

MEASURE
IMPARTIAL ANALYSIS BY CITY ATTORNEY JUL 27 PM 1:13

City of Irvine
Measure Directing the use of Ranked Choice Voting for City Council Member and
Mayoral Elections After January 1, 2028

The City Council of the City of Irvine has placed a measure before the voters that would amend the Irvine Municipal Code to use ranked choice voting (RCV) for City Council member and mayoral elections after January 1, 2028, if certain technical and financial conditions are satisfied.

The City of Irvine (City) currently uses a plurality voting system for City Council member and mayoral elections. Under that system, voters vote for only one candidate and the person receiving the most votes wins the election even if they do not receive a majority of the votes.

In RCV elections, voters rank their choices in order of preference, such as first, second, third, and so on. If no candidate wins a majority of first-place votes, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and ballots ranking that candidate are transferred to the next-ranked continuing candidate. This process repeats until one candidate secures a majority of the votes counted in that round.

Under the proposed measure, the City would transition to RCV after January 1, 2028, once all of the following conditions are satisfied:

- The available voting equipment can feasibly accommodate RCV;
- Transitioning to RCV will not prevent the consolidation of City elections with elections conducted by the County of Orange; and
- The additional cost for an RCV election is not more than 0.23% of the City's general fund budget for the fiscal year during which the proposed RCV election would be held (RCV Cost Cap). For reference, 0.23% of the City's fiscal year 2026-2027 general fund budget of approximately \$312.1 million is approximately \$717,790. However, the actual RCV Cost Cap would be calculated using the general fund budget for the fiscal year in which the proposed RCV election would be held.

When the above conditions are met and the City transitions to RCV, the City will continue to conduct elections by RCV at every City Council member and mayoral election unless the voters choose another voting system.

The proposed measure requires that RCV ballots allow the ranking of a minimum of five candidates, that write-in candidates be permitted, and that voters receive specific instructions regarding RCV. The proposed measure also establishes procedures for tabulating votes, resolving ties, resolving voting mistakes (e.g., skipping a ranking, or giving the same ranking to more than one candidate), conducting a manual vote tally, and providing reports for public review. The proposed measure authorizes the City Clerk to change those procedures if (1) the voting equipment will not feasibly accommodate the voting procedures, or (2) the Secretary of State changes its

current RCV guidelines and adopts new guidelines that can be accommodated by the voting equipment.

A “Yes” vote is in favor of adopting the measure and transitioning to RCV elections after January 1, 2028, if the specified technical and financial conditions are met.

A “No” vote is against adopting the measure.

If a majority of voters vote “Yes,” then this measure will take effect ten (10) days after election results are declared by the City Council.

Dated: July 27, 2026



Jeffrey Melching, City Attorney

The above statement is an impartial analysis of the measure. If you would like to read the full text of the proposed measure, you may find it on the City’s website at cityofirvine.org/election, or call the City Clerk at (949) 724-6205 and a copy will be sent at no cost to you.