Hunter

**Comment:** Remove the prohibition on RCV. As many of the comments above suggest,its a better way to choose our elected officials.

**Name:** Claire Fleming



**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this Bill, so we can continue this new and important statewide conversation about making our elections work better. I implore you to consider removing Division 3 from this Bill.

**Name:** Erin Mills

**Comment:** Remove Division III. Do NOT block ranked choice voting. Ranked choice voting is in the best interest of democracy.

**Name:** Linda DeLaughter

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this bill. The effort to squelch and silence the voice of voters is ethically wrong and undemocratic. We need more people participating in elections, and the language seeking to ban Ranked Choice Voting serves no good purpose. I urge you to NOT restrict Ranked Choice Voting as an option.

**Name:** Leo Kriz

**Comment:** Just to share my frustration that our state is copying and pasting other states and PACs republican/conservative/big money talking points. I would find it refreshing if our state would use Rank Choice Voting then maybe bipartisan would occur instead of hidden agendas being forced down upon us/ What has happened to conversation, debates, instead of fear of out of state lobbying groups or consultants making up your elected minds.

**Name:** Jackson Plummer

**Comment:** I urge you to remove Division 3 from this bill. Ranked Choice Voting is something I've understood to be popular with people from all walks and political belief systems as something that could genuinely improve the way that we govern. Allowing people the real, true opportunity to move away from the two party system is something that should have been done long ago. Ranked Choice Voting, RCV, is the future. Please, listen to the voices of the people asking to remove Division 3 from this bill.

**Name:** Mike Williams

**Comment:** The provision for outlawing rankedchoice voting is antiAmerican, antidemocratic, and arguably fascist. Providing a mechanisms for inclusivity for nonestablished party candidates as provided by RCV is by far the fairest and most representative voting mechanism currently available and should be employed for all elections.As demonstrated across the country, Republicans know that disenfranchising voters is the only way for them to stay in power with everexpanding radical fascist ideals.This bill should not only remove division III, but should instead require RCV across local, state, and federal elections. Let the people properly choose their representation, whichever political ideals that includes.

**Name:** Charlie Cowell

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this Bill. Our elections need to work better for people by giving them more options that can feasibly make an impact. People talk about "throwing away their vote" for one candidate or another and ranked choice voting is one proven method to make everyone's vote more meaningful. It is clear we need something better than we have today and this seems like the best first step. The language in the Bill makes no sense to include. When nowhere in Iowa has even tried this voting method yet.

**Name:** Beth Schulte

**Comment:** I am a teacher. As a professional who works to help our youth learn how to work together to solve problems, to listen to the point of view of others, to respect others and to be involved in the democratic process that we are blessed to have I am concerned about the negativity of our current political landscape. I have been learning about Rank Choice Voting and think it could have potential to encourage a more positive election process. I believe to take it away as a possible solution is short

sighted and may hinder capable people from all walks of life from stepping into the political arena to make a positive impact in our state. Please reconsider as we continue to try to make Iowa the best that it can be.

**Name:** Pete Jones

**Comment:** I disagree strongly with the bill to man Ranked Choice Voting in Iowa.

**Name:** Kayla Weier

**Comment:** Iowa could benefit from a ranked voting system to ensure fair representation and encourage voters to support candidates they truly prefer without fear of "wasting" their vote. This system promotes inclusivity, reduces polarization, and allows for a more accurate reflection of voter preferences, ultimately strengthening democracy.

**Name:** Suzanne Allen

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this Bill, so we can continue this new and important statewide conversation about making our elections work better. Having a choice is a foundationally what our country was based on; I want my vote to matter. I believe most common folk like myself, want something better than what we have today. Keep rank choice voting in.

**Name:** Allison Castle

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this Bill banning Rank Choice Voting. As a voting citizen I want more choice and better choices for my elected officials. I want more civil campaigning. I want my vote to matter. I want something better than what we have today. I have learned about Rank Choice Voting and believe it could address many of the frustrations I have with the current system. Please remove Division 3 from this bill so that conversation around the positive opportunities with Rank Choice Voting can happen.

**Name:** Mary Russell

**Comment:** I'm really happy that Iowans are talking about how to democracy better! I'm afraid that this would stifle that conversation. Please remove Division 3 from this Bill. I'd rather see something like the opposite encouraging people to share and discuss new ideas about how we can all live in a democracy and community better. Iowa is a great place but like any great thing it's a work in progress. Let's be smart about leaving ourselves room to grow and make our elections work better. Iowans want their voice to matter and civil politicians and are open to ideas to make that more a reality here. We are antiauthoritarian by nature, so bristle at this kind of unnecessary control. If ranked choice voting gives people a stronger more powerful voice, why take it off the table? That's what we want in our democracy. Thanks!

**Name:** Evan Jorgenson

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this Bill so Iowans can benefit from ranked choice voting.

**Name:** Nicolas John

**Comment:** I want ranked choice voting plain and simple. I am stymied by any attempt to prevent it and am appalled by the clear disinterest in any of your constituents. Lastly in the event you do choose to listen, thank you!

**Name:** Robin Doty

**Comment:** I respectfully request that Division III be removed from SSB3161.

**Name:** Nancy Cadmus

**Comment:** I strongly object to Division 3, which bans ranked choice voting completely in Iowa please remove it from this bill. Ranked choice voting is exactly what we need to make our election results more closely match the wishes of voters. And it promises

to tone down the vitriol that increasingly plagues our elections. Delete Division 3!

**Name:** Kim Wemer

**Comment:** We need another choice, another way to elect candidates other than having to pick the lesser of two evils. Ranked choice will it make it more fair.

**Name:** john Huff

**Comment:** Please remove division III from SSB3161. Ranked choice voting (RCV) is THE BEST mode of election used in several states including Maine and Alaska. Over 600 elections have been conducted in the USA using it.

**Name:** Carole Simmons

**Comment:** I am opposed to the proposed addition to Division 3 that would prohibit Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in any Iowa election. RCV offers a way for citizens to vote for someone they truly support, without being told they are "throwing away" their vote. As such, it seems like a way to strengthen our democracy, and to encourage participation in elections. A second advantage is that particularly at the local level it could save the need for expensive runoff elections in the event that no candidate receives a majority of votes. I urge legislators to leave an opening for expanded voter choice, and delete the proposed verbiage that prohibits Ranked Choice Voting.

**Name:** David Ballou

**Comment:** Ranked voice voting should be legalized in Iowa. There is only upside, no downside to this. Please remove from this Bill the section that would disallow ranked choice voting!

**Name:** Rita Dudley

**Comment:** I see no reason for removing the option of ranked choice voting as a means of electing a representative government. How is this option a threat to any voter of any party? Other states and other countries use it with no problems. Please do not outlaw it in this bill.

**Name:** Linda R Jones

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this Bill. The political climate in Iowa & the US is so extreme that ranked choice voting is a logical solution to bring us closer. We the people want more choices which ranked choice voting could present. Thank you.

**Name:** Diane Duncan-Goldsmith

**Comment:** Please remove Division III in SSB 3161. This section bans the use of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in all Iowa Elections. I know RCV is a new concept to many; however it is a very successful way to vote, ensuring voices of all voters are heard. This way of voting certainly deserves discussion and debate rather than passing legislation to eliminate it as choice in all future elections. The many benefits are as follows: Election messages become more positive since candidates actually focus more on issues and positive messages since they do not want to alienate 2nd and 3rd choice voters by using attack ads. Promotion of healthy competition and new ideas since candidates need to build a broad consensus in a potentially wide field of candidates. It enforces accountability. New candidates with fresh ideas/issues can get on the ballot without worrying about "spoiling the election". Voters are more empowered to vote their conscience. Ranked Choice Voting elections are an opportunity for new candidates to enter races when other choices may be unpopular. The majority would actually win. Municipalities that combine two elections (e.g. a primary and general election) into a single RCV race see a boost in participation. By combining two municipal elections into one single race, RCV can actually save Iowa taxpayers money. Voters like it because it gives them more representation at the ballot box. RCV has already been successfully used in the U.S. in 628. Therefore, please give voters more options and remove Division III in SSB 3161.

**Name:** Carol Hanson

**Comment:** This is to let you know that I favor the bill as written on the topic of prohibiting RCV Ranked Choice Voting in Iowa. I am not in favor of RCV because it disenfranchises voters! It does not allow everyone's first choice to be what counts. Instead it uses second choices which results in lower quality of candidates! It also is very confusing to voters and results in more confusion in counting and certifying elections and takes a longer time to process! Please do not go down this rabbit hole and keep Ranked Choice Voting out of Iowa!!

**Name:** Diane Duncan-Goldsmith

**Comment:** Please remove Division III in SSB 3161. This section bans the use of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in all Iowa Elections. I know RCV is a new concept to many; however it is a very successful way to vote, ensuring voices of all voters are heard. This way of voting certainly deserves discussion and debate rather than passing legislation to eliminate it as choice in all future elections. The many benefits are as follows: Election messages become more positive since candidates actually focus more on issues and positive messages since they do not want to alienate 2nd and 3rd choice voters by using attack ads. Promotion of healthy competition and new ideas since candidates need to build a broad consensus in a potentially wide field of candidates. It enforces accountability. New candidates with fresh ideas/issues can get on the ballot without worrying about "spoiling the election". Voters are more empowered to vote their conscience. Ranked Choice Voting elections are an opportunity for new candidates to enter races when other choices may be unpopular. The majority would actually win. Municipalities that combine two elections (e.g. a primary and general election) into a single RCV race see a boost in participation. By combining two municipal elections into one single race, RCV can actually save Iowa taxpayers money. Voters like it because it gives them more representation at the ballot box. RCV has already been successfully used in the U.S. in 628. Therefore, please give voters more options and remove Division III in SSB 3161.

**Name:** Matthew Voss

**Comment:** I believe that Division III of this legislation is in search of a problem that doesn't exist and should be removed. We should generally allow for localities to be laboratories of democracy and try different systems that may lead to better representation. Completely disallowing ranked choice voting would be counter to that goal. I would also add that, as other legislation has been proposed to require primaries for many more elections, ranked choice voting allows for including all candidates on a single ballot and winnowing down to the most preferred candidate via a single election. Requiring primaries in addition to general elections would be a waste of money when ranked choice voting allows for, in effect, a combination of a primary and general election on a single ballot. Please remove Division III of this proposed legislation and preserve the opportunity for ranked choice voting to be implemented in Iowa. If places don't want ranked choice voting, they won't implement it. If they do, that should be allowed.

**Name:** Tara Schmid

**Comment:** I think more choices and Ranked choices would encourage me to vote more. It would be more interesting. Please remove Division 3 from this Bill, so we can continue this new and important statewide conversation about making our elections work better. Thank you. Tara

**Name:** Matthew Voss

**Comment:** Division II of this bill appears to be a clear attempt at preemptively exempting the presumed Republican presidential candidate from facing any questions of ballot eligibility in Iowa if he ends up being convicted of a felony before the fall election. My opinion is this: If a jury finds that there is proof beyond a reasonable doubt that a felony was committed by a very prominent federal candidate resulting in a felony

conviction, then he deserves no preferential treatment and likely deserves to have his ballot eligibility questioned. Charging someone with a felony can be politically motivated. A grand jury indictment requires a lower standard of proof. But a jury conviction is a different level and cannot be political in the way it has been accused of being. Hold everyone to the same standard. Don't give federal candidates special treatment because of a specific candidate who will have the opportunity to be heard in court just like everyone else would. If the evidence favors his case against conviction, so be it. If the jury decides that it favors conviction, so be it. Remove Division II from the legislation.

**Name:** Janice Coble

**Comment:** Our legislative bodies need to work for the good of all constituents, not just the best funded. Please remove Division 3 from this bill to allow the voters the ability to vote for centrist alternatives. Get rid of the bomb throwing crazy set, because they help no one.

**Name:** Bob koczela

**Comment:** Please vote to incorporate Rank Choice Voting in Iowa. And please remove Division 3 from this Bill, so we can continue this new and important statewide conversation about making our elections work better. For just one thing, Rank choice voting will avoid the need for expensive, timeconsuming runoffs, in close elections, a winwin for all involved.

**Name:** Deanna Lehl

**Comment:** Let us continue the conversation about RCV without shutting down a good idea before it can be fully examined!!

**Name:** Laura Carlson

**Comment:** Ranked choice voting is not what our constitution outlines for voting. One vote per citizen. Period. Ranked choice creates a false second place etc. Vote no to enote idea! Follow the constitution.

**Name:** Anton Benjegerdes

**Comment:** Division III has no legitimate reason to be enacted as there has been no substantive public discussion on the merits of rankedchoice voting. I think rankedchoice voting could be really good for promoting a more diverse and productive policy debate during the campaign cycle, rank choice voting should be encouraged not explicitly banned like this bill would make it.

**Name:** Leigh Janell

**Comment:** I want Ranked Choice Voting in Iowa.

**Name:** Cole Drenth

**Comment:** Please remove the ban on ranked choice voting (RCV) in Division 3 from this Bill. Our current voting system forces voters to choose between 2 candidates, neither of whom typically accurately represent the majority of constituents. RCV is a better voting system than our current one, and this ban would be a detriment to all Iowans. RCV is similar to runoff elections under our current voting system in that the winning candidate needs 50% support to be elected; however, unlike runoff elections, voters do not need to cast multiple ballots at different times. Under RCV, voters rank candidates in order of preference on their ballots. After votes are cast, in the first round of counting ballots, the candidate ranked #1 on each voter's ballot is the candidate that the vote is attributed to. If no candidate has 50% of the votes that round, the candidate with the fewest votes is removed from the running, and the ballots on which that candidate was ranked as the highest choice are redistributed to the next candidate ranked on those ballots. This continues round by round until one candidate reaches 50% support. In a runoff election system, the same situation would

play out, except in each round, voters would have to return to polling places to submit another ballot until one candidate reaches 50% support. RCV is not only much more convenient for voters than simple runoff elections, but it would also improve our democracy and give voters a real voice.

**Name:** Katherine Babb

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this bill. It's imperative that we continue a conversation about Ranked Choice Voting. I am glad that the legislature wants to improve elections, but banning RCV will do the opposite. As a voter, I am tired of having to vote between the lesser of two evils and not being about to vote for my true preference. I don't like that someone can win an election with less than a true majority, or that the alternative is having a runoff election and having to vote twice. I dislike all of the negative campaigning and want cleaner politics. I've studied Ranked Choice Voting and have even watched debates on it, and I believe that while it isn't a perfect solution, it's a way better system than we have now. It gives voters more choice and more voice. It disincentivizes negative campaigning, paving the way for more informed voters and cleaner politics. It reduces polarization. It's a step in the right direction to improving our voting system. We should be able to continue the conversation and debate surrounding RCV. Please don't stifle a potential voting improvement.

**Name:** Kelly Spencer

**Comment:** Please remove Division III from this Bill. Most Iowans I talk to support Ranked Choice Voting as a way to reduce the cost of our local elections. In Cedar Rapids, where I live, taxpayers spend around \$80,000 for every municipal runoff election. Ranked Choice Voting is similar to our current runoff process, but significantly less costly. Iowa taxpayers are counting on our elected officials to reduce fiscal waste, not enact legislation that codifies it. Thank you for your consideration.

**Name:** Amy Brown

**Comment:** Please remove Division III from this Bill so Iowans can continue to learn about Ranked Choice Voting and how it can improve our elections. I want my vote to matter and to have more civil campaigns which is possible with RCV. Thank you.

**Name:** Mary Ellen Miller

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this Bill, so we can continue this new and important statewide conversation about making our elections work better. RCV gives voters more options than just one vote allows. We want and need something better than we have today. RCV will help make voters feel their votes have greater weight and more accurately reflects their interests.

**Name:** Sylvia Richards

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 that attempts to ban Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) as a potential voting system in Iowa. Voters are becoming more and more frustrated with the twoparty system that limits candidate choices and with the election process as a whole. Voter confidence needs to be restored and I believe that is best done by having open conversations about RCV that is being used successfully in other states (Maine and Arizona) and in many municipalities. I see no good reason to ban RCV without open conversation and consideration by as many voters as possible. Certainly, there will need to be education and discussion about how RCV works and all sides of the issue pros and cons should be open for discussion. Banning the possibility for having those conversations as Division 3 would do serves no good purpose and works against the very purpose of having free and fair elections. Again, please remove Division 3. Thank you for your consideration.

**Name:** Robert Fonder

**Comment:** Ranked Choice Voting is a joke. It does not represent the vote the voter intended for

and favors establishment Republicans and Democrats over conservative Republicans.

**Name:** Nicole Weber

**Comment:** Remove the ban on ranked choice voting (RCV) in division III of this bill. Iowans cannot be sorted into two distinct political groups, yet our election system forces us to choose between, for all intents and purposes, only two candidates. This leads to elections based on fear of the other candidate, rather than true preference for the candidate we vote for. RCV gives voice to the many Iowans dissatisfied with their two choices.

**Name:** Adam Spencer

**Comment:** Please strike division 3 from this bill. Ranked choice voting would eliminate the need for runoff elections.

**Name:** Beverly Lloyd

**Comment:** Regarding Division 3 I agree that the state shall not conduct any election using RCV or similar program because of voter confusion, lower turnout, and delays in processing results. Former California Governor Jerry Brown may have said it best: "In a time when we want to encourage voter participation, we need to keep voting simple. Ranked choice voting is overly complicated and confusing. I believe it deprives voters of genuinely informed choice.

**Name:** Paul Lux

**Comment:** I support Ranked Choice Voting. Cities in Iowa should have the option to have Instant Runoffs instead of having a separate runoff election around Thanksgiving or electing someone with a mere 32%.

**Name:** Faye Henn

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 and continue to have discussions about how we can enhance our democratic system. Iowa is an amazing place, but I worry that division 3 will limit our growth as a state. Iowans want their voices to matter, and if ranked choice voting can strengthen that, why not keep it as an option? Thanks!

**Name:** Sharon Santema

**Comment:** DIVISION III:Keep it simple...One vote per person, the one with the most votes wins. With Ranked Choice Voting, moderates and minor parties get squeezed out and you cannot vote against someone. There is lower voter participation because it is confusing and practically inauditable. In Alaskas 2022 special election, the results came 3 weeks after the election.Ranked Choice Voting and Instant Runoff Voting are two terms for the same process. Approval voting is a variation that allows voters to choose any number of candidates whom they like, and the one candidate who was chosen the most, wins the election. Since we do not know what title will be given to some similar, complicated voting scheme in the future, Im asking that (2a) be rewritten to read An election in this state shall not be conducted using ranked choice voting, instant runoff voting, approval voting OR ANY SIMILAR COMPLICATED VOTING METHOD.DIVISION IV: It is a fairly wellknown fact that the mailin absentee ballots are the basis of a lot of the election fraud has been happening. Do not EXPAND the number of days that nefarious actors have to inject absentee/early ballots to alter the election races. Fourteen days is sufficient time for a voter to receive and return an Absentee ballot (Section 14 (1a). Also shorten to fourteen days for the commissioner to provide facilities for absentee voting in person at the commissioners office (Section 16 (1)). Not more than fourteen days before the election, satellite voting stations shall be established (Section 18 (a)).DIVISION VI is very concerning because there are no parameters on the 3rd party vendor to be chosen for verification of voters. Something does need to be done about Iowa's dirty voter rolls. The only way to have a clean slate is to have all voters reregister, because

you cannot sweep a dirt floor. Col. Shawn Smith's 3minute Clean Slate vs. Cleaning up Voter Rolls is here:  
<https://causeofamerica.org/Post/elections101#CleanSlatevCleanUp>. Iowa could have a clean slate by Novembers presidential election.

**Name:** SUE WHITTY

**Comment:** Ranked Choice Voting is present in over half of our states. It deserves consideration individually on its own merit. Please remove RCV language from this bill and allow its advantages to be discussed and evaluated in due course vs. being sandwiched within a multifocused bill.

**Name:** Daniel Funk

**Comment:** Ranked Choice Voting is one of the few ideas that Ive seen that can bring together people from all ends of the political spectrum. Thats because at the root of it, its an idea that gives more of a voice to voters. That is the unifying principle of America: the power lies in the people. Please remove Division 3 from this Bill, so we can continue this new and important statewide conversation about making our elections work better.

**Name:** Matt Jensen

**Comment:** Regarding the section titled "Division III", banning the use of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in all Iowa Elections, I think this section is totally unnecessary. I think instead of banning RCV more use of this voting method should be used across Iowa. From what I have learned about RCV, the pros outweigh the cons.

**Name:** Leslie Garman

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this Bill, so we can continue the conversation about making our elections better by offering more choices for potential and civil campaigns. Today, the only winners seem to be the propaganda machine where television, print and radio make millions as candidates from two parties try to out sound bite the other opponent. I want and we need more and better choices and civil campaigns. Rank Choice Voting seems like it could assist a process that seems broken. Please help us by allowing the conversation to continue.

**Name:** Teresa Bomhoff

**Comment:** I am against SSB3161. It drastically limits options for voting, for filing candidate complaints, and has made the absentee ballot process much, much more complicated than it needs to be. It amazes me how far efforts will go to keep people from voting. Please do not pass SSB3161. It is an insult to the citizens of Iowa.

**Name:** Thomas McInerney

**Comment:** Iowa has one of the highest voter participation rates in the United States. Such a high rate signifies evidence that the existing system works and is straightforward to Iowans. Allowing an alternate system of voting like Ranked Choice Voting can only increase the likelihood of confusion during elections. There is no clear consensus the Rank Choice Voting has any benefit for Iowans except for those politicians who cannot get elected using the existing rules that have been successful for generations. Therefore, I support the ban of Rank Choice Voting in Iowa. Let Iowa keep being Iowa.

**Name:** Christian Griffith

**Comment:** I would like you to take Division 3 out of this bill. To me ranked choice voting could be a solution to a lot of problems with the way elections work currently. Mudslinging in campaigns and limited choices for the voter leaves me dissatisfied with the whole process. I don't want to limit our possible solutions to these annoyances and think ranked choice voting should be kept as an option.



**Name:** Linda Schreiber

**Comment:** Although SSB 3161 has the potential to improve the Iowa Secretary of States ability to confidentially conduct elections for those who need security to vote and to remove the names of deceased voters to maintain an accurate voter list. The restrictions in Division III related to Ranked Choice Voting should be removed from the bill. RCV has many benefits including the potential to encourage voters to learn more about a broader range of candidates. As voters consider preferences beyond just a single choice, it may lead to a more informed and engaged electorate and eliminate the need for separate runoff elections. RCV provides those options and the preferenceranking process happens in a single election that saves time and resources.

**Name:** Sean Flaherty

**Comment:** Dear Senators Schulz, Driscoll, and Weiner, I am commenting on behalf of Iowans for Voting Integrity, a nonpartisan grassroots group of citizens working since 2006 for voting systems worthy of the public trust. Our membership includes Iowans of diverse ideological and partisan backgrounds united to ensure that Iowans have justified confidence that our elections results reflect systematic good faith to ensure that every valid vote is counted as cast. We write to urge you to amend SSB 3161 by striking Division 3, which would ban rankedchoice voting (RCV) in Iowa. Our chief focus is ensuring that voting methods allow rigorous public audits of election results. Advanced statistical sampling methods allow for gold standard risklimiting audits of RCV elections, and election officials have conducted these in several states (Sources: <https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/bestpractices/ElectionAuditsAcrossTheUnitedStates.pdf>, and <https://www.rcvresources.org/blogpost/postelectionauditsandrankedchoicevoting>). Division 3 would preclude even pilot projects in a method of voting that has increasing crosspartisan appeal, and may serve to increase the electorate's confidence in the overall political system. Support for RCV is increasingly diverse. We would draw your attention to an article by Matt Germer, director of the conservative R Street Institute's Governance Program. Germer notes that RCV has, in states such as Virginia and Utah, enjoyed popularity among conservative voters, and likely helped a Republican candidate win a difficult statewide election in Virginia. <https://www.rstreet.org/commentary/republicanscouldbenefitfromrankedchoicevoting> /Ranked choice voting shows promise in making election outcomes more representative of the whole electorate, and allows for the transparency Iowans need and deserve. Now is not the time to close the door on it. Respectfully, Sean FlahertyChair, Iowans for Voting Integrity

**Name:** Randy Hefel

**Comment:** Division III Ranked Choice Voting Please support SB3161 against Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). If you are going to allow RCV what will be next. Maybe we will just have our candidates roll dices to see who is the high roller or maybe have our candidates draw for high card from a deck of cards to be the winner. To not support SB3161 against RCV would be allowing our election process turn into a bigger circus than it already is. Division IV Absentee Voters Please do not expand the time to allow for receiving ballots. You should shorten the time to 10 14 days in lieu of expanding it 2 days along with putting in place higher standards that apply to absentee voters. There also appears to be few restrictions on who may request an absentee ballot along with no enforcement. Absentee voter ballots are one of the leading factors in voter fraud and more needs to be done to control it within our state. A survey has discovered that 1 in 5 voters who used mailin ballots in the 2020 presidential election admitted to committing voter fraud. See the following voter fraud link <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2023/dec/15/morethan20ofvoterswhousedmailinballotsin/> Division VI Voter Registration Database Please do not make this an Electronic Registration Information System "ERIC" catastrophe again. Wording needs to be provided so that the citizens of Iowa have all portions of the program accessible and transparent to them. Each county should be given local control of their

voter rolls with no internet connectivity. Each county should provide a clean voter roll by reregistering their voters.

**Name:** Greg Schulte

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 of Bill SSB3161! There is absolutely no reason to ban something that does not exist today. Once again, here we are trying to reduce voting activity by not even letting rank chose voting be reviewed as a future option. In a system today that most voters are unhappy with, and voter participation are at alltime lows, why would this be introduced today other than to suppress voting in the future.It absolutely sickens me that someone would try to sneak this into a bill in order to suppress voting. It's quite clear in states that have introduced rank chose voting that voters are marginally happier with this system versus straight party voting as we have today. This a fact. This discussion on rank choice voting needs to be nourished, not killed. As I noted.....this is a absolute travesty if this is allowed.....sickening.

**Name:** Tim Hammond

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this Bill, so we can continue this new and important statewide conversation about making our elections work better.Share your frustrations with wanting more choices, or better choices, or more civil campaigning, and wanting your vote to matter.You want and we need something better than we have today.You have learned about Rank Choice Voting and it sure seems like it could address/solve many of these frustrations.You want to continue this great conversation on RCV and not stifle it! You feel like we are on to something really good.

**Name:** Candella Foley-Fincham

**Comment:** Division 3 making Ranked Choice Voting illegal in Iowa is against democracy. It is too often that a candidate wins an election with a slim percentage of the electors voting for them. In a multiperson race, a candidate might win with only 10% or even less of the votes. It would be much more democratic to have a ranked choice voting process where the voters choose their first and second choice. Or at the very least, let the voters decide rather than writing in laws to make this type of democracy illegal. We do not want to live in an autocracy.

**Name:** Matthew Wetstein

**Comment:** I'm writing to ask you to strike Division III from SSB3161. Ranked Choice Voting would represent a significant improvement to Iowa's election system. By the numbers, RCV is better than the system we currently have in place. Study after study show that voters find it easy to use and it has an excellent track record of finding the most preferred candidate in a wide field. Having been used by over 60 jurisdictions for over 600 elections in nearly two decades, it is routine and well regarded where it's used. Whatever your current position on RCV is, having the conversation about the problems we're trying to solve is incredibly valuable in itself. Banning a policy that doesn't even exist in Iowa yet is pointless and counterproductive. This legislature should strive to give municipalities and the people of Iowa \*more\* local control and \*more\* control over their vote, not less. A large and rapidly growing number of your constituents are frustrated by a status quo that rewards divisive campaigning and gridlock. Our nation cannot sustain the levels of polarization we're seeing. And the concerns about these problems cut across both sides of the aisle. Better Ballot Iowa, our volunteer and Iowafounded movement has succeed in building a big tent the brings together Republicans, Democrats, and Independents alike. This is a provoter issue. All we ask for at these early stages is good faith conversation. We want to work productively with you. Even if this legislature never comes around on RCV, the great state of Iowa will be better off from having had the conversation. So, please, don't take away options, don't hide from new ideas, don't ban policies that don't even exist yet. Please strike Division III from this bill.

**Name:** RICK PETERSON

**Comment:** I urge you to delete section three. We need to consider rank choice voting in Iowa. It is a better method to get better outcomes.

**Name:** William Scheller

**Comment:** As a concerned independent voter, please remove Division 3 from SSB3161. Ranked choice voting is a very important means to allow more and even better choices when voting in city elections. I would hope that Iowa, in the future, would allow ranked choice voting in all voting and not just at the city/county. This voting type also allows cities to save money compared to other voting types.

**Name:** Linda Avraamides

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 on banning ranked choice voting from this bill. Groups outside of Iowa should not be determining how we govern ourselves. Ranked choice voting provides more choices for voters and politicians more responsive to the voters. It is better for democracy than the 2party "options" we currently have. It allows more voices to be heard and for people to vote FOR their best option instead of AGAINST the worst option. It can make elections more civil than they are today and provide citizens with representatives who can work across party lines for the benefit of all. Iowans deserve the chance to discuss and debate the merits of ranked choice voting for Iowa and this ban shuts down the conversation before it can begin. Who benefits from that? Not Iowans.

**Name:** Sarah Quinn

**Comment:** I urge the removal of division III from SSB3161. Please do not restrict future legislation to consider ranked choice voting in national, state, or local elections. It is working in Alaska! One advantage (from Alaska's website): "By ranking multiple candidates, you have a voice in who gets elected even if your top choice does not win. Ranking multiple candidates ensures your vote will go toward your second, third, fourth, or fifth choice if your top choice is eliminated, giving you more voice in who wins."Nevertheless, if one candidate receives more than 50% of the vote, they win, and no more counting is needed. It is be an option that Iowans should be able to consider.

**Name:** Michael Whitley

**Comment:** As an independent voter I would like more options than the 2 party system, please remove Division 3 from this Bill.I want more choices and more civil campaigns that are currently in place with both parties.I have read many articles and I think rankedchoice voting would improve our current system of voting. We need better than the current option of voting by holding my nose and deciding who I dislike least. The only reason this is being discussed as it is a direct threat to the 2 party system and fundraising.

**Name:** Callie Roach

**Comment:** I am commenting to ask that Division III be removed from SSB3161. Voters deserve the opportunity to try a new type of voting that allows a larger portion of the electorate to feel like they have a real say in General Elections. The current system allows the most extreme voices in the two major parties to have a disproportionate impact on who is elected. This has in turn resulted in toxic polarization and disenfranchisement of a large portion of voters. We need to continue to have a statewide conversation about making elections better and prohibiting a potential method to improving elections would be a mistake. Instead of working to maintain the status quo in a system that is not working, we need to work together to find a better way elect individuals who will work to solve the issues facing our communities. And we must reject any attempt to stifle efforts to improve our elections.

**Name:** John Anderson

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this Bill, so we can continue this new and important statewide conversation about making our elections work better. Ranked choice voting would support more visibility into the voice of the electorate. Our current system has flaws, and Ranked Choice Voting would fix some of those issues, though it is not even legal currently. We should have more conversations on the benefits, monetary and voice wise that Ranked Choice Voting enables, rather than passing legislation that would devalue those conversations. Thank you.

**Name:** Steve Rose

**Comment:** I cannot imagine any system that would be more democratic or logical. Today's technology makes it a cinch to make a count of the results. The only reason our forefathers and mothers did not promote this was because of the logistical issue of counting.

**Name:** Rebecca Romatoski

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this bill, no wait actually change it to allow ranked choice voting. There is no reason to limit our possibilities! We don't have ranked choice voting now (it's actually already not allowed now). I'd like us to use it, but, come on, you can't ban it. Let's change Division 3 to allowing rank choice voting! Keep the possibility open. It has great benefits to make sure that the winner gets more than 50% of the vote! So no spoilers and no people strategically voting or holding their nose to vote for someone they don't like because the person they like has no chance of winning. It makes all the candidates listen to each other and they shouldn't bash each other because if they don't get someone's first choice, hopefully they'll be their second. So less negative ads and more substance and stances. RCV is not beneficial to either of the two parties more than the other. It's good for both. There's just a lot of pros to RCV! On another note, sure ballots from dead people shouldn't be counted but don't we have a process for that already? If not, let's have a paper trail and allow someone to contest it, you know show up living and all. How do we know their dead? If someone voted for someone else, that's illegal and they should be help accountable. On another note, count all early ballots! Don't let someone else's responsibility disallow someone who voted properly.

**Name:** Nancy Gion

**Comment:** Please remove the ban on Ranked Choice Voting (Div III) from this bill. Ranked Choice Voting has been proven in other states to have a positive impact all around; it is easy, saves money, and gives voters much more control over who they want to see in office. Iowans deserve to have this option to alleviate their frustration with the divisiveness in politics.

**Name:** Erin Bailey

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this Bill. I have researched RCV and it certainly seems like it could address or even solve many of the frustrations we citizens have when wanting more and better choices on the Ballot. RCV may also encourage more civil campaigning, which we desperately deserve. We, as Iowa voters want and need something better than what we have today.

**Name:** jeff clingan

**Comment:** Please do not ban RCV in Iowa. This provision in the bill is cowardly, indefensible and only in the bill to satisfy wealthy donors outside of Iowa. They are pushing this to limit the number of people who will vote. RCV is a tool to limit the influence of money in voting and bring new ideas and voters into the process. The only reason to oppose it would be if you want to limit democracy and leave people out of the system.

**Name:** Kristi Sjullie-Pick

**Comment:** Please remove the Ranked Choice Voting Bill language. We currently do not have it so it makes no sense to ban it until there is more information for the general public to make an informed decision.

**Name:** Sharon Schiefen

**Comment:** Div. III Ranked Choice Voting I fully support this with the only change to add that any other voting methods that is comparable will be prohibited also. Div. IV Absentee Voter I fully support removing the ability to allow drop boxes, but do not want any expansion to the time allowed for absentee ballots. I believe the time should be shortened and that people need to have a valid excuse of why they need to vote absentee. Div. VI Voter Registration Database The language of this section does not assure us of any transparency. We need to make sure that no contract can be signed with a ThirdParty company which prohibits the citizens from asking any needed and relevant questions to the process and the results.

**Name:** Kathryn Crowley

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this Bill. As a young voter, I consistently encourage my peers to vote but they often feel that it is pointless. Ranked Choice Voting increases the say that voters can have in an election and prevents vote splitting. This would also lead to more positive campaigning and create opportunities for citizens to have conversations about what they want to see from their elected officials, ultimately leading to better representation. Prohibiting Ranked Choice Voting is undemocratic; we should be having conversations about why and how ranked choice voting is beneficial for Iowans instead of completely stifling it.

**Name:** Barb Nelson

**Comment:** I ask that Division III be removed from SSB3161. There has been a lot of interest in ranked choice voting. This bill would remove the possibility to even consider it in Iowa. I believe it is well worth investigating.

**Name:** Diane Holst

**Comment:** Division VI, do not accept a bill that does not identify the voter registration database, a contract with a thirdparty vendor that the state has not identified. ERIC was named in the code, and look how that worked out. Identify first, and allow for public comment. The nonvoting, third party vendor technology is the most uncontrolled, uncertified layer of our voting process. As written, your constituents have no opportunity to weigh in on the process.

**Name:** dilys Morris

**Comment:** I support removing Division 3 from the current Bill. We need new and important conversation about making our elections work better. In any case I support ranked voting since it will reduce polarization in elections

**Name:** Genevieve Johnson

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this Bill, so we can continue this new and important statewide conversation about making our elections work better. I have worked as an Election Precinct Official in Iowa County since 2020, and I routinely hear from voters at the polls that they are frustrated with all of the negative campaigning (they want to hear what the candidates are for rather than tearing down opponents) and want to express their true preferences for candidates rather than voting for the "lesser of two evils" to avoid the spoiler affect. Rank Choice Voting/instant runoffs have proven to address these frustrations and provide many other benefits (e.g., lowering the cost to administer elections by not requiring voters to return to the polls for a runoff election at a later date). Please do not shut down conversation & exploration of ways to make our elections work better for all voters in Iowa.

**Name:** Philip Tillman

**Comment:** Division III RCV I am against Rank Choice Voting. It is very confusing and does not select the best qualities person for an office. Division IV Absentee voting The time for absentee voting should be shortened. This is the method of voting which has the most potential for fraud. Division VI Voter Registration Database This proposal needs a lot more definition and transparency to be any better than ERIC. There is no mention of requirements for a vendor to report on their findings. There needs to be reporting not only to the Secretary of State but also to the people to have any confidence in it.

**Name:** Justin Garrett

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this Bill. Ranked choice voting is already not a thing in Iowa there is no need to ban it outright. If it is wrong, let there be debate on this topic when the possibility arises for it to be implemented. Ranked choice voting is already instituted in many states and countries. On what basis is it believed it cannot work for Iowa? It gives voters more choices than the lesser of two evils, and increases turnout. Again, remove Division 3.

**Name:** Cynthia Keithley

**Comment:** Please remove Division III from this bill, as it is unneeded. RCV is not legal now in Iowa so why does this bill have to contain yet another ban? As an Iowa voter, I would prefer to see RCV as an option!

**Name:** Cheryl Tillman

**Comment:** There is voter fraud in Iowa. Iowa officials wife found guilty on all 52 counts of voter fraud charges, by Nick Robertson, November 21, 2023, The Hill.

**Name:** Sarah Van Weelden

**Comment:** I urge for the removal of Division III from Bill SSB3161. Rank Choice voting would allow citizens to vote their conscience rather than who they think they need to for their vote to count. Rank choice voting would ensure all peoples votes contribute, as that is the nature of rank choice voting. If your first choice does not get meet the viability threshold, then your second or third choice would. This is a way to both empower voters and candidates for elections. Respectfully, Sarah

**Name:** Sean McMannamy

**Comment:** Ranked choice voting is the only way we will ever depart form the twoparty system please remove this bill.

**Name:** John Overton

**Comment:** Please take out Division 3 of this Bill so we as a State can continue the conversation to improve our election process and results. The opportunity to have Rank Choice Voting (RCV) is an important an important conversation we as a State need to have. The current system limits choices and does not allow my/our voice(s) to be heard. Right now the opportunity to have RCV is what in my eyes comes the closest to giving Iowans their political voice back.

**Name:** Rafaela Cadena

**Comment:** I support the BANNING OF ranked choice voting. This is about listing your preferences and once you count the votes you start eliminating the bottom vote getter and that candidates votes are redistributed until someone gets 50%. Therefore it 1. lacks transparency; 2. ballot exhaustion; 3. prone to technical glitches; 4. requires expensive voter education campaigns. Ranked choice voting is designed to cause confusion and fatigue among voters. It does not increase voter turnout. IE a person who has no car, wont decide to run to the polls just because its ranked choice. The idea that it increased turnout is ludacrious, Ranked choice voting suppresses minority voting. Gavin Newsome quote "Where it has been implemented, I am concerned it has often led to voter confusion, and that the promise that ranked choice

voting leads to greater democracy is not necessarily fulfilled. Ranked choice voting poses the biggest threat to election integrity. Both sides should want their vote to count once. "Ranked choice voting is designed to cause confusion and fatigue among voters," Georgia Lt Governor Burt Jones. RCV attempts to run many elections one after another using a single ballot. This is why RCV calls it instant runoff voting but it should be called multiple runoff voting.

**Name:** Melissa King

**Comment:** The ONLY reason to ban rank choice voting is so a 2party system can continue to hold power over the citizens it governs through backdoor politics and big corporation funding. A ban is nothing more than a power grab. If you care at all about the people, this state and the programs we provide, you would allow the PEOPLE to decide. Rank Choice Voting puts the power in the people's hands and it allows our voices to be heard.

**Name:** Inga Frick

**Comment:** Please remove Division 3 from this Bill, so we can continue this important statewide conversation about making our elections work better.

**Name:** Graydon Gunzenhauser

**Comment:** We need Ranked Choice voting. With our political environment getting more heated by the day, we need to make a change. Something to reduce the heat a bit. It can also save money for both parties, and open up a few jobs in the government. Ranked choice voting will be the best solution for the people, the people who are supposed to be represented.

**Name:** Anonymous Anonymous

**Comment:** I find it funny that the Republican base cried so much about the use of ERIC and now are putting into a bill text requiring a pilot program of essentially the exact same thing!

**Name:** David Moritz

**Comment:** As a lifelong republican, my first impression of this bill is that I am strongly in favor of it! Removing drop boxes and increasing security of absentee ballots, as outlined in Division IV, is a great idea! I am always a fan of purging voting records like codifying the removal of deceased program members as discussed in Division I. Division VI establishes a pilot program for verifying voter registration which I believe is excellent! I think a great thirdparty contracting company would be the locally owned and operated We Write Code based out of East Village. This is a great bill. My only opposition is the language of outlawing ranked choice voting from elections. RCV a well established method of enfranchising voters to vote honestly rather than strategically. Please remove the amendments under Division III! Thank you!

**Name:** Catherine Johnson

**Comment:** Please see attachment.





**Disability Rights Iowa**  
**SSB 3161 – Memorandum of Impact**  
**February 9, 2024**

Chairpersons and honorable members of the Committee. My name is Catherine E. Johnson. I am the Executive Director of Disability Rights Iowa. DRI is an independent, non-profit agency, which serves as the designated protection and advocacy system for people with disabilities in the state of Iowa, pursuant to federal mandates. The mission of the agency is to protect and advocate for the human and legal rights of Iowans with disabilities. I appear before you to share DRI's concerns regarding the impact of SSB 3161 on the Disability Community.

**DRI represents Iowa voters with disabilities.**

Disability Rights Iowa advocates for the voting rights of individuals with disabilities to promote their full participation in the electoral process, including registering to vote, casting a vote, and accessing polling places.

**SSB 3161's impact on Iowa voters with disabilities**

The proposed changes to Iowa State Code, particularly the amendments to Sec. 11. Section 39A.4, subsection one, paragraph c, subparagraphs (10) and (11), Code 2024, would impact the ability of Iowans with disabilities to have equal access to the voting process. These amendments would remove county auditor's ability to offer a secure absentee ballot drop box. Currently, county auditors may establish one absentee ballot drop box at their office. Drop boxes may be the most accessible option for Iowa voters with disabilities for numerous reasons. Drop boxes are more accessible for individuals as this provides individuals with the ability to deposit their ballot at a time that works for them or their caregivers. Drop boxes also provide Iowans with disabilities the ability to deposit their ballot without concerns



of encountering the flu, a virus, covid-19 and/or other infectious illnesses.

Developing a ballot eliminates concerns of privacy, tampering or voter fraud, timely delivery of mail and/or lack of regular mail pick up at their residence. Numerous bipartisan organizations have found that absentee ballot drop boxes are safe, secure, and accessible.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful deliberation of DRI's concerns regarding the impact of SSB 3161 on Iowa Voters with disabilities.

**Name:** Lois C Lawler

**Comment:** Thankyou for supporting SSB 3161 and the codification against Ranked Choice Voting in Iowa. In an ABC poll released January 2022, only 20% of Americans were very confident about the voting system. Americans want their votes to be counted. Ranked choice voting throws out ballots that have fewer choices marked in each round of tabulation resulting in thousands of voters being disenfranchised: Pushed almost exclusively by the Left as an alternative to Americas traditional one person, one vote system, rankedchoice voting is actually an alternative voting scam that leads to thousands of trashed ballots, widespread errors, delayed election results, and diminished voter confidence. Thats why five states have banned rankedchoice voting in just the last two years Florida, Tennessee, South Dakota, Idaho, and Montana. <https://thefga.org/rankedchoicevotingisadisaster/> If a person just votes for one of the choices? Too bad, the ballot will be trashed, exhausted, or eliminated. In Maine 2018: 8,000 eliminated ballots. In Alaska 2022: 15,000 eliminated ballots. In New York City 2021: 140,000 (almost 15%) eliminated. In Alameda County 2021: the third place finisher had actually won, a software glitch caused a miscount. An analysis of 96 Jurisdictions by the Alaska Policy Forum, October 2020, showed greater voter disenfranchisement among voters whose first language is not English due to the confusing nature of the ballots and lower voter turnout among minority groups: When individuals leave columns blank on their ballots, and the candidate(s) they vote for are eliminated from contention, their ballots are not counted in the final tabulation. Therefore, if these voters only choose one candidate on their ballots, they are more likely to become exhausted, thereby giving those who fully complete their ballots more influence over the electoral process. In other words, African Americans, Latinos, voters with less education, and those whose first language is not English are more likely to be disenfranchised with a rankedchoice voting system. Further, in his analysis of San Francisco elections between 1995 and 2001, Jason McDaniel, an associate professor at San Francisco State University, found that ranked choice voting is likely to decrease voter turnout, primarily among African Americans and white voters. McDaniel also found that rankedchoice voting increases the disparity between those who are already likely to vote and those who are not, including younger voters and those with lower levels of education. In short, the complexity of a ranked choice ballot makes it less likely that disadvantaged voices will be fully heard in the political and electoral process. <https://alaskapolicyforum.org/wpcontent/uploads/202010APFRankedChoiceVotingReport.pdf> Further many benefits that are supposed to be found by RankedChoice voting do not exist: Rankedchoice elections perpetuate the twoparty system, artificially inflate those parties to make one appear dominant, further empowers extreme partisans then generate even more close red vs. blue contests And the prospect of razorthin margins of victory enable foreign governments to meddle in elections, exacerbate the moneyinpolitics arms race and cement the status quo. <https://thefulcrum.us/whyrankedchoicevotingisbad> I have tried to find examples of articles from a wide spectrum of political beliefs, Right to Left. In general, any process, such as ranked choice voting that is shown to discriminate against voters feels like a return to Jim Crow laws found in the 1860s South. Please support SSB 3161 as it is written. Thankyou, Lois Lawler

Thank-you for supporting SSB 3161 and the codification against Ranked Choice Voting in Iowa. In an ABC poll released January 2022, only 20% of Americans were very confident about the voting system. Americans want their votes to be counted. Ranked choice voting throws out ballots that have fewer choices marked in each round of tabulation resulting in thousands of voters being disenfranchised:

“Pushed almost exclusively by the Left as an alternative to America’s traditional “one person, one vote” system, ranked-choice voting is actually an *alternative voting scam* that leads to thousands of trashed ballots, widespread errors, delayed election results, and diminished voter confidence.

That’s why [five states have banned ranked-choice voting](https://thefga.org/ranked-choice-voting-is-a-disaster/) in just the last two years—Florida, Tennessee, South Dakota, Idaho, and Montana.” <https://thefga.org/ranked-choice-voting-is-a-disaster/>

If a person just votes for one of the choices? Too bad, the ballot will be “trashed,” “exhausted,” or eliminated. In Maine 2018: 8,000 eliminated ballots. In Alaska 2022: 15,000 eliminated ballots. In New York City 2021: 140,000 (almost 15%) eliminated. In Alameda County 2021: the third place finisher had actually won, a software glitch caused a miscount.

An analysis of 96 Jurisdictions by the Alaska Policy Forum, October 2020, showed greater voter disenfranchisement among voters whose first language is not English due to the confusing nature of the ballots and lower voter turnout among minority groups:

“When individuals leave columns blank on their ballots, and the candidate(s) they vote for are eliminated from contention, their ballots are not counted in the final tabulation. Therefore, if these voters only choose one candidate on their ballots, they are more likely to become exhausted, thereby giving those who fully complete their ballots more influence over the electoral process. In other words, African Americans, Latinos, voters with less education, and those whose first language is not English are more likely to be disenfranchised with a ranked-choice voting system. Further, in his analysis of San Francisco elections between 1995 and 2001, Jason McDaniel, an associate professor at San Francisco State University, found that ranked choice voting is likely to decrease voter turnout, primarily among African Americans and white voters. McDaniel also found that ranked-choice voting increases the disparity between “those who are already likely to vote and those who are not, including younger voters and those with lower levels of education.” In short, the complexity of a ranked choice ballot makes it less likely that disadvantaged voices will be fully heard in the political and electoral process.”

<https://alaskapolicyforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2020-10-APF-Ranked-Choice-Voting-Report.pdf>

Further many benefits that are supposed to be found by Ranked-Choice voting do not exist:

“Ranked-choice elections perpetuate the two-party system, artificially inflate those parties to make one appear dominant, further empowers extreme partisans — then generate even more close red vs. blue contests

And the prospect of razor-thin margins of victory enable foreign governments to meddle in elections, exacerbate the money-in-politics arms race and cement the status quo.” <https://thefulcrum.us/why-ranked-choice-voting-is-bad>

I have tried to find examples of articles from a wide spectrum of political beliefs, Right to Left. In general, any process, such as ranked choice voting that is shown to discriminate against voters feels like a return to Jim Crow laws found in the 1860’s South. Please support SSB 3161 as it is written.

Thank-you,

Lois Lawler



**Name:** Cheryl Tillman

**Comment:** Division III, Ranked Choice Voting, or by any other name, should not be allowed in the State of Iowa nor in any city or municipality in Iowa. The system is confusing because candidates who initially get the most firstplace votes dont always win the election. Division IV, Absent voters, must have LESS time for receiving ballots because mailin ballots are the largest portion of election fraud. A photo ID should be required for absentee ballots just as we require photo IDs for inperson voting. Division VI, Voter Registration Database, the public must have full transparency on the list of changes to the voter rolls. The changes should indicate, by county, which registrants dropped off the list and which were added and for what reason.

# Some on the Right Flirt With a Voting Method the Left Loves

Ranked-choice voting could be on the November ballot in four states, a sign of the system's rising popularity. Most conservatives have opposed it. But some say that could be changing.

By [Michael Wines](#)

Feb. 8, 2024

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/08/us/ranked-choice-voting-elections.html>

Long viewed as an intriguing, if somewhat wonky, approach to conducting elections, ranked-choice voting — allowing voters to list candidates in order of preference instead of selecting just one — appears to be having a moment.

Across the country, voters have adopted the system for municipal and county elections in each of the last 27 times the issue has been put to them. Nevada and Oregon — and [perhaps Colorado](#) and Idaho as well — will hold referendums on adopting the system this fall. Maine and Alaska already have adopted it.

Proponents say ranked choice reduces polarization by forcing candidates to seek broad support, and that it allows voters to support minor or protest candidates without them becoming spoilers. Critics call the system confusing and even undemocratic, since candidates who initially get the most first-place votes don't always win in the end.

But just how popular ranked-choice voting is may depend on the group that has most often waged tooth-and-claw battles against it: conservatives, and in particular Republican political figures, who have ideological and practical reasons to oppose the system.

The Republican National Committee urged Congress and the states a year ago to oppose ranked-choice voting “in every locality and level of government.”

Republican-run legislatures in Kansas and Georgia are considering bills to outlaw it. When a coalition of advocacy groups began mobilizing last year to place a ranked-choice initiative on the ballot in Idaho, the G.O.P. supermajority in the Legislature preemptively banned it.

At least a few Republicans say they see cracks in that opposition. Whether they're right could determine if ranked-choice voting, also known as instant runoffs, could have a future beyond largely Democratic states and municipalities.

A measure that would repeal the Idaho ban and institute a modified form of ranked-choice voting is within a few thousand signatures of reaching the November ballot, with the backing of scores of Republican political figures led by former Gov. Butch Otter. In solidly red Utah, 21 cities — including the capital, Salt Lake City — have held ranked-choice elections since 2021. Wisconsin’s Republican-controlled Legislature held a hearing on the system last month, with testimony from both Republican and Democratic supporters.

“A lot of it is guilt by association,” said John Pudner, a Wisconsin Republican and president of [Take Back Our Republic Action](#), which describes itself as a center-right nonprofit focused on election rules. “When people say, ‘San Francisco did this, and Seattle did it, and New York did it,’ the assumption is that if the other side is doing something, it’s probably bad for you,” he said.

Mr. Pudner said that he opposed unlimited ranked-choice ballots, but that some conservatives, like him, favor a modified system that doesn’t ask voters to rank more than five candidates. “It’s picking up steam,” he said. “I hear more and more people talking about it at Republican meetings around the country.”

Indeed, Virginia Republicans used ranked-choice voting in 2021 to select Glenn Youngkin, who defeated six opponents and went on to become the first Republican governor in the state in more than a decade. The party [stuck with ranked-choice](#) the next year, saying that the method would elevate “the candidate with the broadest base of support.”

If an election can be compared to choosing where to go on vacation, voters typically get one choice, no matter how many options — mountains, seashore, resort, big city — are under consideration. With ranked choice, voters state their preferences in order: First, the seashore, and if not that, a resort, and if not that, then the city.

With ranked choice, the race is over if any candidate nets more than half of the first-place votes that are cast. If no candidate exceeds 50 percent, the candidate with the fewest first-place choices is discarded, and the votes for the others are tallied. The lowest-ranking candidate continues to be tossed out until one candidate gets more than half of all top preferences.

The system allows voters to support outsider candidates without worrying about using their vote on a candidate who can’t win. Candidates can win only with support — or at least tolerance — from a majority of the electorate, thus reducing polarization. And proponents say that ranked choice lessens the chance that minor candidates [become spoilers](#) in close elections.

Deb Otis, the director of research and policy for the ranked-choice advocacy group [Fair Vote](#), called that aspect “the beauty of this system.”

“You have to have some people rank you first, to have some base of support,” she said. “But you may also need to pick up second and third choices to cross that 50 percent threshold.”

Critics — not all of them conservatives — call the system confusing and even undemocratic, given that the person who wins a plurality of the vote in a multicandidate contest may not end up the winner. In 2019, Gov. Gavin Newsom of California, a liberal Democrat, vetoed legislation that would have expanded the use of ranked-choice elections in the state.



**Name:** Christopher Peters

**Comment:** More Americans than ever before are dissatisfied and distrustful of all levels of government, from executive branches to legislative bodies and the courts. They are increasingly supportive of a variety of political reforms, to include RankedChoice Voting. Denying voters more choice is antidemocratic, and denying Iowa counties and municipalities the option of adopting RankedChoice Voting is state overreach.

**From:** Chris and Julie Peters cpetersj@me.com  
**Subject:** Fwd: Support Political Reform in Iowa  
**Date:** February 12, 2024 at 09:05  
**To:**



[View this email in your browser](#)



## Support Political Reform in Iowa

According to polling, less than one-third of Americans are remotely satisfied with our politics, a record low. Trust in government, including executive branches, legislative bodies, and the courts, is also at an all-time low. More Americans than ever before have unfavorable views of both the Republican and Democratic parties. Furthermore, more Americans than in years past wish they had more options, including better candidates and additional political parties.

Not surprisingly, Americans are increasingly supportive of a wide variety of political reforms. Term and age limits, along with efforts to reduce the influence of money in politics, are particularly popular. Additionally, more Americans are looking at reforms in how we select our political candidates and eventual elected representatives. They understand that these more fundamental reforms may be necessary before any other objectives can be achieved.

Two reforms focused on candidate selection and election include open primaries and ranked-choice voting (RCV). I am a fan of both of these reforms and, for the past couple of years, have been supporting a new group, Better Ballot Iowa, which seeks to offer RCV as an option to interested counties and municipalities in Iowa.

Currently, RCV is not permitted in any Iowa jurisdiction per legislative statute. Given this, it's interesting that the recently introduced Senate Study Bill 3161 includes Division III, which reiterates that "an election in this state shall not be conducted using ranked choice voting". If something is already not permitted, is it necessary to make it impermissible again?

Perhaps the supporters of this section of Senate Study Bill 3161 subconsciously wished to raise the profile of RCV in Iowa beyond what we supporters could accomplish on our own? Even if not, we'll take advantage of that exposure, so thanks!

Here are some truths regarding RCV to counteract what may be presented by the anti-RCV crowd:

- RCV is not more susceptible to fraud or outside manipulation.
- While there is a small upfront cost for implementing RCV, such as voter education, the long-term costs are unchanged.
- RCV will eliminate costly and poorly attended runoff elections.
- While there can be a short learning curve, RCV is easy to understand for voters, simply involving ranking candidates as they might rank movies watched or books read.
- RCV tends to lead to less negative campaigning, greater voter participation, and improved voter satisfaction.

- While currently elected officials may be wary, there is no evidence that the implementation of RCV benefits one party over another.

RCV is not a panacea for all of our political ills, but it is one reform among many worth considering. Allowing Iowa counties and municipalities to experiment with political reforms, including RCV, may lead to better outcomes. This is the essence of the “laboratories of democracy” ideal, the foundation of our federalism. State overreach, undermining the sovereignty of Iowa counties and municipalities, as exemplified by Division III of Senate Study Bill 3161, should be opposed.

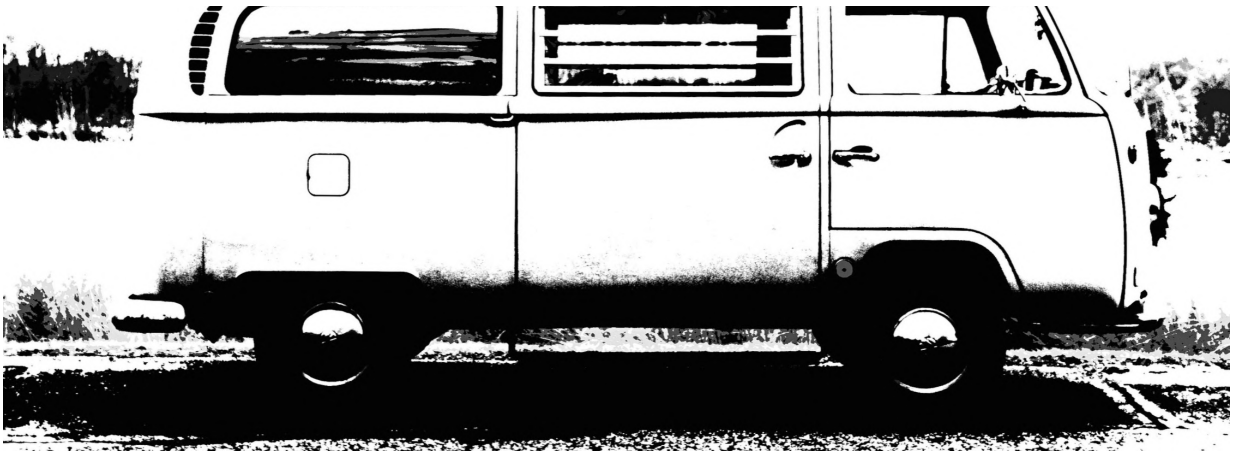
In my opinion, the ones most resistant to change are those who are already in power. We, the people, demand better than the status quo. We wish to make our state and country better for everyone. We are entitled to make changes in our existing political order, to experiment and tinker, always hopeful for a better future. As part of that, we should be free to have conversations about all political reforms, including RCV, with nothing left off the table.

To our state legislators: please remove Division III from Senate Study Bill 3161. To all Iowans reading this, please contact your state legislators to do just this.

[Pew Research, 2023: Americans' Dismal Views of the Nation's Politics](#)

[Gallup, 2024: Record Low in U.S. Satisfied With Way Democracy Is Working](#)





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**Name:**

Saul Anuzis

**Comment:**

Testimony from: Saul Anuzis  
In OPPOSITION to Senate Study Bill 3161  
February 12, 2024  
Dear Members of the Committee, I write to you as a former member of the Republican National Committee and former Chairman of the Michigan Republican Party with a deep interest and a longtime commitment to the success and vitality of the Republican Party. I write in opposition to Senate Study Bill 3161 (SSB 3161), which would prohibit use of ranked choice voting (RCV) in all elections in Iowa. I strongly believe that blanket opposition to RCV hurts Republicans chances of nominating the strongest possible candidates, both here in Iowa and in other states across the country. RCV is not a one size fits all system, and many state and local Republican parties have used RCV to nominate stronger candidates like Virginia governor Glenn Youngkin. Rather than throw the baby out with the bath water, lets take time to learn why many Republicans in many states like RCV in some form or in some context. Supporting some applications of RCV does not mean endorsement of how RCV is used in Alaska, as one example. First, I know some have real concerns that I take seriously about using RCV in general elections, and our focus is on the nominating process. Virginia provides a particularly good example. I invite you to read this important analysis by Virginia Republican political consultant Eric Wilson on the value he has seen for Republicans in nominating candidates with RCV in his state. Contrast Glenn Youngkins big win in Virginia in 2021, after winning a clear majority of the vote with RCV, with painful losses in a string of U.S. Senate races in 2022 after nonmajority, splitvote winners of Republican primaries. Those defeats hurt our partys chances to stop Joe Bidens radical agenda. Nominees chosen with majority support in their primaries do better in general elections than those chosen by a minority of voters. We can use that fact to our advantage. Our state and local Republican parties deserve the chance to try RCV to strengthen their nominees. SSB 3161 would deprive the Iowa Republican Party of that opportunity, something that other state parties have used to great benefit. Given the crowded presidential field we saw right here at the Iowa Caucus in 2024, we want a voting rule that will help us pick the strongest consensus candidate among Republican voters and activists one ready to win in November. Our plurality primaries incentivize us to train our fire on each other and force candidates out of the race before voters have had a chance to weigh in instead of more Republicans traveling the country and spreading the partys message. That would strengthen the GOP heading into the general election. R Street Institute has published several important opeds and reports on the idea of using RCV in the presidential nominating process. For these reasons, the Republican Party of the U.S. Virgin Islands decided to use ranked choice voting in its 2024 presidential primary, allowing Republicans there to express their true preference among a crowded field of candidates. It is too late for other state parties to make similar changes to presidential nominations for 2024. But, by passing SSB 3161, Iowa Republican legislators would close the door on a tool that could help the GOP in 2028. Second, RCV is not a new idea nor a liberal idea. RCV is supported by numerous organizations, political parties, and state governments led by conservatives. This explains: Why six southern states Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina have their overseas and military voters cast RCV ballots when holding runoffs to give them a greater chance to have their vote count. Why hundreds of private associations use RCV for leadership elections, including the American Chemical Society (the worlds largest scientific society), American Psychiatric Association (more than 38,000 members); and American Psychological Association (approximately 150,000 members). Why RCV was used in 2020 by the Indiana Republican Party at its state convention to select its nominee for attorney general in a fourcandidate race. Why Utah Republicans have used RCV at its state convention for major offices, from Governor to Congress, and a 2020 postconvention survey found over 70 percent of participants liked using RCV. Why the Republican Party of Virginia in 202023 has used RCV to elect its party chair, to nominate five candidates for Congress and a state delegate, and, most impactfully, to nominate its victorious statewide ticket in 2021 led by Glenn Youngkin for governor

in a seven candidate race. Why the American Enterprise Institute recently published a report noting that conservatives have won in places that have enacted election reforms. Third, there is no single model of RCV, and forms of it are completely consistent with our goals for election integrity. Many common criticisms of RCV are greatly exaggerated and easily addressed. RCV can be used with a sensible limit of five rankings permitted for voters, for example. RCV instead can be implemented in a simple two round instant runoff. RCV can be run such that it is fully precinct summable with all data reported locally. Hand tallies can confirm the results, as the Republican Party of Virginia has shown repeatedly. It is also important to set the record straight on three common criticisms first, RCV does not cause delays in election results. Most places using RCV release results the night of or day after the election. Second, voters understand RCV. We rank things every day. In exit polls from places as varied as Utah, New York City, Minneapolis, and Alaska, over 80% say ranking candidates is easy. Third, so called exhausted ballots are not the problem they are cracked up to be. Some voters choose not to rank all the candidates, just like some voters do not return for runoffs or vote for one of the top two candidates in a plurality election. By allowing voters to express backup choices on a single ballot, RCV means more voters end up having a say compared to runoffs or plurality elections. The Alaska model is very different from using RCV in primaries. That system is based on ending primaries as we know them and allowing more than one Republican to advance to the general election, where RCV is used to allow voters to consider four candidates. That is not what we are discussing. I respectfully suggest that there be a clear distinction taken into consideration of the difference between Alaskas use of RCV versus in local nonpartisan elections, party primaries, and/or the nominating process. This isnt some slippery slope proposal that is going to fool Republicans into using something that will harm their general election chances. State parties and their respective party activists are more than capable of picking a nominating system that best fits their specific circumstances. SSB 3161 would rob Iowa Republicans of a tool that would make their own party stronger at the same time. I ask that you oppose SSB 3161. Thank you for your time and consideration. Saul Anuzis Former Chairman of the Michigan Republican Party

Testimony from:

**Saul Anuzis**

**In OPPOSITION to Senate Study Bill 3161**

February 12, 2024

Dear Members of the Committee,

I write to you as a former member of the Republican National Committee and former Chairman of the Michigan Republican Party with a deep interest and a long-time commitment to the success and vitality of the Republican Party.

I write in **opposition to Senate Study Bill 3161 (SSB 3161)**, which would prohibit use of ranked choice voting (RCV) in all elections in Iowa. I strongly believe that blanket opposition to RCV hurts Republicans' chances of nominating the strongest possible candidates, both here in Iowa and in other states across the country.

RCV is not a "one size fits all" system, and many state and local Republican parties have used RCV to nominate stronger candidates like Virginia governor Glenn Youngkin. Rather than throw the baby out with the bath water, let's take time to learn why many Republicans in many states like RCV *in some form or in some context*. Supporting some applications of RCV does not mean endorsement of how RCV is used in Alaska, as one example.

**First, I know some have real concerns that I take seriously about using RCV in general elections, and our focus is on the nominating process.** Virginia provides a particularly good example. I invite you to read this [important analysis by Virginia Republican political consultant Eric Wilson](#) on the value he has seen for Republicans in nominating candidates with RCV in his state.

Contrast Glenn Youngkin's big win in Virginia in 2021, after winning a clear majority of the vote with RCV, with painful losses in a string of U.S. Senate races in 2022 after non-majority, split-vote winners of Republican primaries. Those defeats hurt our party's chances to stop Joe Biden's radical agenda.

Nominees chosen with majority support in their primaries do better in general elections than those chosen by a minority of voters. We can use that fact to our advantage. Our state and local Republican parties deserve the chance to try RCV to strengthen their nominees. SSB 3161 would deprive the Iowa Republican Party of that opportunity, something that other state parties have used to great benefit.

Given the crowded presidential field we saw right here at the Iowa Caucus in 2024, we want a voting rule that will help us pick the strongest consensus candidate among Republican voters and activists – one ready to win in November. Our plurality primaries incentivize us to train our fire on each other and force candidates out of the race before voters have had a chance to weigh in – instead of more Republicans traveling the country and spreading the party's message. That would strengthen the GOP heading into the general election. R Street Institute has published several important op-eds and [reports](#) on the idea of using RCV in the presidential nominating process.

For these reasons, the Republican Party of the U.S. Virgin Islands decided to [use ranked choice voting](#) in its 2024 presidential primary, allowing Republicans there to express their true preference among a crowded field



of candidates. It is too late for other state parties to make similar changes to presidential nominations for 2024. But, by passing SSB 3161, Iowa Republican legislators would close the door on [a tool that could help the GOP](#) in 2028.

**Second, RCV is not a new idea nor a liberal idea.** RCV is supported by numerous organizations, political parties, and state governments led by conservatives. This explains:

- Why six southern states – Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina – [have their overseas and military voters cast RCV ballots](#) when holding runoffs to give them a greater chance to have their vote count.
- Why hundreds of private associations use RCV for leadership elections, including the American Chemical Society (the world’s largest scientific society), American Psychiatric Association (more than 38,000 members); and American Psychological Association (approximately 150,000 members).
- Why RCV was [used in 2020 by the Indiana Republican Party](#) at its state convention to select its nominee for attorney general in a four-candidate race.
- Why Utah Republicans have used RCV at its state convention for major offices, from Governor to Congress, and a 2020 [post-convention survey found over 70 percent of participants](#) liked using RCV.
- Why the Republican Party of Virginia in 2020-23 has used RCV to elect its party chair, to nominate five candidates for Congress and a state delegate, and, most impactfully, to nominate [its victorious statewide ticket in 2021 led by Glenn Youngkin for governor in a seven-candidate race](#).
- Why the American Enterprise Institute recently published a [report](#) noting that “conservatives have won in places that have enacted... election reforms.”

**Third, there is no single model of RCV, and forms of it are completely consistent with our goals for election integrity. Many common criticisms of RCV are greatly exaggerated and easily addressed.** RCV can be used with a sensible limit of five rankings permitted for voters, for example. RCV instead can be implemented in a simple two-round “instant runoff.” RCV can be run such that it is fully “precinct summable” with all data reported locally. Hand tallies can confirm the results, as the Republican Party of Virginia has shown repeatedly.

It is also important to set the record straight on three common criticisms – first, RCV does not cause delays in election results. Most places using RCV release results the night of or day after the election. Second, voters understand RCV. We rank things every day. In exit polls from places as varied as [Utah](#), [New York City](#), [Minneapolis](#), and [Alaska](#), over 80% say ranking candidates is easy. Third, so-called “exhausted ballots” are not the problem they are cracked up to be. Some voters choose not to rank all the candidates, just like some voters do not return for runoffs or vote for one of the top two candidates in a plurality election. By allowing voters to express backup choices on a single ballot, RCV means *more* voters end up having a say compared to runoffs or plurality elections.

The Alaska model is very different from using RCV in primaries. That system is based on ending primaries as we know them and allowing more than one Republican to advance to the general election, where RCV is used to allow voters to consider four candidates. That is not what we are discussing.

I respectfully suggest that there be a clear distinction taken into consideration of the difference between Alaska’s use of RCV versus in local nonpartisan elections, party primaries, and/or the nominating process. This isn’t some slippery slope proposal that is going to fool Republicans into using something that will harm their general election chances.

State parties and their respective party activists are more than capable of picking a nominating system that best fits their specific circumstances. SSB 3161 would rob Iowa Republicans of a tool that would make their own party stronger at the same time.

I ask that you **oppose SSB 3161**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Saul Anuzis**

Former Chairman of the Michigan Republican Party