

# Terry W. Reilly

TO: Elections Commission

Date: 4/21/10

---

From: Terry Reilly

Number of pages including cover: 9

Regarding: SF's restricted RCV Education Effort Underfunded

Dear Election Commission,

SF spent approximately \$1.70 per voter in 2004 (~\$770,000). Studies from SF State show high percentage of voters not understanding restricted RCV, and not knowing restricted RCV would be used. The less educated, the less affluent, if english is not your first language, you were less likely to understand or know about restricted RCV.

In 2005, the city reduced the education funding, following proponents suggestions to ~ \$0.65 per voter (~\$250,000). A follow up study from the same group showed the % of people not knowing restricted RCV would be used jumped higher, along the same lines.

Director of Elections Arntz mentions to the SF Elections Commission problems due not having enough funding to conduct pre-election outreach to voters.

Sincerely yours,

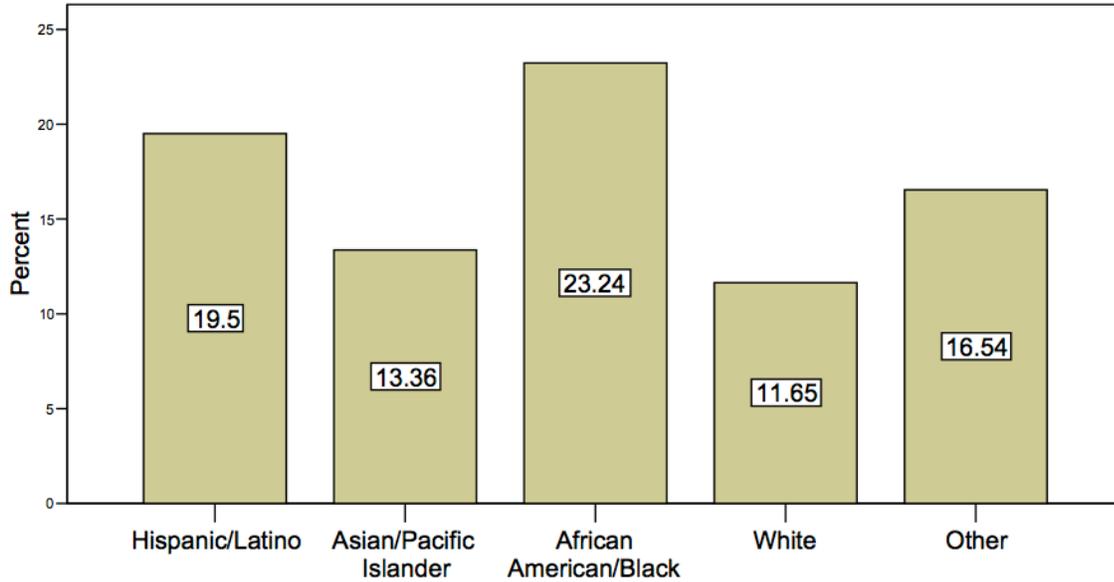
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terry W. Reilly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "T" and "R".

Terry Reilly

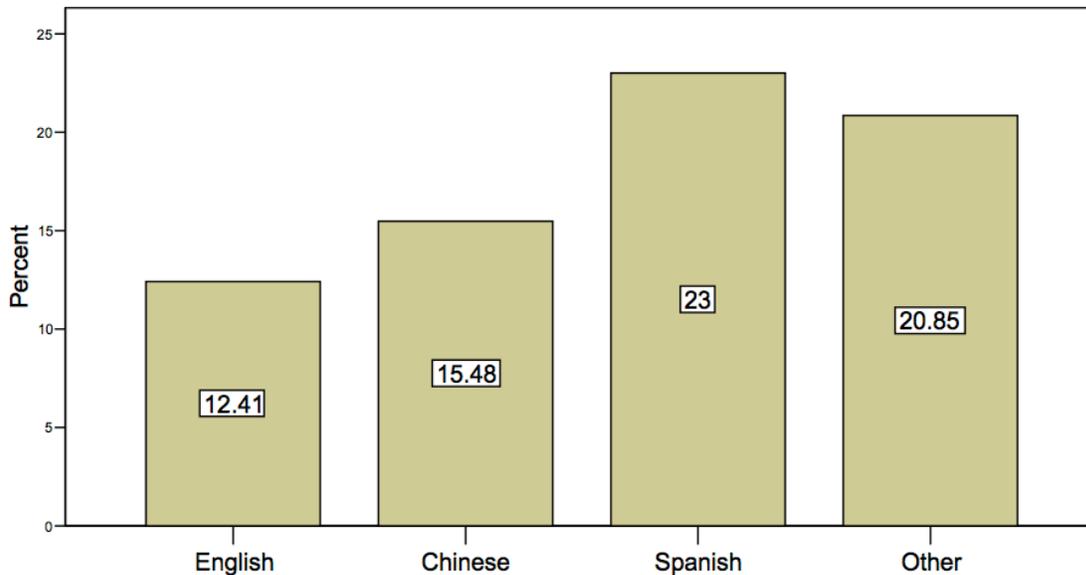
# What does \$770,00 buy you in San Francisco?

PRI - SF State University Assessment of RCV in the SF 2004 Election

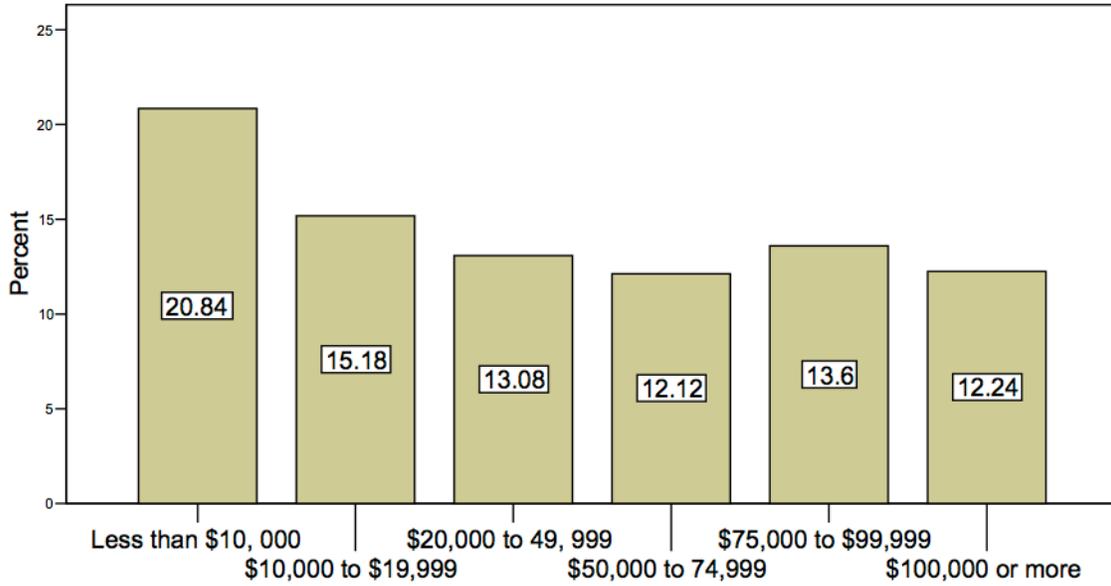
**Figure 10. Percent of Voters that Did Not Understand RCV by Race/Ethnicity**  
(n = 2555; Chi-square = 24.76; p < .001)



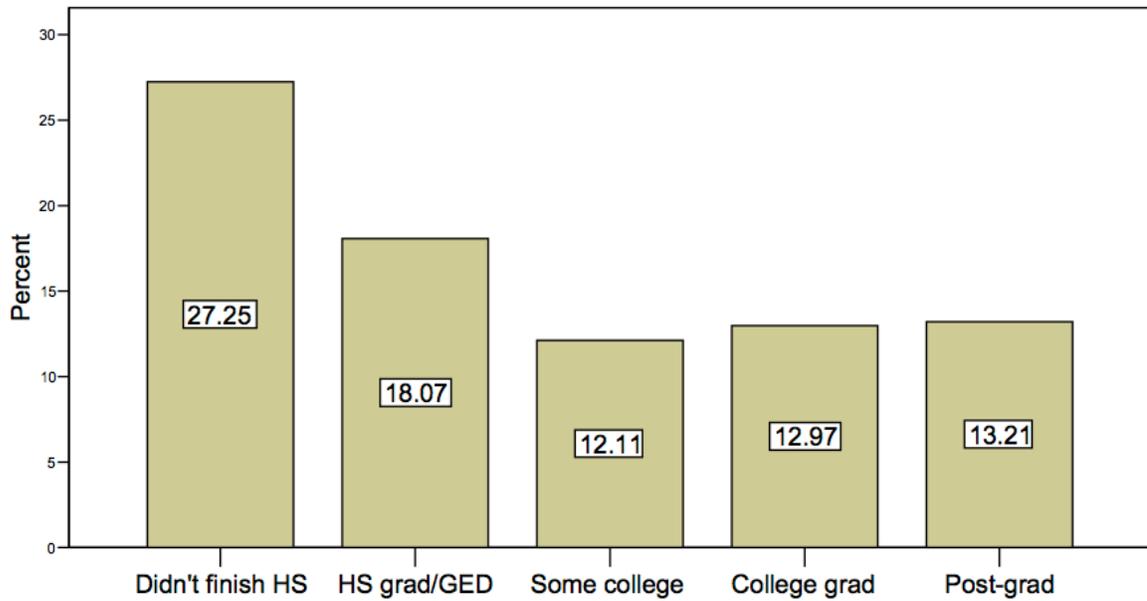
**Figure 8. Percent of Voters that Did Not Understand RCV by First Language**  
(n = 2537; Chi-square = 19.87; p < .001)



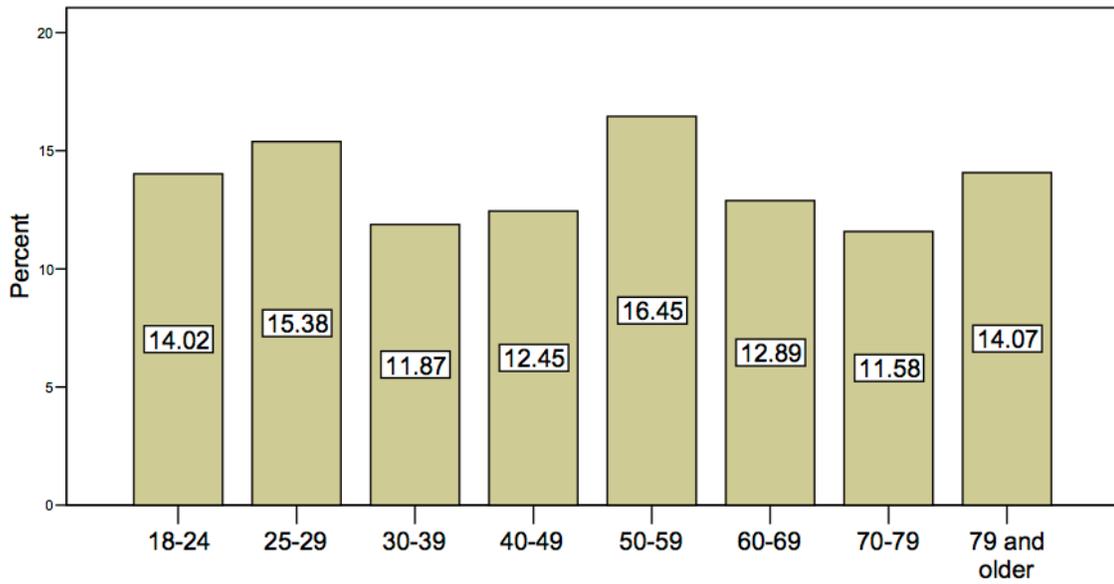
**Figure 7. Percent of Voters that Did Not Understand RCV by Income Level**  
 (n = 2507; Chi-square = 9.70; p < .09)



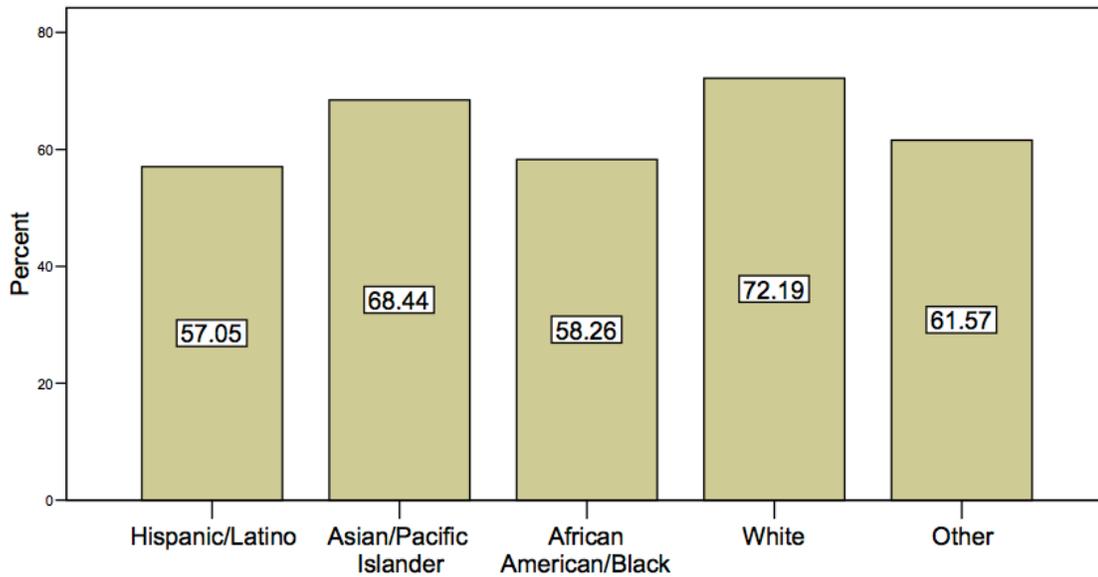
**Figure 6. Percent of Voters that Did Not Understand RCV by Level of Education**  
 (n = 2557; Chi-square = 12.37; p < .02)



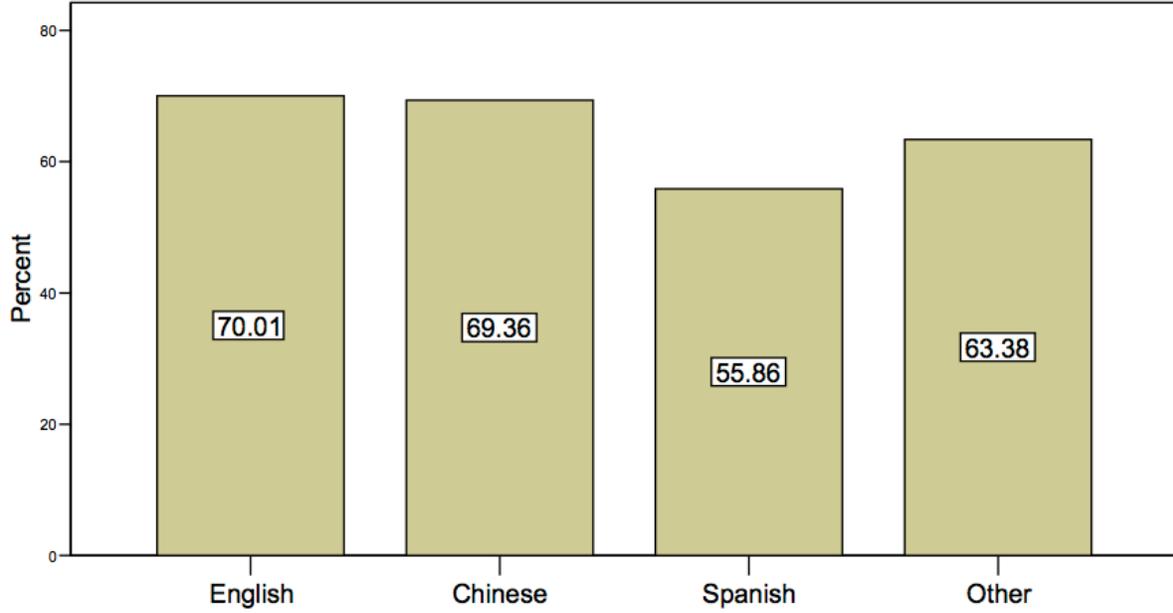
**Figure 9. Percent of Voters that Did Not Understand RCV by Age**  
(n = 2577; Chi-square = 6.65; p < .47)



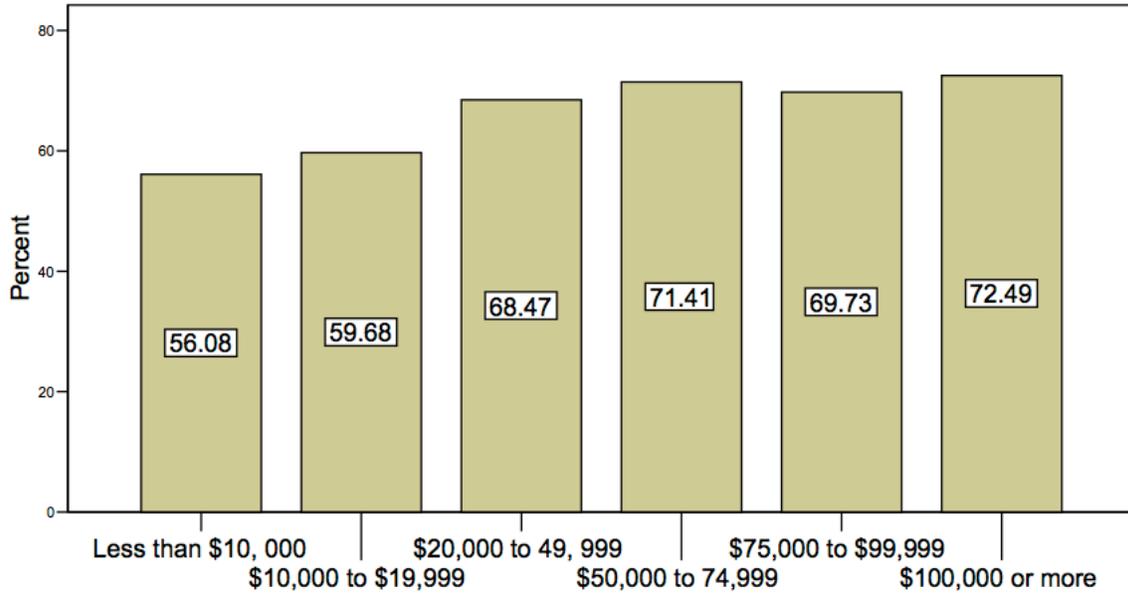
**Figure 4. Percent of Voters Who Knew about RCV by Race/Ethnicity**  
(n=2802; Chi-square = 39.48; p < .001)



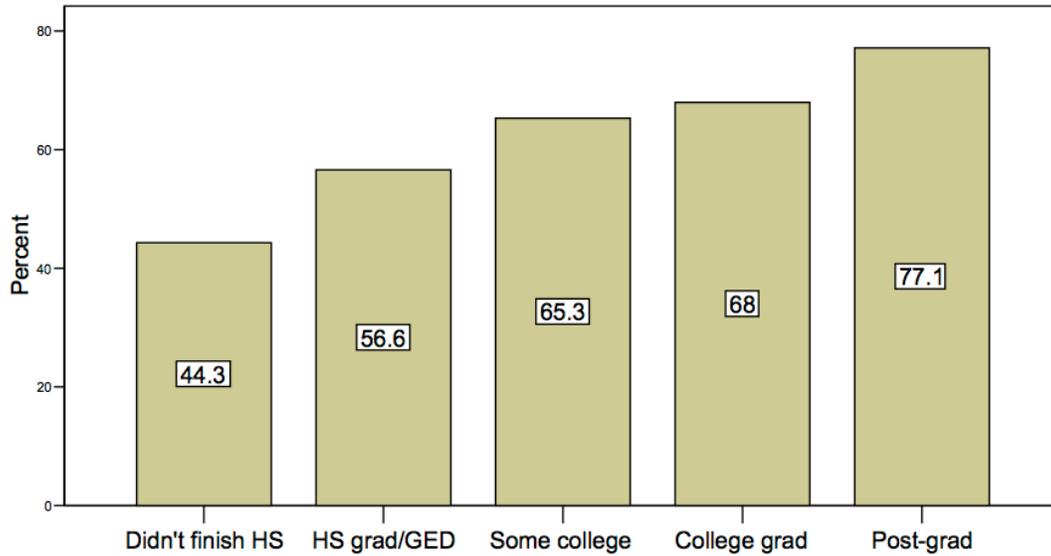
**Figure 3. Percent of Voters Who Knew about RCV by First Language**  
(n=2780; Chi-square = 15.30; p < .01)



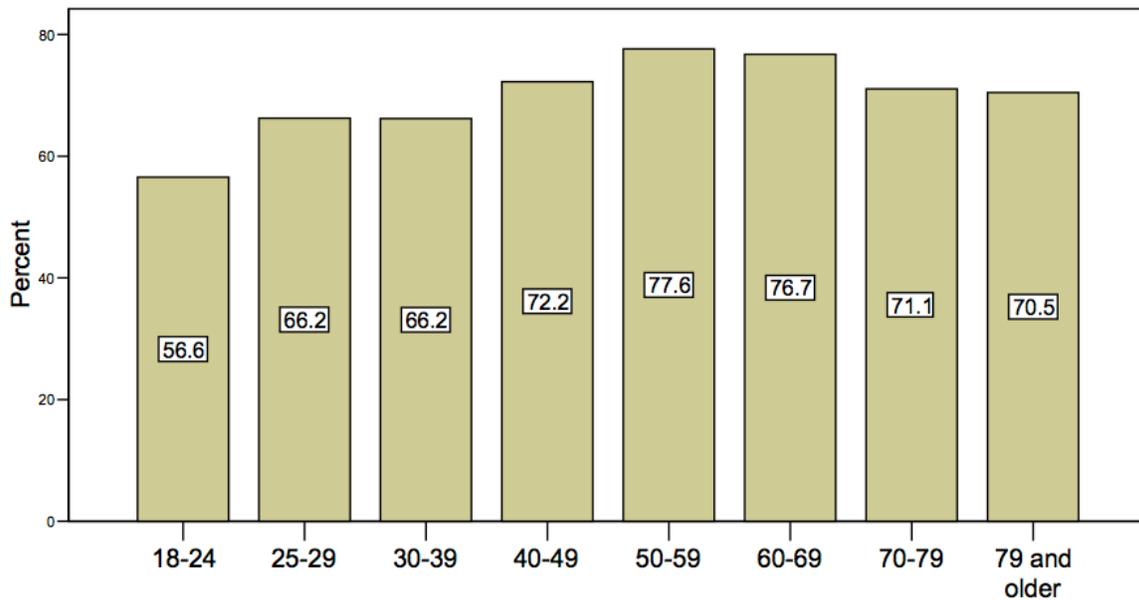
**Figure 5. Percent of Voters Who Knew about RCV by Income Level**  
(n=2747; Chi-square = 26.70; p < .001)



**Figure 2. Percent of Voters Who Knew about RCV by Level of Education**  
(n = 2800; Chi-square = 56.65; p < .001)



**Figure 1. Percent of Voters Who Knew about RCV by Age**  
(n = 2825; Chi-square = 50.04; p < .001)



SF spent over \$770,000 dollars on RCV education in 2004, and greatly reduced it afterwards. This impacted the disenfranchisement of voters significantly, particularly less educated, lower income groups, and many english as a second language voters.

In addition, African Americans were considerably less likely to know than any other racial or ethnic group to be educated about RCV and use that opportunity.

From the Public Research Institute's Report on An Assessment of Ranked Choice Voting in the San Francisco 2005 Election:

***Prior Knowledge of Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV)***

- A narrow majority of voters surveyed (54%) knew before voting that they would be asked to rank candidates for City Treasurer and Assessor in the 2005 election.
- The proportion of voters who had prior knowledge of RCV was lower in 2005 (54%) than in the 2004 election for the Board of Supervisors (67%).
- Those with lower rates of prior knowledge tended to be those who were less educated, reported having lower incomes, and spoke a primary language other than Spanish.
- African Americans were considerably less likely than other racial and ethnic groups (41.9%) to know they would be ranking their choices for these offices.
- Voters residing in districts that used RCV for the 2004 election for the Board of Supervisors were more likely to know that they would be ranking their choices in 2005 (57%) than those from districts using RCV for the first time (49%).

Understanding of RCV varied. Only 51.6% understood it perfectly well. Combined with 35.6% who self reported understanding it “fairly well”, that leaves an unconscionable 12.9% not understanding this new voting scheme. This should not something to be proud of.

**Table 9. Overall Understanding of RCV  
(N = 1633)**

Understood it perfectly well	51.6%
Understood it fairly well	35.6%
Did not understand it entirely	9.9%
Did not understand it at all	3.0%

## Overall Understanding of RCV

- The wide majority of voters said that they understood Ranked-Choice Voting either “fairly well” or “perfectly well” (87%).
- The proportion of voters indicating they understood RCV in 2005 (87%) is about the same as those saying they understood RCV in the 2004 Board of Supervisors election (86%).
- Self-reported levels of understanding were lowest among voters with low levels of education and those for whom Chinese was their first language.

**Table 12. Understanding of RCV by Education**  
(Chi-square = 9.69,  $p < .05$ ,  $N = 1409$ )

	Did not understand entirely or did not understand at all
Less than HS	23.8%
HS grad	15.3%
Some college	13.9%
College grad	13.3%
Post-grad study	10.0%

One’s understanding of RCV was also related to one’s first language. A higher proportion of voters who learned Chinese as their first language said they did not understand RCV (22%) than did voters who first learned Spanish (9%) or English (12%).

**Table 13. Understanding of RCV by First Language**  
(Chi-square = 10.08,  $p < .02$ ,  $N = 1610$ )

	Did not understand entirely or did not understand at all
English	12.1%
Chinese	21.9%
Spanish	9.0%
Other	13.9%

For both native and non-native English speakers, lack of understanding was substantially higher among voters who had been unaware that they would be asked to rank their choices for Assessor and Treasurer. Still, statistically significant differences remained between those whose first language is English and those whose first language is another language among those aware that RCV would be used in this election.

Voter confusion and participation breaks along racial line, education lines, and income lines. This is the definition of disparate treatment. When 2 to 1 on a race and 2 to 1 on a language someone fails to understand how to mark their ballot, that is a backward step in the pursuit of participatory democracy.

# Elections Commission

[LISTEN](#)  
[TEXT ONLY](#)  
[PRINT](#)

[A](#)  
[A](#)  
[A](#)

## November 15, 2005

City and County of San Francisco  
Elections Commission

Approved: December 21, 2005

Minutes of the Meeting at City Hall Room 400  
November 15, 2005

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** President Matthews called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.
2. **ROLL CALL.** PRESENT: Commissioners Gerard Gleason, Sheila Chung, Richard P. Matthews, Arnold Townsend, and Jennifer Meek. EXCUSED: Commissioners Michael Mendelson and Eric Safire.
3. **Public Comment:** *Roger Donaldson* said he had worked as a Field Election Deputy (FED) during the recent election and presented a letter he wrote regarding the voting system.
4. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**The November 8, 2005 Consolidated Special Statewide Election.** – All polling sites were open at 7:00 am on election day, this is the first time in several elections that this has been accomplished. During past elections when a site was not open at 7:00 am, curbside voting would occur. The Director praised the poll workers for this extraordinary achievement. There were fewer (only 750) phone calls into election center and (only 1800) to the phone bank. This is an incredible decrease in calls and the Director attributed the decline to better poll worker and FED involvement. These workers were more eager and able to resolve problems because they were better trained.

Director Arntz said that voters were concerned that their ballots were frequently rejected by the Eagle machines because they did not complete all three columns. This is partially attributed to the Department not having enough funding to conduct pre-election outreach to voters. Community outreach would have enhanced voters awareness of how the ballots needed to be marked in order to be counted efficiently. Therefore, voters were less prepared to vote in this, the City's second ranked choice election. Also during the development of RCV in San Francisco, the majority of public comments wanted voters to be alerted if all three columns were not marked. People were concerned RCV would not be successful if voters did not have every opportunity to mark all three columns.