

Proportional Representation

SO HOW DOES PR WORK?

There are many different types of PR, because it is flexible and may be adapted to the situation of any city, state or nation. Here are a few of the most common, plus one reform for single-winner races called the Instant Runoff that may be a first step toward PR:

1) List System – the most widely used form of PR. The voter selects one party and its pre-determined slate of candidates to represent them. Party slates can be either "closed" or "open," allowing voters to indicate a preference for individual candidates. If a party receives 30

2) Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) – This German hybrid elects half the legislature from single-seat, "winner take all" districts and the other half by the List System. MMP smoothly combines geographic, ideological and proportional representation.

3) Preference Voting (PV) – Allows blocs of like-minded voters to win representation in proportion to their voting strength. The voter ranks candidates in an order of preference (1,2,3,4, etc.) Once a voter's first choice is elected or eliminated, excess votes are "transferred" to next preferences until all positions are filled. Voters can vote for their favorite candidate(s), knowing that if that candidate doesn't receive enough votes their vote will "transfer" to their next preference. With PV, every vote counts and very few votes are wasted. PV is ideal for non-partisan elections.

4) Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) – related to PV, IRV is ideal when selecting a single candidate such as president, mayor, or governor who must win a majority. Like PV, the voter simply ranks candidates in an order of preference (ex. 1. Nader 2. Perot 3. Clinton). The candidate with the least number of first place votes is eliminated, and their votes are "transferred" to their 2nd choice, 3rd choice and so on until a candidate has a majority.