

2021 CHARTER AMENDMENTS

Proposal No. 14 - Using Ranked Choice Voting within Democrats Abroad - at International and Regional Levels

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Purpose:

1. Help Democrats Abroad more closely embody the ideals it advocates in its 2020 Platform by making it obvious that Ranked Choice Voting:
 - a. Should be used for some elections at DPCA meetings and regional meetings; and
 - b. Can be used for voting within the organization, such as at Global DPCA Meetings and Regional Meetings.
2. Provide some definitions for terms related to voting to reduce confusion among readers of the bylaws.
3. Not place new requirements on Country Committees.

Supplemental Information (Q&A, Analysis, Explainer Videos, etc):

[Click here to view a separate google doc which contains:](#)

- Explainer Videos
- Amendment Analysis, Q&A
- Tips and Instructions for Using Google Documents

To access hyperlinks:

- Adobe Reader works best

Endorsements for the concept of Ranked Choice Voting:

1. "I am a strong proponent of RCV for general elections of individuals by a large (or larger than International Excom) electorate." Tom Schmid, former DA International Counsel, (Japan).
2. Quaide Williams, DPCA Voting Rep., (Germany)
3. [FairVote.org - Winners of the Nobel Prize Endorse RCV](#)
4. [FairVote.org - Scholars on Democracy, Elections, and Mathematics Endorse RCV](#)
5. [FairVote.org - National Political Leaders Endorse RCV](#)
 - a. Elizabeth Warren, Massachusetts U.S. Senator
 - b. John McCain, Former Arizona U.S. Senator
 - c. Barack Obama, Former U.S. President
 - d. Andrew Yang, Former Democratic Presidential Candidate
 - e. Jo Jorgensen, Former Libertarian Presidential Candidate
 - f. Gary Herbert, Former Governor of Utah
6. [FairVote.org - Winners of Johan Skytte Prize \(the Nobel for Political Science\) Endorse RCV](#)

Affected Sections:

- Section 3.1 (Calling of Meetings, including Electronic Meetings)
- Section 3.2 (Date and Place)
- Section 3.6 (Representation and Voting) subsection (e)
- Section 4.2 (Election) subsection (a)
- Section 4.2 (Election) subsection (c)
- Section 4.11 (Responsibilities of the Executive Committee)
- Section (6.1 The Regions)
- Section 6.2 (Regional Vice Chair)
- Section 7.2 (Election of DNC Members) subsection (a)
- Section 7.2 (Election of DNC Members) subsection (b)
- Section 8.1 (Delegate Selection)

Other sections of the charter do not have any text changed by this amendment but involve voting at Global DPCA Meetings and Regional Meetings. Thus, they would be influenced by definitions of terms such as "majority" or "vote", etc., which are related to definitions contained in "winning threshold" and "methods of voting" in the nested sections of "Section 3.6 (Representation and Voting) subsection (e)":

- Section 3.3 (Notice and Agenda) subsection (a)
- Section 5.4 (Country Committee Compliance and Filings) subsection (d)
- Section 6.4 (Regional Meetings and Communication)
- Section 7.3 (Vacancy)

Text:

WHEREAS multiple Nobel Prize Winners, Scholars on Democracy, Elections, and Mathematics, and National Political Leaders endorse Ranked Choice Voting. (see links in the Supporters section for details.)

WHEREAS Democrats Abroad's 2020 Platform (p19) supports Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) by saying: "We support all measures that create fairer election outcomes, including the National Popular Vote Compact, the elimination of caucuses in Presidential primaries, and ranked-choice voting." However Democrats Abroad's current bylaws make no specific mention of Ranked Choice Voting.

WHEREAS Ranked Choice Voting (or something similar to it) has been used successfully within Democrats Abroad, such as the 2020 AP Regional meeting and the 2020 Global DPCA meeting for the election of DNC Representatives.

WHEREAS the current bylaws do not define various terms related to voting such as "majority" "simple majority" "simple majority vote", and methods of voting.

WHEREAS There has been confusion about whether the current bylaws allow for Ranked Choice Voting

BE IT RESOLVED that the DPCA Charter will be amended to help Democrats Abroad embody the ideals it advocates by (1) making it clear that Ranked Choice Voting should be used for some elections at DPCA Meetings and Regional Meetings, (2) making it clear that Ranked Choice Voting can be used within the organization, such as at DPCA Meetings and Regional Meetings, and (3) providing some definitions for terms related to voting to reduce confusion with the following changes:

Article Three: Meetings

Section 3.1 (Calling of Meetings, including Electronic Meetings)

Meetings of the DPCA may be called by the International Chair, or by at least one-fourth (1/4th) of its voting members, or by a **simple** majority of the Executive Committee. An annual Democrats Abroad Global Meeting shall be called in the first half of each year to approve the accounts of the previous year and take any such other action as may be appropriate and, in odd-numbered years, to elect officers. If, for whatever reason, the International Chair or International Vice Chair fails to call a meeting when required to do so, then the International Secretary shall call such meeting within thirty (30) days of the date required. Except as otherwise provided in Section 3.4, meetings of the DPCA may be held exclusively by, or in conjunction, with electronic participation, provided that, at a minimum, the technology used to conduct the meeting enables simultaneous aural communication (i.e., audio conferencing capability).

Section 3.2 (Date and Place)

Upon proposal of the International Chair at a duly constituted DPCA meeting, and after having invited all Country Committees to submit non-binding bids, the date, time, and place of the annual DPCA meeting required under the previous Section shall be determined by majority [ranked choice single transferable](#) vote of the Country Committees, DPCA Officers, and DNC Members present or represented at the meeting or participating by electronic vote (see Section 3.7). The Executive Committee may vote to change the date, time, or place for reasons it deems important.

Section 3.6 (Representation and Voting)

(e) All decisions shall be taken by ~~simple~~-majority vote except where a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote is required (Sections 2.4(c), 4.2, 5.3, 6.1 and 10.1) [or where ranked choice single transferable vote is used to select multiple winners](#) or where the right to vote is not accorded to all DPCA Voting Members (Sections 4.2 and 7.2). The ~~simple~~-majority must include votes from at least one-third (1/3rd) of all Country Committees.

(i) Definitions

(1) Winning Threshold: the percent, relative number, or fixed number of the votes cast for any one candidate, issue, or item that are required to select winner(s). For this and all nested terms, the method of voting is determined separately.

(a) Majority: more than 50% of the votes cast for any one candidate, issue, or item are required to select winner(s).

• Simple Majority: see Majority. Please do not use this term in the bylaws.

• Absolute Majority: see Majority. Please do not use this term in the bylaws.

(b) Super Majority: a number that is greater than a majority. Example below:

• 2/3 Majority: more than 2/3rds of votes cast for any one candidate, issue, or item are required to select winner(s).

(c) Plurality: the highest number of votes cast for any one candidate, issue, or item is used to select a winner. The winner need not receive a majority of votes.

• Overall Majority: see Plurality. Please do not use this term in the bylaws.

• Relative Majority: see Plurality. Please do not use this term in the bylaws.

(d) Minority: a number that is less than a majority.

(e) Quota: This is the number of votes that mathematically guarantees that a candidate cannot lose. It is often calculated as: $((\text{Total votes cast})/(\text{winners to select}+1)) + 1$, with any fraction disregarded. This term or similar ones are often used with particular methods of voting such as “ranked choice single transferable vote”. When there is only one winner to select, this number will also be a “majority”. When there is more than one winner, by design, this number will be less than a “majority”.

(2) Method of Voting: As mentioned in Robert's Rules of Orders, a variety of voting methods may be used to conduct a "vote", i.e. ballot voting, voice vote, adopt by consensus, show of hands, roll call vote, etc.

(a) Ballot voting: methods of ballot voting include "select one item from a list of choices", Ranked Choice Voting, Single Transferable Vote, and Instant Runoff Voting.

- Ranked Choice Voting (RCV): a method of casting a vote where you rank the candidates instead of just picking one. A broad term that includes various specializations listed below. Some people equate this term to "single transferable vote" others equate it to "Instant Runoff Voting". Therefore when specifying how a particular vote should take place, to avoid confusion, it is preferable to use one of the terms below.

- Single Transferable Vote (STV): a type of Ranked Choice Voting that is useful for electing a group of candidates (e.g., a committee or council). Includes concepts such as transferring surplus votes and giving representation to minority groups of electors. When used to elect one candidate, it is basically the same as Instant Runoff Voting.

- Ranked Choice Single Transferable Vote (RCSTV): see Single Transferable Vote

- Instant Runoff Voting (IRV): a type of Ranked Choice Voting that is most often used for electing a single candidate. Somewhat confusingly, in the USA this type of voting is sometimes referred to as "Ranked Choice Voting".

(3) An important clarification regarding how majority and other "winning threshold" terms such as quota are calculated and may change over multiple rounds of voting: Every time a round of voting takes place the number of non abstaining valid votes cast is used to calculate what number represents a majority, a quota, or other "winning threshold" terms. A ranked choice ballot is essentially an individual's preferences for multiple rounds of voting written all at the same time. If the ranked choice ballot does not rank all choices(candidates) then that individual has essentially chosen to abstain from future rounds of voting should their ranked choice(s) be eliminated. The majority, quota, or other "winning threshold" terms will be re-calculated based on the number of people who have cast non abstaining valid votes that round. Thus, the majority (or quota) calculated on the first round of evaluating everyone's preferences may be a different number than the majority (or quota) calculated on the last round of evaluating everyone's preferences if some voters have not ranked all choices on their ballot.

(ii) Determining Method of Voting for elections and meetings:

(1) For an election or for a meeting: The Nominations and Elections Committee (NEC), or equivalent group that governs voting rules will decide what method(s) of voting to use unless specific instructions are specified in the bylaws. Such a group will also decide the particular implementation details of the chosen method(s) of voting.

(a) Notice: For elections, the NEC, or equivalent group, will include the method of voting in communications about the election and when soliciting nominations or candidates.

(2) An Instant Runoff Voting ballot is the preferred method of voting to use in the following situations: (a) none.

(3) A Ranked Choice Single Transferable Vote is the preferred method of voting to use in the following situations: (a) selecting one item (winner) from a list of options (b) selecting multiple items (winners) from a list of options.

(4) Ranked Choice Voting does not need to be used in situations where taking into consideration a voter's preferences beyond the first choice would not affect the outcome. For example: selecting one winner from two choices.

Article Four: Officers

Section 4.2 (Election)

(a) The Officers other than the Regional Vice Chairs shall be elected at the first meeting of the DPCA held in odd-numbered years, to serve for a term of two (2) years or until their successors have been elected. Election shall be by majority of the ranked choice single transferable votes cast by the DPCA, subject to the provisions of Article 3.

* * *

(d) All ranked choice single transfer vote questions shall include an additional candidate called "none of the remaining candidates are acceptable. I wish for further discussion OR to elect no one today." If such a name is too long to fit, then equivalent information shall be displayed on the ballot for voters.

(e) Access to all voters' anonymized voting data, and reports of rounds of voting that can be generated from voting software, should be available to any candidate or elector on DA's website or wiki within 10 days of the conclusion of the election.

(f) A voter or candidate may challenge the results of an election within 30 days of the election's conclusion. An election auditor who was not a candidate or voter in the election must be appointed and agreed upon by the challenger and winning candidate(s). Access to all the non-anonymized voting data and reports will be made available to the Auditor. The Auditor will report on validity of election to all interested parties and NEC in a timely matter.

Section 4.11 (Responsibilities of the Executive Committee)

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the conduct of the affairs of Democrats Abroad in accordance with policies of the DNC and the DPCA. The Executive Committee shall establish its own rules and, when convened by the International Chair or one third (1/3rd) of its members, may act in a meeting, by telephone or electronic means. The Executive Committee shall adopt a budget for Democrats Abroad prior to the first meeting of the DPCA each year. Except as provided in the following sentence, decisions taken by the Executive Committee shall be by ~~simple~~-majority vote of those members present in person or by instructed proxy given to another member of the Executive Committee or, if such vote is taken in electronic or written form, by ~~simple~~-majority of the entire Executive Committee. By a two-thirds (2/3rds) majority of the entire Executive Committee, the Executive Committee may overrule any decision or action of any Officer. [The Executive committee can choose to use ranked choice single transferable voting and shall be mindful of the definitions and suggestions about voting majorities and methods of voting contained elsewhere in the bylaws.](#)

Article Six: Regions

Section ~~6.1~~ (The Regions)

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Section 6.2 (Regional Vice Chair)

(a) Each Region shall elect a Regional Vice Chair at a meeting of the Region held in odd-numbered years. Election shall be by [ranked choice single transferable](#) ~~simple majority of the~~ votes cast by the Chairs (or Vice Chairs) of the Country Committees in the Region in attendance. Each Country Committee will be allocated one (1) vote in electing the Regional Vice Chair, to be cast by the Chair or the Vice Chair. If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair are in attendance, then the single Country Committee vote will be divided into two (2) one-half (1/2) votes. Voting shall be in person or electronically. The term of office of a Regional Vice Chair shall be for a two (2)- year period or until the election of a successor at the next Regional meeting during an odd-numbered year, provided that the election shall take place prior to the conclusion of the Global Meeting in odd-numbered years.

Article Seven: Democratic National Committee

Section 7.2 (Election of DNC Members)

Each of the six (6) elected DNC Members shall be eligible to serve in such position for no more than two (2) consecutive full terms and shall be elected for a term of four (4) years at a meeting of the DPCA to be held during the year of the National Convention, to be chosen as follows:

(a) At Regional Conventions held pursuant to a duly authorized and accepted Delegate Selection Plan, the delegates to each Regional Convention elected under the Plan shall elect one (1) DNC Member from that Region by [a ranked choice single transferable majority](#)-vote of delegates physically present;

(b) The remaining DNC Members to represent Democrats Abroad shall be elected by [a ranked choice single transferable majority](#) vote of the Democrats Abroad Convention (excluding the incumbent elected DNC Members);

[The Delegate Selection Plan shall include language equivalent to Sections 4.2 \(d\), \(e\), \(f\).](#)

The International Chair and International Vice Chair of the DPCA may not cumulate membership as *ex officio* members and as elected DNC Members. Elected DNC Members need not be DPCA Members. All Democrats Abroad DNC Members must have their principal residence abroad and their number shall be equally divided between men and women.

Article Eight: National Convention

Section 8.1 (Delegate Selection)

Delegates to the National Convention of the Democratic Party or Democratic Party Conferences shall be elected by the members of Democrats Abroad pursuant to procedures to be established by the DPCA in accordance with the Delegate Selection Rules and Regulations of the Democratic Party of the United States of America and such other rules, regulations, and procedures adopted by the DNC. [If not prohibited by the DNC, a ranked choice single transferable vote should be used to elect delegates.](#)