

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Kristen Schulze Muszynski
207-626-8400/ 207-441-7638

Secretary Dunlap launches ranked-choice voter information resource center online

AUGUSTA – Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap has unveiled a new section of the department website offering several informational resources for voters who are seeking to educate themselves about ranked-choice voting.

On June 12, 2018, this method of voting will be used for the first time ever in a statewide election as voters cast their ballots in the Primary Election.

Now available on the [RCV Resources page](#) are:

- Sample ballots for all ranked-choice voting races (Only races with three or more candidates will employ the ranked-choice voting process, which requires that one candidate receive a majority of the vote)
- Frequently Asked Questions
- A printable PDF “RCV Fact Sheet” for voters to review and share with others in preparation for marking their ballot
- An implementation plan showing the department’s progress and preparation for ranked-choice voting
- A timeline showing how the State of Maine came to use this voting method in the June 12, 2018 Primary Election
- The draft rules that will govern the process of administering ranked-choice voting, along with the public comments on those rules

Additional resources will soon be added to the [RCV Resources page](#), including:

- The final version of the rules
- An easy-to-understand animation explaining how to mark the ranked-choice ballot and how votes will be tabulated

Follow the Maine Department of the Secretary of State on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to receive updates regarding additional information and voter education outreach efforts prior to the June 12 Primary Election. To obtain an absentee ballot, visit your town office or use the [Online Absentee Ballot Request](#) service.

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RCV Voter Information Outreach Tour

Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap will make four stops across the state during the month of May to provide information to voters regarding the new ranked-choice voting method that will be used in the June 12 Primary Election.

Secretary Dunlap will host information sessions in:

- **Biddeford:** Monday, May 14, 4-6 p.m., McArthur Public Library, 270 Main Street
- **Bangor:** Tuesday, May 15, 4-6 p.m., Bangor Public Library, 145 Harlow Street
- **Presque Isle:** Monday, May 21, 4-6 p.m., Mark & Emily Turner Memorial Public Library, 39 2nd Street
- **Lewiston:** Tuesday, May 29, 4-6 p.m. Lewiston Public Library, 200 Lisbon St.,

For those who are unable to attend the presentations, Secretary Dunlap will also offer the presentation and question-and-answer session via **Facebook LIVE on Thursday, May 24 at 6 p.m.**, on the Maine Department of the Secretary of State Facebook page.

Ranked-choice Voting (RCV)

Ranked-choice voting in Maine: Frequently Asked Questions

The June 12, 2018 primary election will be conducted using a method of ranked-choice voting, in which voters will mark the ballot for their first-choice candidate as well as their second, third and subsequent choices for each office. Voters will also decide on a People's Veto referendum question that asks if they would like to continue using ranked-choice voting for future elections in Maine -- for federal offices ONLY (U.S. Senate and U.S. Congress) in general elections, and for all state and federal offices in primary elections. Below is a list of frequently asked questions regarding this voting method and the June 12 primary election as prepared by Secretary of State's Election Division.

[1. What is ranked-choice voting?](#)

Ranked-choice voting, sometimes called "instant run-off voting," allows voters to choose their candidates in order of preference, by marking candidates as their first, second, third, and subsequent choices. The votes are tabulated in rounds, with the lowest-ranked candidates eliminated in each round until there are only two candidates left. The one who is determined to have received the majority of the votes (more than 50%) in the final round is declared the winner. It is different from our previous method of voting, in which voters choose only one candidate for each office and the winner is determined by plurality (whoever gets the most votes).

[2. What is being done to prepare for the implementation of RCV in the June primary?](#)

The Department of the Secretary of State is working on all the details of administering this first-in-the-nation statewide implementation of ranked-choice voting, based on our [implementation plan](#). This begins with finalizing and adopting rules; acquiring a high-speed ballot tabulator and software necessary to determine the voting results; creating the ballot layout and ballot instructions; creating materials for voter education and municipal officials' training; and booking a secure central location for conducting the RCV counting process.

[3. Why are we using ranked-choice voting in the June 12 primary election?](#)

The [full timeline of ranked-choice voting in Maine](#) explains the path of legislation that led to the June 12, 2018 People's Veto vote. Ranked-choice voting was delayed by the Legislature until after December 1, 2021, with the provision that it would be repealed unless, by that date, a Constitutional amendment allowing its use in all state elections is approved (Public Law 2017, Chapter 316). This law did not go into effect, however, because it was suspended by the filing of a valid people's veto referendum petition in February of 2018. This people's veto referendum would repeal the parts of [Public Law 2017, Chapter 316](#) that delay implementation of ranked-choice voting and instead apply RCV to all of Maine's primary elections as well as general elections for federal offices. Thus, the primary elections for U.S. Senate, Governor, U.S. Congress, State Senate and State Representative will be decided by a system of ranked-choice voting on June 12, 2018.

[4. How will the ranked-choice voting Peoples' Veto referendum question appear on the ballot?](#)

This is the wording of the Peoples' Veto on the June referendum ballot:

"Do you want to reject the parts of a new law that would delay the use of ranked-choice voting in the election of candidates for any state or federal office until 2022, and then retain the method only if the constitution is amended by December 1, 2021, to allow ranked-choice voting for candidates in state elections?"

[5. What happens if voters approve the RCV People's Veto in June \(a "yes" vote\)?](#)

If voters approve the people's veto ballot question in June, then ranked-choice voting will be used for primary and federal elections, such as the offices of U.S. Senate and U.S. Congress for the general election in November. Plurality voting would still be in place for statewide offices such as Governor, State Representative and State Senator in the general election.

[6. What happens if voters do not approve the RCV People's Veto in June \(a "no" vote\)?](#)

If it is not approved, [PL 2017, Chapter. 316](#) will take effect and ranked-choice voting will not be implemented until after December 1, 2021 and then only if, by that date, the voters ratify an amendment to the Maine Constitution authorizing RCV for primary and federal elections, including the offices of U.S. Senate and U.S. Congress, Governor, State Representative and State Senator.

[7. How will RCV work for the June 12 primary?](#)

The tabulation process and other details of implementing RCV are currently being finalized in the rules that will govern the process. You can read the [draft rules](#) for more detail and view our [examples of marked ballots](#) to learn how the tabulation rules will be applied. If no candidate wins a majority of votes on Election Night in the races that have three or more candidates, the ballots and memory devices from each municipality will be securely transported by a professional courier service to a central tabulation site in Augusta. There, the winner will be determined via rounds. The details of this process are explained in the [draft rules](#).

[8. How are you making sure that my vote is secure and will be accurately counted?](#)

The Department of the Secretary of State takes security issues very seriously and has several measures in place to ensure the integrity of the voting process and validity of the results. Implementation of ranked-choice voting will not change the fact that the voting process in Maine is not online nor linked to any network, which makes it far less susceptible to cyberattacks. The RCV tabulation will not be online in any way, at any point in the process. All computers related to ballot layout and tabulation are also closed systems, not connected to any sort of network/internet. Ballots and memory sticks from tabulation machines are locked and sealed, with strict procedures establishing the chain of custody. Those procedures will be retained with RCV. The software to determine the results will be operated on hardwired computers that are on a closed system. None of the tabulator machines currently in use statewide have connectivity capability, and we use paper ballots for all elections, which are fully auditable.

The only aspect of Maine's voting system that is connected to the internet is the Central Voter Registration system, which allows municipal clerks to update voter information. However, it is password-protected and monitored by in-house Information Services staff for any attempts at unauthorized use. Additionally, Maine has same-day voter registration, so no voter can be disenfranchised at the polls due to an error related to their registration.

9. How can I learn more about the candidates and issues on the June 12 primary ballot?

The Department of the Secretary of State will post a 2018 Special Referendum Voter Guide in May, on our [Upcoming Elections page](#). This non-partisan guide, published for every referendum election, explains the referendum issues. Information on candidates, including their positions on the issues of the day, is not available via our department. Voters should look to candidates' websites, social media and printed outreach materials, as well as Maine media outlets and public debates for this information.

10. What will it cost to implement RCV?

A typical primary election costs approximately \$250,000. The additional cost to conduct ranked-choice voting in the primary election is about \$80,000. This includes the cost of: software/hardware upgrades, temporary staff to help with tabulation, lease of a high-speed ballot tabulator, and security for a central counting facility. In addition, implementation of ranked-choice voting for the gubernatorial and congressional primaries will require transportation of ballots or tabulator memory devices from municipalities across the state to a centralized RCV counting facility. A professional courier service will be contracted for this work, at an estimated cost of \$31,000. Thus, an RCV primary is estimated to cost a total of approximately \$360,000.

11. Hasn't RCV been deemed unconstitutional in Maine?

The Justices of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court issue a unanimous [advisory opinion](#) at the request of legislators in May, 2017, concluding that the parts of the ranked-choice voting law that apply to general elections for State Representative, State Senator and Governor were unconstitutional under the Maine Constitution because the Maine Constitution requires the winners of those offices in a general election to be decided by a plurality. Primary elections in Maine and elections for federal offices are governed by statute and not by the Maine Constitution.

12. I don't want ranked-choice voting. Can't the Secretary of State or the Governor do something to stop this vote?

Implementation of ranked-choice voting for the June 12 primary is mandated by law via the People's Veto process. The [Maine Supreme Judicial Court](#) confirmed this on April 17 in a ruling responding to a recent lawsuit brought by the Maine State Senate. It is not up to the opinion or discretion of the Secretary of State or the Governor.

13. How can I learn more about RCV?

We will be providing educational materials for voters in the lead-up to the June 12 Primary/referendum election. This will be announced via our social media outlets, traditional media outlets, and our website in the coming weeks. Visit the [Maine Department of the Secretary of State Facebook page](#) and follow the [Maine Department of Secretary of State Twitter account](#).

**ABSENTEE BALLOTS WILL BE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST
BEGINNING MONDAY, MAY 14TH**

**THE RSU NO. 26 BUDGET VALIDATION PUBLIC MEETING IS BEING HELD
ON TUESDAY, MAY 15TH AT 6PM.**

**THE ELECTION WILL BE HELD UPSTAIRS IN THE TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS
ON TUESDAY JUNE 12, 2018. POLLS OPEN AT 7AM – 8PM.**

Are you ready for ranked-choice voting?

The June 12, 2018 primary election will be conducted using a method of ranked-choice voting. Ranked-choice voting, sometimes called “instant run-off voting,” allows voters to choose their candidates in order of preference, by marking candidates as their first, second, third, and subsequent choices.

The votes are tabulated in rounds, with the lowest-ranked candidates eliminated in each round until there are only two candidates remaining in the final round and the candidate with the most votes is declared the winner. It is different from our previous method of voting, in which voters choose only one candidate for each office and the winner is determined by plurality (whoever gets the most votes).

Ranked-choice voting is only applied when there are three or more candidates running for the same office. Thus, for the June 12, 2018 Primary Election, you will receive a ranked-choice ballot for: The Democratic and Republican nominations for the office of Governor; the Democratic nomination for the Representative to Congress in Congressional District 2; and the Republican nomination for Representative to the Maine Legislature in House District 75.

To mark the ballot for your first-choice candidate – the person who you would most like to see win the office – simply fill in the oval next to their name in the “1st Choice” column. If you wish to rank some or all of the remaining candidates in order of your preference, you may do so, or you can choose to vote for only your first choice. To mark a candidate as your second choice, fill in the oval next to their name in the “2nd Choice” column, and so on.

Governor	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice	6th Choice	7th Choice	8th Choice
Duck, Donald	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Flintstone, Fred	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○
Grainger, Hermione	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○
Mouse, Michael	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○
Man, Spider	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○
Man, Super	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○
Woman, Wonder	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○
Write-In	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

In the ballot example at right, the voter is choosing candidates in the gubernatorial primary. This person chose to rank all of the candidates, with Donald Duck marked as their first-choice candidate and Spider Man as their fifth-choice candidate.

You can find additional resources and details about ranked-choice voting on the Department of the Secretary of State website RCV Resources page, <http://maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/upcoming/rcv.html> You can vote at the polls on Primary Election Day, June 12, or request an absentee ballot from your town clerk or online at <http://maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/voter-info/absent.html>

In addition to using ranked-choice voting in some races this June, voters will also decide on a People’s Veto referendum question that asks if they would like to continue using ranked-choice voting for future elections in Maine – for federal offices ONLY (U.S. Senate and U.S. Congress) in general elections, and for all state and federal offices in primary elections – or restore the delay mechanism that would require a constitutional amendment to fully implement RCV.