

Raleigh City Council Tables Instant Runoff Voting Proposal

Council Members cite concerns about voter disenfranchisement, complexity, lack of transparency, cites value of one-on-one candidate runoffs.

On April 3, 2007 in the Raleigh City Council chambers, 6 out of the 8 council members expressed concerns about Instant Run-off Voting (aka Ranked Choice Voting). There was obviously no support for bringing IRV to Raleigh for the upcoming City of Raleigh elections. The motion was tabled meaning that no action would be taken to implement IRV.

Below are transcripts of the meeting that I prepared from the video of the meeting.

Council member Dr. James P. West:

"I indicated that I have some concerns about this especially in disenfranchises certain segment of voters.. especially those of lower socio economic level , I think we have had some examples of that in Florida. There's a perception of trust, and I think we should make sure that the democratic process and try to make sure that everybody participates.

A vote-less people is a hopeless people, what we don't want in this great city

I have met with some elected officials, I also had an informal conversation with our WAC representatives, as well as a representative of the Wake County Voters Coalition, without going into a whole lot of detail, I could give you a litany of reasons on why this thing is wrong

But when we weigh on one side of the ledger. Other, especially some people's skepticism, sometimes they don't even look on the other side of the ballot,..

My sixth sense and what I can pick up from the people that I represent is that this is not the time, educate people well in advance, I just cannot support it at this time. Dr. West"

Council member Philip Isley:

"I agree with Dr. West, I'm not going to support it. It feels to me to be a little un-American frankly..." You don't have the opportunity to go to the ballot for your candidate twice.

If someone does want to support a particular candidate, and..

..I just see a great chance for a lot of confusion to exist. it's expensive obviously to have a runoff election, that's what we have in place...

Frankly I think it's odd enough to have odd year elections, but to throw in this monkey wrench into that election cycle in my mind, may actually decrease how many people come out to vote...

I likewise don't think we are ready for this thereby am probably voting against it."

Council member Thomas Crowder:

"I expressed concerns at our last meeting, I still have those concerns...

Just like blackjack in Las Vegas, we are going to see a lot of game-men's-ship trying figure out the odds on putting people into office, and similar concerns, that um Mr. Isley and Mr. West expressed as well.

I thought of a compromise, we could put just the mayoral up, but that means Mr. Mayor that we would have to put up three other people against you as well.

Maybe we need to look at just one race as a pilot type process .rather than opening up the whole process in the future.."

Council member Joyce Kekas:

"I agree with all three another thing I'd like to see is if you are going to do pilot programs.. then probably do them in a smaller location, not so much the capitol city. I think it's un-American, I will vote against it."

Council member Tommy Craven:

"to me this is something that would certainly serve the convenience of the board of elections, and maybe save the city a little money, but it's certainly not in the best interest of the voting public."

Council member Russ Stephenson:

"I actually ran into the chair of the Wake BOE and had a discussion, expressed my concerns, really echoing concerns that Mr. West had, so we sat down and scratched out a little test ballot, and said - just looking at my race, an at my race, a large race, the most complicated race, our conversation went on for some time, and based on the length of our discussion, it took us this long- and you're the expert - to figure this out, then I'm not sure this is really the way to go. "

(April 3, 2007 Raleigh City Council Meeting on video - If you go to the link,

http://raleigh.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=2 click on the button that says video by that date* -

City Council	April 3, 2007	02h 19m	Agenda	Video
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**there is a drop down button that allows you to jump to the section specifically where they talk about IRV.)*