
Appendix 4: About the author

Since 1999, Caleb Kleppner has been working on ranked choice voting in both public and private elections. He has assisted with the implementation of instant runoff voting in San Francisco and Burlington, and administered both traditional and ranked choice elections for private organizations ranging from small student elections to board elections for multinational firms.

As an employee of FairVote (then the Center for Voting and Democracy) from 1999 to 2003 in San Francisco, the author and his colleague Steven Hill wrote the instant runoff voting charter amendment that was eventually adopted by the voters in 2002. He also led the campaign to pass the charter amendment and worked to ensure a smooth implementation of the new system in the intervening period before the first IRV elections in November 2004. Implementing IRV in San Francisco took two and a half years and required much work because the local election officials, the vendor (Election Systems and Software, or ES&S), state election officials, state consultants and federal Independent Testing Authorities (ITA's) had little or no experience with ranked choice voting methods.

As representatives of the organization that led the effort for instant runoff voting in San Francisco (and nationally) for many years, Hill and Kleppner worked with ES&S, local and state election officials, state consultants and the federal ITA's to facilitate communication among agencies, resolve policy questions, solicit public input on key issues and establish the protocols for testing a ranked choice voting system. The San Francisco charter laid out the main details for administering an instant runoff election, but it did not detail ballot design, voter education, result reporting, pollworker training, state and federal testing, or procedures for logic and accuracy testing and manual recounts. There was little statutory or regulatory guidance for these matters. Instead, the process of implementation had to be guided by the spirit and intent of the charter, by the experience of places that have used ranked choice methods for many years (including Cambridge (MA), Australia, Ireland and the United Kingdom) and by common sense.

Hill and Kleppner worked as a clearinghouse for the implementation process, writing up policy details and alternatives, sharing information among all parties, gathering public input on ballot design and voter education and laying most of the test protocols that were eventually used in the state and federal testing of the voting system.

As Election Day 2004 approached, Hill and Kleppner arranged funding for an exit poll by the Public Research Institute at San Francisco State University. This poll looked at the voter experience with and attitudes toward IRV. They also supervised a team of volunteers to observe polling places and report problems to election officials, who in turn mobilized field deputies to address these problems. Finally, they coordinated analysis of election data, polling data and demographic data to answer key questions about the use of instant runoff voting in San Francisco.

Kleppner left FairVote in 2003 to pursue opportunities in consulting and private election administration. In this work, along with a colleague, Terrill Bouricius, he in 2005 received a contract to design Burlington, Vermont's IRV voter education program, assist with the testing of voting equipment and software and develop IRV-specific training for poll workers. A University of Vermont professor conducted an exit poll in Burlington's first IRV election and Burlington made publicly available all of the ballot images along with the actual IRV tallying software and code.

Kleppner administered the first quasi-public IRV election in San Francisco when over 7,500

high school students elected a student representative to the Board of Education in 2004, he served as the assistant national election supervisor for the Pacifica Foundation's first ever elections, which involved ten ranked choice elections in five cities with almost 100,000 eligible members, and he has conducted elections for numerous private sector clients, including unions, associations, cooperatives and homeowner associations.

Kleppner currently conducts public and private sector elections for TrueBallot, Inc, a private election services company based in Bethesda, Maryland.

Kleppner drafted this report under contract to FairVote.