

**Subject:** December 2018 / January 2019 Newsletter  
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## **DECEMBER 2018 / JANUARY 2019 NEWSLETTER**

*If this is your first newsletter, and you are surprised to receive it, please see the President's Letter in the August 2018 newsletter at <https://cfer.org/newsletter/vfd2018q3/index.php> for an explanation.*

*[Read this newsletter as a PDF.](#)*

*For all the back issues, go to <https://cfer.org/newsletter/>.*

Happy New Year, everyone! And what better way to celebrate the new year than a newsletter from Californians for Electoral Reform?

### **A GREAT YEAR FOR SERIOUS ELECTION REFORM**



2018 was a great year for the movement for RCV and PR.

The huge win in Maine -- where RCV was used statewide with great success -- is historical and is reverberating around the country. U.S. congressional seats were decided for the first time in U.S. history using RCV elections. See this article for more: [USA Today Article on Maine's Success](#). (*Fun facts on Maine's election: opponents of RCV and parts of the media said that less than 50% of the voters would rank their ballots, and it would cost the state \$1,500,000. In fact, 87% of the voters ranked their ballots, and the additional cost was \$100,000.*)

\* Santa Fe used RCV for the first time, very successfully. See [Sante Fe's RCV Election](#).

\* Memphis voters reaffirmed RCV. It will now likely be used in 2019 for the first time in Tennessee.

See [Memphis Voters Defend Election Reform](#).

\* Nationally, five cities acted to use RCV in their next elections, and six Utah cities committed to using it in 2019 (although they could change their mind before April). If all 6 were to use RCV, that would double the number of cities using RCV from the current number of 11.

\* The four Bay Area cities using ranked choice voting had very smooth and successful elections, and their next ones will be with a ballot allowing up to 10 rankings instead of a limit of 3 rankings. *More San Francisco voters cast ballots for mayor with RCV than for governor or senate without RCV in the June elections.*

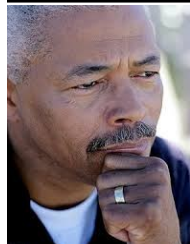
\* Fairvote held a hugely successful RCV Activist Summit in Oakland (see below), and many other regional summits were held around the country.

\* The Fair Representation Act was introduced in the House of Representatives, got some great press, spurred education efforts, and began to gain some momentum. It will be reintroduced in the next session of congress.

\* The PR/IRV movement got more and more good press and endorsements, including the New York Times, conservative columnist David Brooks, and many others. The New York Times editorials on RCV in June and backing the Fair Representation Act in November each was a full page. Other papers editorially backing RCV this year included the Boston Globe, Washington Post, Baltimore Sun, and the Economist.

All told, it was a fantastic year!

## **ELECTORAL REFORM QUIZ**



How many countries use a form of Proportional Representation for their national legislatures?

- A. 136
- B. 120
- C. 103
- D. 94
- E. 74

Highlight the white space after the colon for the answer: The answer is D.

Source: [Wikipedia article on Proportional Representation](#)

## **ELECTORAL REFORM SUMMIT HELD IN CALIFORNIA**



Fairvote California and the national Fairvote held a West Coast RCV Activist Summit December 8th and 9th in Oakland. It was a tremendous success, with over 100 activists showing up to learn how to organize, how to educate about RCV and PR, how to have an effective digital strategy, etc. In addition, there were speakers and guests at the summit and reception like congresswoman Barbara Lee, Oakland mayor Libby Shaaf, council-members, school board members, and governmental election staff people. People came from all over California, and about 20 people came from out of state. Almost half the attendees were women, and there were lots of Latino and Asian participants.

Very special for CfER was the love shown for our group, and new activists who joined at the Summit. Our own Steve Chessin and Paula Lee were recognized with Champions of Democracy awards for lifetime achievement for their many years of hard and effective work for PR and IRV.

Overall it was a tremendous boost for the movement in California. Thanks Fairvote, and thanks to everyone that was able to attend.

### **PR ENDORSED BY THE NY TIMES!**

# The New York Times

The New York Times had previously endorsed Rank Choice Voting. This time, they endorsed proportional representation (although they didn't call it that).

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/11/10/opinion/house-representatives-size-multi-member.html>

### **PRESIDENT'S LETTER**



First, my apologies for the lateness of this newsletter; I was the bottleneck. There's a lot of good content in it.

Second, Happy New Year! We hope to see a bill introduced this year that would allow general law cities the same right to use ranked choice voting that charter cities have, similar to the one that we

had in 2016. (If at first you don't succeed, ....)

Finally, if you are also a member of the League of Women Voters, you have an opportunity to support a concurrence statement that will be considered by all local Leagues in California in the next few months.

Please watch for your local League's program planning meeting date and attend to support the proposal to "Support election methods at each level of government that encourage participation, are verifiable and auditable, and enhance representation for all voters."

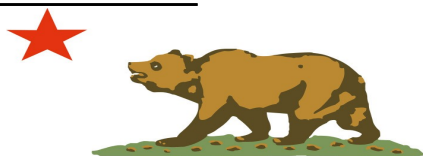
If you aren't a member of the League, but know someone who is, you can tell them about the proposal and ask them to attend their local League's program planning meeting to support it.

If you have any questions, or would like more information on the concurrence statement, contact Paula Lee, LWV Sacramento County, at [paula.lee@comcast.net](mailto:paula.lee@comcast.net).

Thanks,

--Steve Chessin, President

## **WHO ARE WE?**



**CALIFORNIANS FOR**

**ELECTORAL REFORM**

Californians for Electoral Reform has been working for Proportional Representation and Ranked Choice Voting for over 20 years, and we continue to work on these issues actively. We are an action-oriented group, with chapters and contacts around the state, working in the State Legislature, and working in many local communities, promoting and educating about PR and RCV.

We have led successful campaigns for RCV in San Leandro, Oakland, San Francisco, and Berkeley, and spoken to thousands of people. RCV is now much more well known than it was 20 years ago, and is being seriously considered in several jurisdictions around the state. We have twice got legislation through both houses of the legislature and to the governor's desk. We are well known in Sacramento and in electoral reform circles, and have a lot of respect in Sacramento and statewide.

[JOIN US!](#) You can join for free. You can also send in a little (or a lot of) money to help the movement if you can. If you have time and energy you can get involved in a campaign or education work. If a friend sent you this newsletter, and you want to get our quarterly newsletter and monthly updates, you can do that too, at no cost. [Click here to join the movement for PR and IRV!](#)

## **NEXT MONTH**



In February, we'll be bringing you a brief update on electoral reform. 👍

-- CfER Staff

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