



**Written Testimony of Jacqueline Doyer
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Senate Bill 63—Proponent
Ohio Senate General Government Committee
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Chair Roegner, Vice-Chair Gavarone, Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on Senate Bill 63 to ban ranked-choice voting. My name is Jacqueline Doyer, legal policy director for the Honest Elections Project, a nonprofit group founded on the principle that every American has the right to vote in free, fair, and secure elections.

SB 63 is crucial safeguard for Ohio elections. Banning the complicated scheme known as ranked-choice voting will ensure that Ohio elections are transparent, efficient, and accessible for every voter.

Thirteen states have already banned RCV. In 2024, 70% of [Missouri](#) voters approved a constitutional ban on RCV. In fact, the 2024 election reflected a tidal wave of public opposition to RCV. Voters in [six states](#)—Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, and Oregon—overwhelmingly rejected ballot measures aimed at bringing RCV to their elections. The public consensus is clear: Ranked-choice voting has no place in American elections.

It is easy to see why Americans feel this way.

RCV is corrosive to public trust in elections. No matter how it is branded—“Final Five,” “Instant-runoff,” proportional representation—RCV is a scheme aimed at ending the American tradition of “one person, one vote.” Instead, voters are asked to rank candidates by order of preference. Winners are computed through a series of elimination rounds. If no one wins a majority of the first-place vote, the candidate with the least first-place votes is eliminated and ballots are redistributed to each voter’s next highest pick. This repeats until a candidate gets a majority of the *remaining* votes. A significant issue and byproduct of this process is the problem of so-called “exhausted” ballots. If a voter does not rank every available candidate and if their choices are eliminated before a final winner is computed, the ballot is “exhausted.” These ballots are eliminated from the denominator – creating or manufacturing majority winners.

RCV makes the voting process more complicated and enormous effort must be put into reeducating the public about how to vote. [New York City](#) spent \$15 million to teach people how to vote in an RCV election, while [Maine](#) was forced to produce a 19-page guide for voters.

RCV makes voting needlessly time-consuming and burdensome in two key ways. First, voters must study the platforms of numerous candidates for each office, including many who are fringe or otherwise unelectable. Second, they must decide which candidates to rank, and the order in which to rank them, for every RCV race on a ballot. One [MIT](#) study found that filling out a ballot takes 12 seconds longer per candidate compared to typical plurality elections. In a “Final Five”-style system, RCV adds a full minute per race. In other words, if RCV advocates succeed



in replacing federal, state, and local elections with ranked-choice voting, the time it takes to vote could easily double, risking long lines, voter fatigue in down-ballot races, and potentially deterring people from voting altogether.

Another problem with RCV is the complicated and opaque nature of this type of voting. It is possible for tabulation mistakes to go undetected. That's what happened in Oakland, California in 2022. Tabulators mistakenly eliminated hundreds of votes and certified the wrong [winner](#) in a school board contest. That error nearly went undetected, and it was months before the actual winner took office.

Supporters of ranked-choice voting make grand claims that RCV improves elections and moderates divisive politics. Independent studies debunk these claims. A 2023 [study](#) by the Hubert Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota concluded that ranked-choice voting failed to reduce political polarization, increase diversity among election officials, increase voter turnout, or decrease negative campaigning. In fact, one [study](#) of RCV in Maine found that "negative spending increased significantly...casting doubt on the claim that RCV makes campaigns more civil."

Many jurisdictions try ranked-choice voting only to repeal it. For instance, proponents tout a Utah pilot program that recruited two-dozen cities, yet over half have [withdrawn](#) citing public confusion and RCV's failure to deliver on its promises.

Americans want elections with clear rules that deliver clear winners. RCV offers neither. I encourage you to advance Senate Bill 63 and protect Ohio's elections.

Thank you for considering this testimony.