

From: Peggy Leech
Sent: Sunday, February 24, 2019 4:40 PM
To: council@broomfieldcitycouncil.org
Cc: vmteam@lwvbc.org
Subject: RCV and Ward Boundaries: an LWV offer

Dear Broomfield City Council Members,

Broomfield is considering some exciting electoral changes. At the LWV of Colorado Legislative Conference in January 2019, we heard that adoption of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) may be on the ballot in Broomfield this fall. We also read in the local paper that Broomfield City Council plans “to address an imbalance of population among wards” by redrawing ward boundaries ahead of the normal 10-year schedule.

Currently, Broomfield elects a total of 10 city council members, plus a mayor. Every two years Broomfield elects 5 city council members, one per ward, for four-year terms.

One commonly discussed disadvantage of wards is the possibility of gerrymandering (from the point of view of the electorate) or the charge of gerrymandering (from the point of view of Broomfield administration). Councilman Mike Shelton alluded to such problems when explaining that Broomfield City Council plans to wait until after the 2019 election to implement changes in order to avoid any negative perceptions from the process.

We would like to suggest that you consider another approach: proportional representation. Broomfield could continue to elect 5 city council members every two years, but elect the members citywide using a voting method that promotes proportional representation such as multi-winner RCV, cumulative voting or multi-winner approval voting.

Boundary disputes disappear with citywide elections, and the city can free up time for other civic issues. Wards provide geographical representation, but many more characteristics of Broomfield’s electorate may be ignored. Proportional representation could give sizeable minorities, including a given neighborhood, a voice on the Broomfield City Council.

Celeste Landry of our Voting Methods Team spoke at your Sept 18, 2018 study session after County Clerk Jim Candelarie’s presentation on RCV in which he referenced our League’s work. Ms Landry noted that our League position (below) highlights proportional representation and suggested that, as the Broomfield City Council considers RCV, the council may want, in tandem, to consider going from single-winner wards to citywide multi-winner contests in order to promote proportional representation.

Broomfield is on the cusp of important changes. We would welcome being resources and partners as you embark on your adventure. Please let us know if you would like our Voting Methods Team to provide a study session on proportional representation. The team can be contacted at: vmteam@lwvbc.org.

Sincerely,
Peggy Leech, President

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Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.

VOTING METHODS Position LWV of Colorado (adopted 2017)

The League supports authorizing and implementing alternatives to plurality voting that allow people to express their preferences more effectively. The League supports gaining on-the-ground experience with alternative voting methods in order to ascertain whether a voting method results in outcomes that match voters' preferences as recorded on their ballots. The League supports voting methods that can improve the election experience, that encourage honest voting rather than tactical* voting, and that consider ease of implementation.*

Considerations:

- Some voting methods are intended for single-winner elections, others for multi-winner elections. It is important that the intended use of a voting method match its actual application. Multi-winner voting methods can promote proportional representation which fosters diversity of our elected officials.*
- Election officials should conduct post-election analysis to evaluate the voters' usage of the voting method and the election's reflection of voters' stated preferences. There should be sufficient data transparency – for example, access to ballot records in anonymous form – for an independent analysis to be conducted by other interested groups.*

**A voting method encourages "honest" voting when it allows voters to meaningfully support all their preferred candidates, rather than leading them to either not support their favorite or "tactically" indicate a higher preference for a candidate who is not their favorite.*