

DEMOCRACY AND HEALTH EQUITY

...

How the way we elect our leaders shapes policy

Maria Perez, MPH
Democracy in Action

What to expect today

- Upstream thinking
- Be curious
- Be reflective
- Ask questions

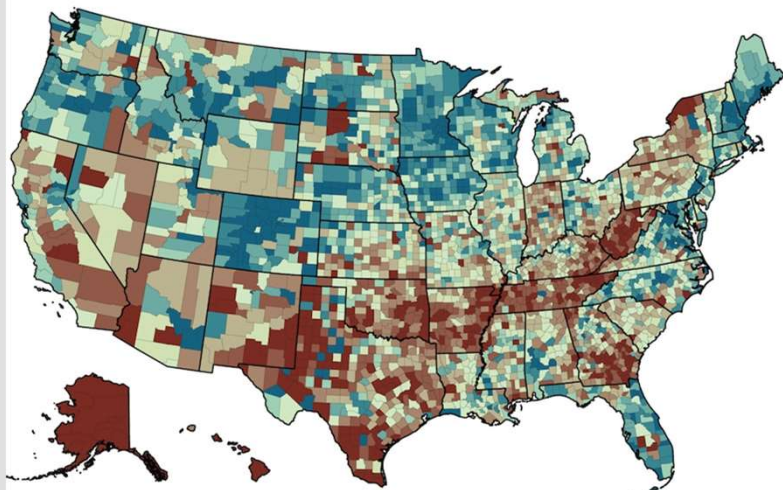
Upstream Thinking

The backbone of Public Health



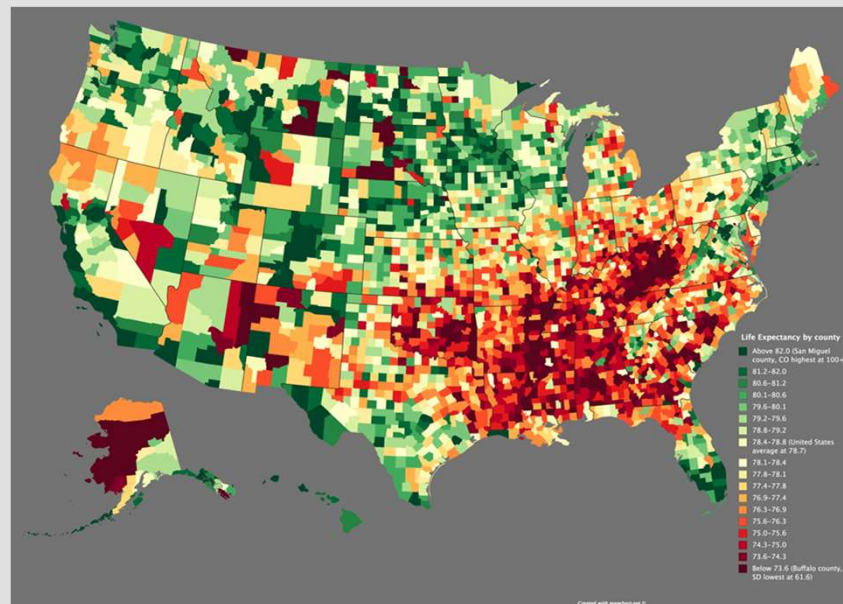
Spoiler... It is ultimately our elected officials

Voter turnout in 2016 (votes cast as share of citizen voting age population)



Voter Turnout

Life Expectancy



THE COST OF CASTING A VOTE

- Voter registration restrictions
- Voter list purges
- Bans on early voting
- Bans on absentee voting
- Voting ID
- Felon disenfranchisement
- Fewer voting machines in poorer precincts

BUT... barriers to the ballot do not end with overt voter suppression.

Consider:

VALUE OF THE INDIVIDUAL VOTE

- Do people feel like their vote counts?
- Lack of competitive elections
- Voting for the “lesser of two evils”

THE COST OF ELIGIBILITY for candidates

- How hard is it to get on the ballot?
- What does it take to win?
- Will I be splitting the vote?

THIS ALL HAS TO DO WITH HOW WE
ELECT OUR OFFICIALS

Let's talk about how we currently elect our officials

First past the post - whichever candidate has the most votes, wins

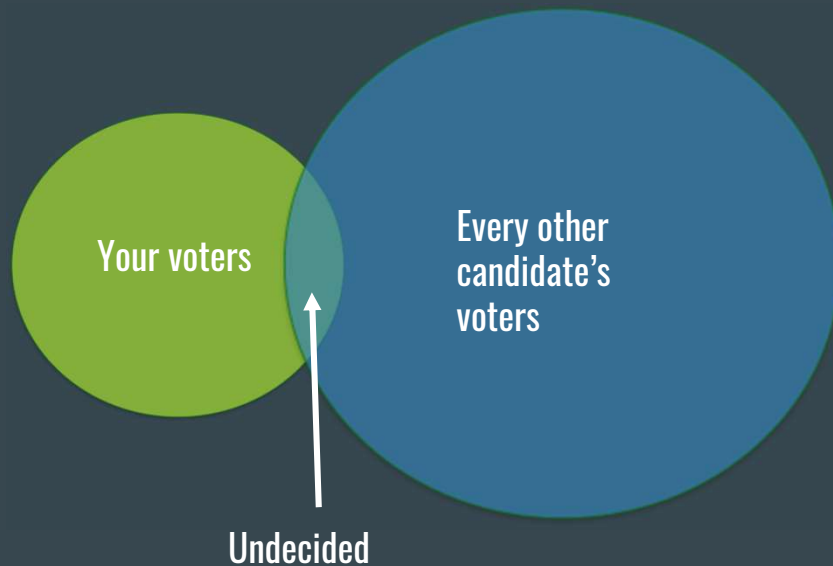
Seems fair, right? BUT....



Let's say we have a race with five candidates, the winner is elected with 33% of the vote. This means 67% of the voters preferred somebody else!

Does this seem fair?

Let's look into it a little deeper



Current campaign logic results in...

- A lack of engagement with voters
- Negative campaigning
- Split votes

And this results in elected officials....

- Only being responsive to their base
- Having no incentive to collaborate
- Finding it extremely difficult to pass good, bold policies

Political Deadlock



You can't win together if
you don't work together.

Nick Saban

 quoteoftheday

Who Pays the Price?

OUR MOST VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES!



What if we had a political process that...

- Gives voters more choice and more power?
- Brought more people in?
- Incentivized positive campaigns?
- Incentivized working in coalition?
- Welcomed diverse voices at the decision making table?
- Ensured elected officials have the support of the majority of the voters?

THE GOOD NEWS: We CAN do This a Different Way

There is no silver bullet, but
RANKED CHOICE VOTING
is an important step towards
improving the health of our
democracy



Let's see how it works



VOTE DIFFERENT SANTA FE!
our new ranked choice ballot

	1 st CHOICE	2 nd CHOICE	3 rd CHOICE	4 th CHOICE	5 th CHOICE
Betty Bear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Felix Fox	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Lucinda Lizard	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Roberto Rabbit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diego Deer	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



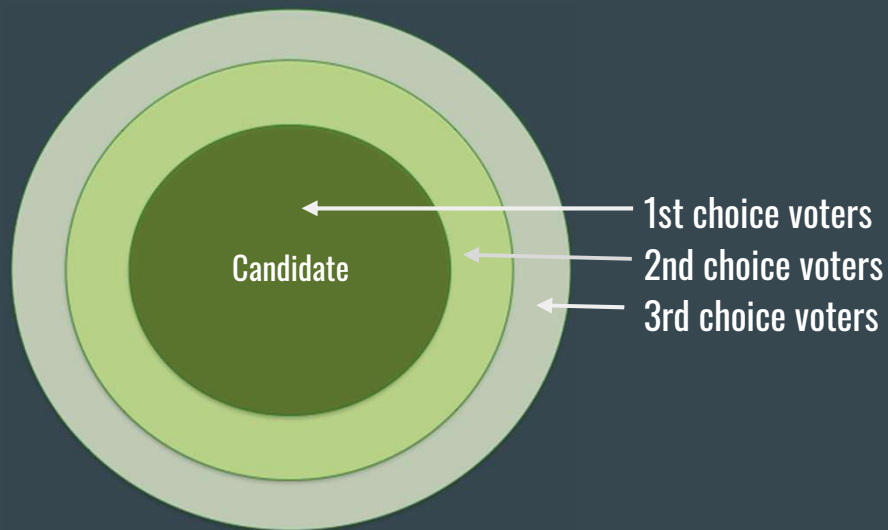
- Voters rank all candidates in order of preference
- You rank as your first choice the candidate you love
- You rank as your second choice the candidate you like
- You rank as your third choice the candidate you are ok with...

Let's see how it works



- All 1st choice votes are counted
- If a candidate has a majority, they win!
- If not, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated
- The voters who preferred that candidate have their vote instantly go to their next choice
- The process repeats until there is a majority winner!

How Does This Change Things?



In order to win...

- Candidates need to reach out beyond their base
- Positive campaigning
- Diverse and non-traditional candidates
- Increased civic engagement
- No split votes

And once elected...

- Accountable to the broad majority
- Incentivized coalition work



Our Revolution Twin Cities Endorsed and Approved Candidates:



WARD 4:

*Phillippe Cunningham



*Stephanie Gasca

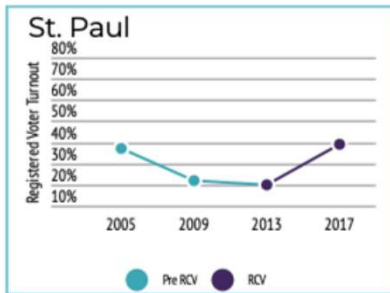
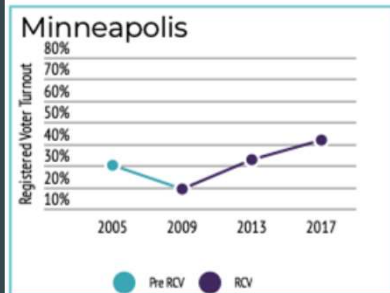
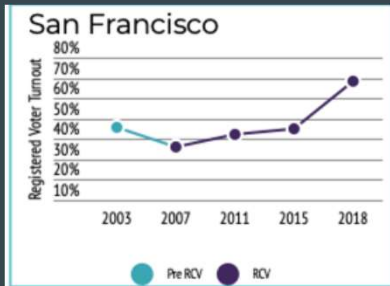


Teachers, Nurses, Tenants, The Sierra Club,
and the Democratic Party agree:

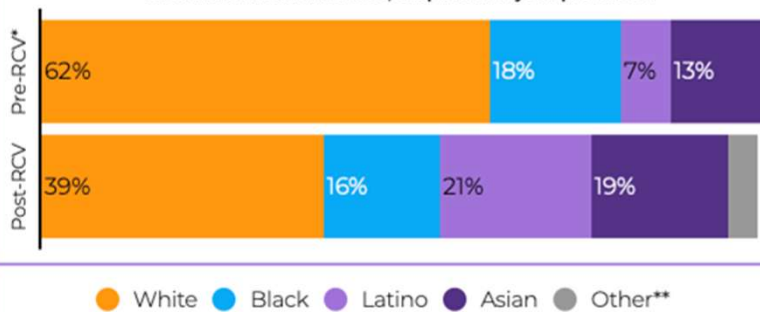
MARK LENO & JANE KIM

OUR TOP TWO CHOICES FOR MAYOR





In the four Bay Area cities that use RCV (San Francisco, San Leandro, Oakland and Berkeley), candidates of color have won 62% of RCV races, compared to only 38% prior to RCV.



Benefits of RCV

- More positive campaigns, grounded in policy
- Increased voter turnout
- More diverse governing bodies that better reflect the community

Minneapolis City Council

Before RCV (2009) 93% white

Today
61% white



Las Cruces City Council

Before RCV (2017) 43% white, 43% Latino
71%

over 45, 71% male

Today
white, 14%
71% Latino

over 45, 43% male



Political breakthrough



Who Benefits?

OUR MOST VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES!



Some examples of community health priorities in places that have
Ranked Choice Voting.

In Main- Medicaid expansion

In Minneapolis- Shift from minimum wage to living wage
Paid sick leave

In San Francisco- Closing down of Juvenile Hall
Ended cash bail

New Mexico state law allows any municipality to have Ranked Choice Voting.

As of now, only Santa Fe and Las Cruces have opted for this election reform.

Since adopting RCV, both governing bodies are now:

- Younger
- More diverse
- Have more gender parity

QUESTIONS?

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