

Summary of testimony

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How did Burlington's first instant runoff election go?

By all accounts --- my personal observations of the Burlington wards and from the media coverage -- the election went extremely smoothly.

- Voters didn't have trouble filling out their ballots, and pollworkers didn't have problems with the IRV portion of the process.
- People staffing the IRV help desks were bored.
- The *Burlington Free Press* headlined a story about the election, "Burlington Voters Ace Instant Runoff."
- After Ward Clerks finished announcing ward-level results, we announced IRV results at 9:05 pm.

Was instant runoff voting difficult for voters, especially low-income voters?

Concern	Citywide evidence	Ward 3 (low income) evidence
Turnout will drop	Highest voter turnout since 1999, possibly earlier	Turnout 25% higher than in 2003 mayor's race, 72% higher than 2001
Voters will skip the mayor's race	1% skipped mayor, much lower than previous mayoral elections (2% and 24%)	1% skipped the mayor's race, but 5 times as many skipped the contested city council race that didn't use IRV.
Invalid ballots will rise	Invalid rate was 0.1%, which is extremely low by national standards	Only 2 invalid ballots out of 1,200. For comparison, there were 4 invalid ballots in a Ward 7 runoff in 2004, and that election only had 1 race and 2 candidates on the ballot.
Voters won't rank candidates	Voters ranked on average 2.9 candidates. 18% ranked only 1 candidate.	Voters ranked on average 3.1 candidates, the highest of any ward, and 17% ranked only 1 candidate.
Ballots will exhaust	89% of voters ranked one of the top two candidates. Only 11% of ballots exhausted.	93% of voters ranked one of the top candidates. Only 7% exhausted.

From the actual election data, we find no evidence that voters in general and low-income voters in Ward 3 had difficulty with instant runoff voting.