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S.A. Resolution #6

Amending the Rank Choice Voting System for all Cornell Student Assembly Elections

ABSTRACT: This resolution is intended to amend the Rank-Choice system for all Cornell Student Assembly Elections

Sponsored by: Uche Chukwukere '21

Whereas, Rank Choice Voting is the system that is currently employed for the President, Executive Vice President, and reserved Undesignated Representative At-Large student-elected positions on the Cornell Student Assembly.

Whereas, Rank Choice voting is a system in which voters rank their candidates based on their personal preferences

Whereas, The Office of Assemblies specifically states that, "Ranked choice voting (also called Instant Runoff Voting/IRV, or "**Hare System**" Voting) is a method of voting in which voters rank candidates in order of preference - 1st choice, 2nd choice, 3rd choice, etc. All first choices are tallied and in a single-winner race, if no candidate receives a majority (50%+1) of first-choice votes, the less popular candidates are eliminated and ballots cast for these candidates are redistributed to more popular candidates, based on their voters' second choices, until one candidate wins with a majority.

As a result, every vote counts and very few votes are "wasted." Voters cast their vote for their favorite candidate knowing that if he or she doesn't gather enough votes to win, their vote will count toward their second choice. Your vote always counts for your highest ranked candidate until he or she is elected or eliminated and your vote continues to count once your favorite candidate is elected or eliminated until all the seats are filled. This helps ensure that more voters than ever are represented by someone they voted for and provides greater opportunity for more diverse representation."

Whereas, The Office of Assemblies has participated in a form of voter disenfranchisement by invalidating the votes of voters who did not fully rank all candidates in a specific race

34 **Whereas,** In the 2019, 1435 ballots were deemed “empty” in the Presidential Election, 1761 ballots
35 were deemed “empty” in the Executive Vice President Election, and 2038 ballots were deemed
36 “empty” in the Undesignated Student Assembly Representative At-Large race

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38 **Whereas,** In the 2020 Fall Reactivation, second round election, 37 votes were invalidated in the
39 Presidential Election in part because voters did not rank every single candidate

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41 **Whereas,** In the 2020 Fall Reactivation, first round election, many more votes were going to be in-
42 validated due to voters have their votes invalidated because they did not rank every single candidate
43 and as a result the election for certain races had to be redone with clarification of the reason for in-
44 validation despite no true attempt of notifying voters of this technicality the first time.

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46 **Whereas,** These empty votes included voters who did not fully rank every single candidate

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48 **Whereas,** This is unacceptable because voters should be able to rank as many or as few candidates
49 as they so choose and not have their votes invalidated

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51 **Whereas,** In the spirit of Rank Choice Voting, not ranking a candidate is equivalent to a motion of
52 no confidence and should be accepted as such and the candidate(s) that were ranked should have
53 those votes counted towards them

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55 **Be it therefore resolved,** In following elections, all elected positions should go by a rank-choice
56 voting system that does not invalidate ballots of voters that do not decided to rank every candidate.

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58 **Be it finally resolved,** The following amendments are made in Section 2: Election of Voting Mem-
59 bers for the Cornell Student Assembly Charter:

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61 “The President, Executive Vice President, Undergraduate Representative to the University Assem-
62 bly, and other Undesignated at Large representatives will be elected by a single transferable voting
63 system. Voters may rank all candidates on the ballot for each of these races and any ballot that has
64 candidate(s) who is/are left unranked the ballot shall not be invalidated and will count towards the
65 ranked candidate. All other representatives shall be elected by a plurality voting system. Voters will

66 cast one vote per available seat, (e.g. if three Arts and Sciences representatives are to be elected, the
67 voter will vote for three candidates).”

68

69 **Respectfully submitted,**

70 Uche Chukwukere ‘21

71 *Vice President for Finance*

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73 *(Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 5-0-2, 10/14/2020)*