

Terry W. Reilly

TO: Elections Commission

Date: 4/21/10

From: Terry Reilly

Number of pages including cover: 8

Regarding: First RCV Election in Minneapolis

Dear Election Commission,

Minneapolis held its first RCV election in Nov. 2009. It had the lowest turnout in nearly 100 years. It was reported there were no debates for the Mayor's race. A primary and run-off would have forced issues to be discussed and debates for the public.

Like San Francisco, voters were confused based upon income, race and education.

Spoiled ballot rates were much higher in lower income and non-white districts.

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



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An underwhelming election

BY ED FELIEN

What if they gave an election and nobody came? Well, almost nobody came to the City Election last Tuesday. R. T. Rybak got 73 percent of the vote for Mayor, but that was only 33,217 votes. That's the smallest amount a winning candidate has gotten running for Mayor since 1910. Rybak's total was less than 15 percent of the number of registered voters. In the last three municipal elections the LOSING candidates for Mayor polled almost as high as Rybak's winning total: 2005-25,807; 2001-30,896; 1997-42, 530.

Why was the turnout so low? Some people blame Instant Runoff Voting. Not because it's complicated and that might have turned people off. It's not that complicated. It's actually quite simple, but some people feel that canceling the Primary Election denied voters an opportunity to see a dress rehearsal of the main stage production. A Primary Election gives voters an opportunity to see candidates in action before they have to vote on their final choice. One suggestion, made by James Graham on the Minneapolis Issues List (mpls@forums.e-democracy.org), was to have instant runoff voting for the Primary Election and then have the two top vote-getters face off in the General Election.

If there is a wide field of challengers, then the incumbent can simply ignore them —which is what R. T. did. He went through the campaign acting as though nothing was happening. And the Star Tribune and the general public believed him and acted as though nothing was happening as well. It's not for lack of issues.

There were plenty of issues that could have served as a referendum on Rybak's tenure: his support for a billion dollar sales tax for a new baseball stadium; his closing down of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program that had encouraged citizen participation in city affairs; his failure to support the Library Board; his attempts to take over the Park Board. These issues deserved a sharp and focused debate, but in a wide field they were easily ignored.

Incumbent City Council Members coasted to easy victories, and DFLer John Quincy won with a convincing 63 percent of the vote to replace retiring Scott Benson in the 11th Ward. Elizabeth Glidden, Council Member from the 8th Ward, beat a wide field with 74.87 percent of the vote. In the 12th Ward Sandy Colvin Roy easily outdistanced her two rivals with 64 percent of the vote. But Cam Gordon, the only Green Party Council Member, got 84 percent of the vote in the 2nd Ward.

Voters rejected Rybak and the City Council's proposal to eliminate the Board of Estimate and Taxation (BET) by a margin of almost two to one: 64.87 percent to 35.13 percent. A conclusion one could draw from that lopsided rejection is that voters want to vote for people. They want to participate in their representative democracy. Instead, politicians have reduced the number of choices offered to voters over the years. Some people still remember when there were two City Council Members for every Ward. That was changed back in the 1950s. Don Fraser changed the Charter to allow four-year instead of two-year terms for Mayor and City Council, thereby canceling half the city elections. Then they eliminated the City Treasurer and City Comptroller. Carol Becker was easily elected to one of the at-large positions on the BET.

She has been a critic of many of the Mayor and City Council's proposals. A self-described policy wonk, she has been such a thorn in their sides, they wanted to



Knew to rank choices prior to coming to polls

Rank by Income (cells are percentages) (Chi-square = 82.150, p = .000, N = 624)							
Know asked to Rank/ Income	Under 15K	15-25K	25-35K	35-50K	50-75K	75-100K	100+K
Yes	72	74	58	93	91	90	86
No	28	26	42	7	9	10	14
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Rank by Race (cells are percentages) (Chi-square = 40.686, p = .000, N = 654)		
Know asked to Rank/ Race	White	Persons of Color
Yes	88	67
No	12	33
Total	100%	100%

Actually Used RCV

Table 7: Rank Some or First Choice Only		
<i>“Did you actually rank any candidates after your first choice or did you only vote for your first choice?”</i>		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Ranked Some Candidates	402	59
Voted First Choice Only	256	38
Don't Know	21	3
Total	679	100%
<p>Respondents who answered Voted First Choice Only, Don't Know and Refused were skipped to Table 9: Why Not Rank Choices.</p>		

Table 9: Why Not Rank Choices			
<i>“Why did you not rank your vote choice?”</i> (multiple responses allowed)			
Responses	Frequency	Percent of Responses	Percent of Respondents
I didn't know enough about the other candidates	77	27	27
None of the other candidates was acceptable	55	19	19
I will always pick one candidates	71	25	25
I didn't know I could rank candidates	7	2	2
I didn't understand that part of the ballot	6	2	2
I wanted to give an advantage to my favorite candidate	35	35	12
OTHER-(closed)	16	6	6
Don't Know	19	7	7
Total	286	100%	NA

**St. Cloud State Univ. Poll included
“Push Poll” Question**

Table 14: Ranked vs. Traditional if Winner Different from Traditional

“Suppose the outcome of this election results in a different winner than there would have been in a traditional primary and general election. Which of the following best describes your opinion if this happened?”
(responses read; only one answer accepted)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
I would prefer the ranked choice voting result because it is more accurate	341	51
I would prefer the traditional primary and general election result, because it is tried-and-true	181	27
I wouldn't care which system were used	121	18
Don't Know	30	4
Total	672	100%

All respondents were skipped to Table Age-Voter.

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**2009 Minneapolis Municipal Election Results: Council Member Ward 5
Ranked-choice Voting Tabulation Center Summary Statement**

Total votes cast for the office:	2170	Note: Total votes counted in the first round. Does not include undervotes or partially defective, totally defective, or spoiled ballots.
Number to be elected:	1	
Threshold:	1086	Note: Half of total votes cast for office + 1, disregarding fractions.
Undervotes:	30	Note: Voter did not rank any candidates for the office.
Partially defective ballots:	0	Note: Unable to determine voter's intent with respect to the office being counted.
Totally defective ballots:	0	Note: Unable to determine voter's intent for any office on the ballot.
Spoiled ballots:	151	Note: Ballot spoiled by voter at polls.

Candidate	Round 1	Round 2	Round 2	Final Round Percentage
	First preference votes	Vote Change (+ Added, - Subtracted)		
		<i>Defeated: Chism, McKnight, Smithrud, Write-ins</i>		
Chism	61	-61	0	0.00%
Johnson Lee	652	241	893	41.15%
McKnight	336	-336	0	0.00%
Samuels	1020	111	1131	52.12%
Smithrud	93	-93	0	0.00%
Write-in	8	-8	0	0.00%
Exhausted	-	146	146	6.73%
TOTAL	2170		2170	

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6.96% Spoiled Ballots
Ward 5 Median income
<\$25,000 - 2/3 non-white

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2009 Minneapolis Municipal Election Results: Council Member Ward 7 Ranked-choice Voting Tabulation Center Summary Statement		
Total votes cast for the office:	4392	Note: Total votes counted in the first round. Does not include undervotes or partially defective, totally defective, or spoiled ballots.
Number to be elected:	1	
Threshold:	2197	Note: Half of total votes cast for office + 1, disregarding fractions.
Undervotes:	140	Note: Voter did not rank any candidates for the office.
Partially defective ballots:	0	Note: Unable to determine voter's intent with respect to the office being counted.
Totally defective ballots:	0	Note: Unable to determine voter's intent for any office on the ballot.
Spoiled ballots:	184	Note: Ballot spoiled by voter at polls.
Candidate		
	Round 1	Final Round Percentage
	First preference votes	May not sum to 100% due to rounding
Goodman	2997	68.24%
Katch	1042	23.72%
Wagner	321	7.31%
Write-in	32	0.73%
Exhausted	-	
TOTAL	4392	

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4.19% Spoiled Ballots
Ward 7 Median income
>\$100,000 (Downtown)