

Seattle voting reform initiative qualifies for November 2022 ballot



Initiative 134 empowers voters to express their full opinions in primary elections, leading to more representative and more responsive elected officials.

June 15, 2022 (SEATTLE) – Seattle Approves, a volunteer-run voting reform organization, announced today that an initiative to improve Seattle’s elections has qualified for the November 2022 ballot.

If passed in November, Initiative 134 will let Seattle voters select more than one candidate on primary ballots. Instead of reading “Vote for one,” primary ballots would instruct voters to “Vote for as many as you approve of.” Just like today, the two candidates with the most votes would move on to the general election. This voting system is commonly known as Approval Voting.

"Seattle’s leaders must represent everyone," said Sarah Ward, volunteer co-chair of [Seattle Approves](#). "Initiative 134 will make Seattle’s elections as representative as possible, so that its leaders represent the entire electorate. This initiative puts voters first."

Studies show that Approval Voting elects [more representative leaders](#) than our current voting system. It also eliminates vote splitting¹ and enables voters to be more honest about their true support for each candidate². With this change, any candidate who works to appeal to voters can win, not just candidates with big backing from political insiders. "If you've ever debated between voting for a candidate that you really like and another you like less but has the big money backing to win, you've experienced the problem with our existing elections. The money flowing into elections combined with the flaws in our current voting system means our elections aren't a fair assessment of what voters want," said Logan Bowers, volunteer co-chair. "Too often, voters feel compelled to vote strategically based on who they think can win," Bowers said.

Approval Voting is already in use in St. Louis, MO, and Fargo, ND. St. Louis adopted Approval Voting in November 2020 with support from 68% of voters, then used it successfully 4 months later. In the March 2021 primary, with 4 candidates for mayor, St. Louis voters supported an average of 1.56 candidates. In 2022, 69% of St. Louis residents voted to retain this change.

¹ A Split Vote is when two similar candidates divide votes from like-minded voters and neither candidate gains enough support to win even though each one individually would win if the other similar candidate didn't run.

² Under the current system, a voter may choose not to vote for a long shot candidate they support out of fear of “throwing away” their vote. Under Approval Voting, they can support all of their preferred candidates.

“Seattle residents will continue to see our volunteers at farmers markets and local community events as we continue outreach to educate voters about I-134 and Approval Voting,” Bowers added.

To learn more and get involved, visit seattleapproves.org or email info@seattleapproves.org.

Appendix A: Example 2021 Approval Voting ballot

Appendix B: Related links

Appendix A: Example 2021 Approval Voting ballot

City of Seattle

Mayor

nonpartisan office

vote for ~~one~~ all you approve of

- Andrew Grant Houston**
- Lance Randall**
- M. Lorena González**
- Casey Sixkiller**
- Clinton Bliss**
- Henry C. Dennison**
- Bobby Tucker**
- Omari Tahir-Garrett**
- James Donaldson**
- Arthur K. Langlie**
- Colleen Echohawk**
- Don L. Rivers**
- Bruce Harrell**
- Stan Lippmann**
- Jessyn Farrell**
- _____

This example ballot shows how the 2021 mayoral ballot would have looked if the race was conducted using Approval Voting. Just like today, the two primary candidates with the most support advance to the November election.

Appendix B: Related links

- Introduction to Approval Voting: <https://electionscience.org/approval-voting-101/>
- St. Louis Recorder of Deeds Michael Butler on how Approval Voting enables better representation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmQOEEovixs>
- Cori Bush endorsement of Proposition D (Approval Voting in St. Louis): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=slqCkt63SdE>