

Memo

To: Cynthia Reichert, City of Minneapolis Elections
From: Mike Dean, Tipping Point Strategies, LLC
RE: Test Election Feedback

The City of Minneapolis Election Department conducted a test election to help the staff evaluate the procedures for implementing Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). Over the past few weeks, Tipping Point Strategies interviewed members of various organizations and interested members of the public to gather input on the RCV process and ballot design.

We met with over 40 individuals, who provided the following feedback:

Ballot Design

- Many commented that repeating all of the candidates' names in every column makes it look as though the three ranking columns are actually three separate races. Suggestions for fixing this point of confusion included using thicker lines between offices and creating one heading with the name of the office that spans all three columns.
- Since the ballot machines only detect some types of voter errors, many voters made mistakes that were not caught. These mistakes included skipping rankings and voting for the same candidate more than once. Election judges expressed surprise at the large number of spoiled ballots cast during the test election. As a result, their biggest concern is having enough ballots for the actual election.
- Fortunately, the most common mistake was one that is detectable by the ballot machines: choosing more than one first choice in the multi-seat (park board at-large and board of estimate and taxation) races. Many voters were extremely confused that two or three people were to be elected but they were only able to *rank* two or three candidates instead of *voting for* two or three candidates.

Election Judge Instructions

- Voters found the explanation of how to fill out their RCV ballot helpful but overly long. Many admitted to "tuning out" midway through the explanation. Instructions on the ballot and plentiful explanatory posters in the polling place will be key to reducing voter error.
- Election judges also wanted to create a climate in the polling place in which voters felt comfortable asking for a new ballot if they made a mistake. Many voters who made mistakes during the test election were extremely embarrassed about asking for a new ballot.

Voting Method

- Some people felt that the process in which the winner is determined in the multi-seat election is complicated and confusing. This will require additional opportunities to educate those that are interested in the process.
- Many voters expressed confusion about how multi-seat races were determined using RCV. A common comment was "this is not what I voted for in 2006."