

## Measure 2-100

### **Ballot Title**

#### **Caption (10 words)**

Amends County Charter to Elect Officials Using Ranked Choice Voting

#### **Question (20 words)**

Should County Charter be amended to elect countywide officials by ranking candidates in order of preference using ranked choice voting?

#### **Summary (175 words)**

The measure would amend the Benton County Charter to specify that all elected officers of the County be elected by a process known as ranked choice voting, also known as instant runoff voting or the alternative vote. Currently, the Benton County Commissioners and Benton County Sheriff are the only elected County officers.

Ranked choice voting would allow voters to rank candidates in order of preference, using those rankings to elect candidates. The measure would provide that ranked choice voting be used for general and special elections; not for primaries.

The measure would require the County to enact an ordinance implementing the ranked choice voting process no later than 120 days prior to the date of the first election using ranked choice voting.

Ranked choice voting would be implemented only after the County has received up to \$200,000 from the State of Oregon, or other sources, for the costs of implementation. Ranked choice voting would be used during the first election at least twelve months after funding has been received.

## Summary

This measure would implement Ranked Choice Voting for elected positions in Benton County government. Ranked choice voting is an elections system that would give voters the ability to rank candidates in order of preference; 1, 2, 3, and so on. If no candidate receives a majority (more than fifty percent) of first choice votes, voters with a preferred candidate who receives the fewest votes, will have their vote automatically recast for their second choice candidate. This process will repeat until one candidate receives a majority of votes cast.

## Current Election Law

Currently in Benton County, the candidate who receives the most votes wins the election. Under the current system, there is no requirement that a candidate receive a majority of votes cast to be elected. This means candidates could be elected to office with less than fifty percent of the votes cast in that contest. This may occur when more than two candidates run for the same office and split the votes among them; potentially resulting in a successful candidate receiving less than a majority of the votes cast.

## How Ranked Choice Voting Works

Ranked Choice Voting is a system that gives voters the ability to rank candidates in order of preference. If no first choice candidate receives more than fifty percent of the votes, the candidate who receives the fewest first choice votes is eliminated from the race. If a voter's first choice candidate is eliminated, the voter's ballot is then instantly recast for the voter's second choice in the ranked choice contest. This process repeats until one candidate receives more than fifty percent of the votes cast. A candidate must have a majority, greater than fifty percent, of the votes cast to be elected to county office under this system.

If passed and funded, this Benton County Charter amendment measure, would require Ranked Choice Voting to be used only to elect countywide officials during General and Special Elections. Ranked Choice Voting would not be used during party primaries. Currently, the only countywide elected offices are the County Commissioners and the County Sheriff.

## Implementation

This measure does not require the county to spend any money to implement Ranked Choice Voting. If the measure is enacted, the county will request up to \$200,000 from the state or other sources within 60 days of the election date, to educate voters and implement the system. With state-approved modifications, the county's current vote tabulation equipment can be adapted to handle Ranked Choice Voting contests. This system would only be implemented at the first general election that is held twelve months or more past the date when funding is secured.

**FILED**

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