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Minneapolis IRV: Full Speed Ahead!

Last week, the Minneapolis City Council gave instant runoff voting (IRV) a big boost, voting 12 to 1 to direct city staff to proceed at "full speed" to implement IRV in time for the November city elections. (Read the FairVote Minnesota [press release](#).)

The Council's vote comes less than a month after Hennepin County District Court Judge George McGunnigle resoundingly [rejected](#) a Minnesota Voters Alliance lawsuit claiming that IRV is unconstitutional and not permitted by state law.

The Minnesota Voters Alliance has appealed Judge McGunnigle's verdict, and the City of Minneapolis has asked the Minnesota Supreme Court for an expedited review. City staff are preparing contingency plans for a traditional election in the unlikely event that the Supreme Court overturns Judge McGunnigle's decision, but 11th Ward Council Member Scott Benson strongly urged the Council to keep IRV on track: "The voters have voted for this, the court has ruled strongly in our favor, we are moving ahead." Speaking on behalf of Mayor R.T. Rybak, Council Liaison Peter Wagenius also urged the Council to move forward expeditiously, saying, "To do otherwise would be disrespecting the will of the voters."

FairVote Minnesota is looking forward to collaborating with the City of Minneapolis on IRV implementation. Stay tuned as we roll out voter education efforts – and be sure to contact Elections Committee Chair Elizabeth Glidden, the mayor and [your council member](#) to thank them for their leadership in keeping IRV implementation on track.

We Still Have Work to Do!

Thanks to all of you who have helped make IRV a reality in Minneapolis. We now must make IRV implementation in Minneapolis a success so we can show the rest of Minnesota how well it works!

With \$50 we can print five "How to Vote with IRV" posters.

With \$100, we can provide an IRV demo election at a house party.

With \$250 we can sponsor a neighborhood-wide demonstration election.

With \$500 we can print educational literature to distribute at all precinct caucuses on March 3.

With \$1,000 we can create website materials to reach at least 50,000 Minneapolis voters.

With \$2,500, we can print 10,000 educational brochures for non-English speaking voters.

Our work is far from finished. Please make a generous contribution to FairVote Minnesota today – [online](#) or by mail to **FairVote Minnesota, PO Box 19440, Minneapolis MN 55419-0440.**

IRV around the Country: Burlington, Vt., Voters Look Forward to Second IRV Election

Minneapolis will be closely watching the second-time use of IRV in Burlington, Vt., on March 3. In 2005, 64 percent of Burlington voters elected to use IRV in mayoral elections. The new system was implemented in time for the following year's election for [mayor](#). This year, IRV also will be used in city council elections.

Burlington's experience is proof positive that IRV works and can be implemented successfully even in a short amount of time. Read more about Burlington's IRV elections [this year](#) and [successful implementation](#) in 2006.

Better Ballot Campaigns

St. Paul Update

The St. Paul Better Ballot Campaign is gearing back up in anticipation that IRV will be on the ballot this November. Last year, more than 7,000 petition signatures were collected and certified to place IRV on the ballot. The St. Paul City Council blocked the petition campaign but resolved to put IRV on the ballot upon resolution of the lawsuit in Minneapolis. Given the judge's ruling in favor of IRV Jan. 14, we should be all-systems-go in St. Paul.

[In a letter to St. Paul supporters](#), Campaign Coordinator Ellen Brown said, "The Better Ballot Campaign is excited to start the conversation towards placing IRV on the ballot for St. Paul voters and is already talking with the City Council and Mayor about next steps."

Stay tuned for further updates and information about how you can get involved.

Duluth Update

On January 19, more than two dozen Duluth residents gathered for a training and organizing session launching an effort to bring IRV to Duluth.

Following the gathering, attendee and long-time Duluth Budgeteer columnist Virgil Swing wrote that other than the perils of being an early adopter, "I'm edging closer to endorsing instant-runoff voting" and encouraged Duluthians to sign a petition to put IRV on the ballot. Read more in Mr. Swing's piece, [Pondering the merits of Instant Runoff Voting](#).

For additional information about the Duluth effort, contact Mary Evans at mevans@d.umn.edu or Bob Wahman at rwahman@duluthmn.com.

FairVote Minnesota at Minneapolis Caucuses March 3

Minneapolis DFL precinct caucuses are quickly approaching. FairVote Minnesota is launching an effort at the caucuses to educate attendees about IRV in preparation for the November city elections, and we need your help to cover all 40+ precinct locations. Learn how you can help [here](#) – and sign up to help by emailing info@fairvotemn.org.

Are Your Candidates Supporting IRV?

Check [here](#) to see which Minneapolis candidates are supporting IRV. If yours are, please contact them to say “thank you!” and urge them promote IRV during their campaigns. If they do not, then contact them to ask for support.

Cast an IRV Ballot for Minnesota’s Next Governor

At its upcoming Casino Night fundraiser, Progressive Majority will be IRV-polling party-goers on their favorite 2010 gubernatorial candidates. ([Learn more](#) and register for the event.) At the end of the night, one candidate will be the favorite of the majority!

Straw polls are a great way to demonstrate how IRV works. If you would like to conduct a straw poll at an event or with a group of friends, we’re happy to help you. Contact us at info@fairvotemn.org.

FairVote Minnesota also is asking all candidates running for governor in 2010 for their support. Check [here](#) to see which gubernatorial candidates are IRV supporters.

Legislative Update

Instant Runoff Voting

FairVote Minnesota is working with Rep. Steve Simon and Sen. Ann Rest to reintroduce legislation providing uniform standards for IRV elections in charter cities and requiring counties to purchase IRV-capable machines when replacing voting equipment.

Senators John Marty, Sandy Pappas and Linda Schied also have introduced [a bill](#) to provide for the use of IRV in federal, state, and local elections. In the House, Rep. Eken has introduced [a bill](#) proposing a constitutional amendment to require elections for single-member offices (e.g., executive officers, judges, and members of the legislature) be won by a majority of General Election votes cast.

FairVote Minnesota believes the Simon-Rest bill stands a particularly good chance of moving forward. We will continue to push for this bill to be reintroduced and heard this year. Stay tuned for updates and calls for action!

National Popular Vote

Rep. Simon also has introduced the [National Popular Vote bill](#), which seeks to ensure the people's voice always prevails in presidential elections. Each state legislature that adopts the National Popular Vote plan pledges its state's Electoral College electors to the winner of the national popular vote, regardless of the winner's performance in their state. FairVote Minnesota [supports](#) this bill and urges supporters to [ask their legislators](#) to do the same!

Volunteer for IRV

With so many exciting things going on, there are many ways you can help!

[Contact your legislators](#) to let them know why you support IRV.

Assist with our Minneapolis IRV voter education campaign.

Become involved in the St. Paul or Duluth Better Ballot Campaigns.

Write letters to the editor and op-eds in your city or local paper.

Blog about IRV.

Help us redesign our website and communications. We are seeking volunteers to help with design and writing.

Become a member of our Speakers Bureau.

Contact info@fairvotemn.org to become involved in any of these ways!

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