

Arguments in support or opposition of the proposed laws are the opinions of the authors

## Argument Against Measure E

### **There's a Better Way than District Elections: Ranked Choice Voting**

In 2020, the Santa Cruz City Council chose to avoid a lawsuit under the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) by proposing district elections. The CVRA aims to enable minority groups to be represented in city councils. Our traditional at-large (city-wide) voting method seems to block this possibility as illustrated by the fact that all our existing councilmembers were elected by only 46% of all the votes cast – 54% are “wasted” because not represented in the Council. In our traditional system, as well as in district elections, you only have one vote, which is wasted if your candidate doesn't win. The California Attorney General has pointed the way to a more democratic solution than district elections: Proportional Ranked Choice Voting.

Ranked Choice Voting is used in dozens of cities, including San Francisco, Berkeley, New York, Minneapolis, and Santa Fe. In Ranked Choice Voting, each citizen can rank any number of candidates as either first, second, third, etc. The more candidates you rank, the greater the probability that your vote will help elect a candidate you favor. Diversity is genuinely enabled by counting these preferences so the resulting Council would represent 88% of all the citizens voting (not 46% as at present). The mayor could be the councilmember with most votes.

When voters don't feel represented, it increases anti-government sentiment and polarization.

When compared with the proposed alternative, Ranked Choice Voting:

- is more democratic and less expensive.
- avoids the expensive process of drawing the boundaries for districts, avoiding gerrymandering.
- better satisfies the aim of the CVRA to reduce vote “dilution.”

The City Council can implement Ranked Choice Voting by a simple majority vote.

**Vote No on Measure E so Ranked Choice Voting will remain an option.**

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