

As an elected member of the city of Riverside, I am writing today to urge you to vote against Senate Bill 137.

Ranked choice voting provides our citizens with an easy way to express their preferences, allowing them to rank their choices, particularly in races when we are electing 4 members to the city council. These races are at-large and non-partisan, and our citizens have expressed how difficult it can be to feel confident that they are voting in such a way that their choice will matter across such a large field. Ranked choice voting can provide this confidence.

In a recent election, we had four newly engaged citizens take out petitions to run for office against 3 incumbents and one open seat. In the end, only one of those citizens turned in their petitions. In my opinion, this was a direct result of the negative campaigning undertaken by members of the community, because they felt it was the only way they had to express a real preference and affect the election. Ranked choice voting would discourage negative campaigning in a community such as ours. Winners of the election would need to gain a true majority support amongst all the candidates.

Our mayor was elected with an outright majority and I have seen first-hand how much better we as an elected body can operate under leadership who has the expressed confidence of the majority of the voters. I want that for all our city's elected officials.

Please consider the impact of this decision on the well-being of communities such as ours. Allow us to be better representatives to our constituents and stewards of democracy. Allow our voters a chance to decide whether ranked choice voting is right for them. Once again, I urge you to vote no against this bill.