

Approval Voting

VOTE FOR AS MANY AS YOU LIKE



Who benefits from Approval Voting?

Plurality Voting allows voters to express an opinion about only **one candidate**.

Plurality Voting, currently used across the US, is not merely simple, but simplistic—it results in gaming the vote and unfair outcomes.

Plurality Voting Leads to Strategic Voting

At the heart of the problem is vote-splitting, leading to the “wasted-vote” dilemma. Because each voter may vote for only one candidate, similar candidates might split the vote, allowing the least-preferred candidate to win. As a result, many voters feel forced to consider candidates’ popularity; i.e. who they think other voters will vote for.

Elections Are Purchased

Instead of supporting the candidate with the best ideas, voters line up behind the few they believe have the best chance of winning—those with the most money and the most media friends. This makes the supposed “unpopularity” of new or different ideas and candidates a nearly-unbreakable, self-fulfilling prophecy. A third candidate who does get significant votes succeeds only in splitting the vote and spoiling the election, with a less-popular candidate winning.

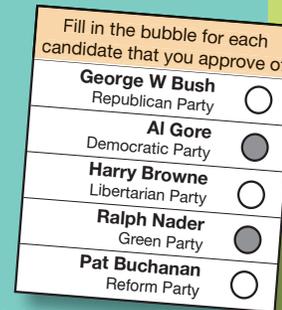
Approval Voting offers the simplest solution—voting for as many candidates as one wants.

A good voting system, such as Approval Voting, has four essential qualities: it encourages compromise, does not produce perverse results (such as the least-favored candidate winning from vote-splitting), does not encourage strategic voting, and is simple to use and understand.

Compare today’s Plurality Voting, with its inherent vote-splitting and elections going to the candidates with the highest financial backing, to the fairness and simplicity of Approval Voting—voting for as many as you like. Approval Voting is so simple that current ballots and software support it.

Spoiler Example: 2000 US Presidential Election

Like him or not, Gore would have won the 2000 election against Bush had it not been for left-wing spoiler, Nader.



Candidate	Vote %
Bush	47.87
Gore	48.38
Nader	2.74
Buchanan	0.42
Browne	0.36

Major-party supporters:

- Better primaries, with no vote-splitting
- Less negative campaigning, more post-primary party unity
- No minor-party spoilers

Minor-party supporters:

- Other parties see minor-party candidates as allies, not as spoilers
- Results reflect a party’s true support

The general public:

- Compromise results which better reflect “the will of the people”
- More civility and consensus, less polarization and acrimony
- Parties compete to serve voters, not deep-pocketed funders

“Make things as simple as possible, but no simpler.”

~Albert Einstein

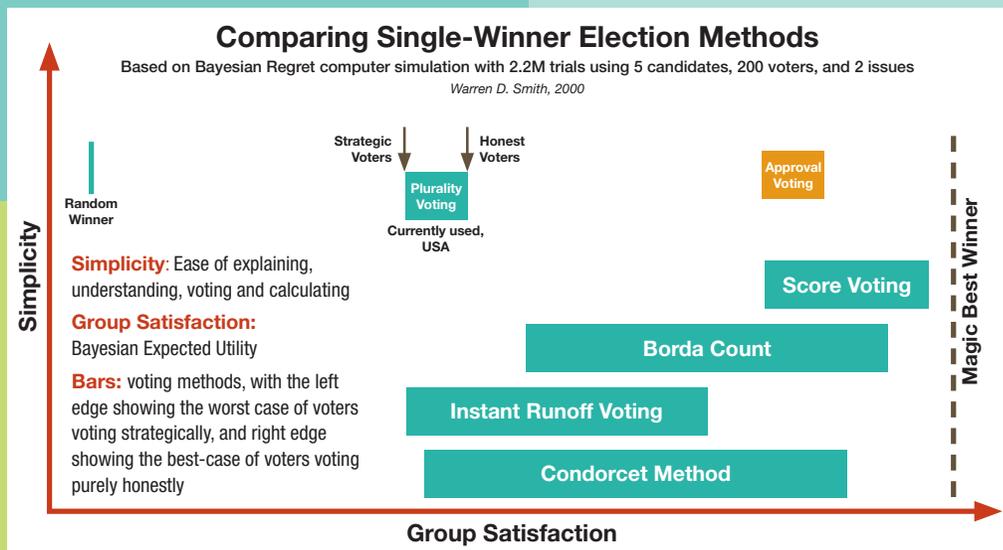
Reforming our Voting System Would Lead to More Fair Elections

Improved voting systems exist in two major categories: **rating** or “evaluative” (e.g. Approval Voting and Score Voting) and **ranking** or “comparative” (e.g. Borda, Condorcet, and Instant Runoff Voting). All these other voting systems allow voters to express an opinion about more than one candidate. The fairest of these is the rating system known as Score Voting, which in its simplest form is Approval Voting: rating candidates 1 or 0, thumbs up or down.

Nowhere in the social or business spheres do we use Plurality Voting—why then do we use it in politics?

When friends choose a movie, or businesses choose a supplier, they use a fair voting system, because good results matter: after the decision, friends want to remain friends, and businesses want to remain in business. But politics is a power game, where one side wants to defeat and dominate the other, exacerbated by the perverse incentives of Plurality Voting.

For years Americans have lamented the polarization and negative campaigning seemingly endemic to politics. A simple switch



from Plurality to Approval Voting would remove a primary structural cause.

Fortunately the US and state constitutions make no mention of any voting system, let alone mandate one, so a better voting system can be implemented at local and state levels. However, we must overcome inertia and ignorance; few people know that alternative voting systems even exist.

We need to raise awareness, in our schools and colleges; among journalists, politicians, and party activists; and throughout the electorate.

For more information and resources, visit The Center for Election Science and follow the Twitter hashtags below.

www.electology.org

[#ApprovalVoting](https://twitter.com/ApprovalVoting)

[#endPlurality](https://twitter.com/endPlurality)

