

## Multnomah County Ballot Measure 26-232

**Official Title:** Amends Charter: County officials elected using ranked choice voting; runoff elections eliminated.

**Question:** Should elections for County offices give voters option of ranking candidates in preferred order, with instant-runoff vote-counting process determining results?

**Financial Impact:** Unclear

**Probable Results of “Yes” Vote:** By 2026, Multnomah County officers would be elected using instant runoff ranked choice voting (voters rank candidates by preference).

**Probable Results of “No” Vote:** The County voting system would not change.

**Background:** Instant runoff ranked choice voting, commonly called “ranked choice voting,” and other ranked ballot voting methods (for example, STAR voting) have become increasingly popular and are currently being used in 55 cities across the country in recent elections, according to the ranked choice voting advocacy group FairVote. Benton County, Oregon, held its first ranked-choice election in 2020.

As part of a ballot measure going to voters this November, the City of Portland Charter Review Commission has also recommended that a ranked choice voting system be used to elect Portland City officials.

Ranked-choice voting is an election method in which voters rank candidates for an office in order of preference, and ballots are counted in rounds. Any candidate with more than 50 percent of first-choice votes is elected. However, if no candidate receives a majority of the vote in the initial round of counting, ballots are counted in subsequent rounds. In those subsequent rounds, candidates keep the number of votes counted for them in the first and any prior round that already occurred. The candidate having the fewest votes in each round is eliminated, and ballots that had been counted as votes for the eliminated candidate are instead counted as votes for the candidate who is ranked next on those ballots. That process of eliminating candidates and transferring votes to the next-ranked candidates repeats until a candidate has a majority of the vote and is elected. Because the instant runoff ranked choice voting method elects a majority candidate in a single election, no primary elections would be necessary.

**Summary of Measure:** The measure requires that by 2026, instant runoff ranked choice voting will be used to elect Multnomah County officers in general or special elections. Candidates with more than 50 percent of first-choice votes are elected. If no candidate receives a majority, ballots are counted in subsequent rounds: candidates retain votes from prior rounds; the candidate with fewest votes is eliminated each round; votes for the eliminated candidate transfer to the candidate ranked next on those ballots. This process repeats until the candidate with the majority is elected.

### Supporters Say:

- Ranked choice voting promotes more candidate coalition building and greater diversity of candidates and discourages negative campaigning.
- Ranked choice voting is used successfully worldwide and in the United States. Exit polls show that voters understand how to use it..
- Ranked choice voting eliminates the need for primaries or runoffs, thus saving money.

### Opponents Say:

- Ranked choice voting is confusing.
- Ranked choice voting creates the risk of “strategic voting,” where small groups can vote together in blocks to influence election outcomes.