



PRESS KIT

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Eliminating Dark Money

“Dark Money” refers to political campaign spending where a donor uses a front group or third-party to shield their identity. The Better Elections Initiative eliminates dark money by requiring both donors and campaigns to identify the true source of donations over \$2,000.

Open Primaries:

An open nonpartisan primary is a simple change allowing all voters, regardless of party affiliation, to use a single ballot listing every candidate running for office in each race. Instead of using public funds to subsidize the political parties to run separate primaries, an open, nonpartisan primary would simplify the process and increase participation. Alaskans shouldn't be forced to choose a party before they can choose a candidate

Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV):

Ranked-choice voting is an easy and effective reform that gives voters the power to rank their candidates in order of preference. If a candidate wins a majority of first choices, they win, just like any other election. If not, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated; his or her voters' ballots are counted for their second choice. This process continues until a candidate wins a majority of votes.



QUICK FACTS

Dark Money:

- Over \$818 million in dark money was spent nationwide just in the 2018 Election Cycle, according to [Open Secrets](#).
- [The vast majority of Americans support reforms](#) that would curb the influence of big-pocketed dark money donors.

Open Primaries:

- [Over 60% of Alaska voters](#) are independent, nonpartisan, undeclared, or a member of a third party.
- In the 2018 primary election cycle, states with open primaries had a higher average voter turnout than states that didn't, according to a [study from the Bipartisan Policy Center](#).
- Alaska used to have an open primary system, but thanks to a lawsuit from Outside, it was forced to abandon it in the early 2000s. Up until that point, an open primary worked well.

Ranked-Choice Voting:

- [13 cities and the state of Maine](#) use ranked-choice voting and seven additional cities are poised to use it in their upcoming election cycle - bringing the total number of states using ranked-choice voting to 10.
- About 3/4 of voters reported ranked-choice voting was “somewhat” or “very” easy when it was used in Maine’s 2nd Congressional District, according to an exit survey conducted by the [Bangor Daily News](#).
- [A 2016 study](#) found that ranked-choice voting increases voter turnout by about 10 percentage points.



Op-Eds for Reference:

- Author: Jason Grenn, Bonnie Jack, & Bruce Botelho; November 1, 2019
[Better governance starts with better elections](#)
- Author: Sharman Haley; November 26, 2019
[Alaska's campaign finance laws must be enforced](#)
- Author: Rebecca Braun; December 27, 2019
[Ranked-choice voting initiative favors no one but voters](#)
- Author: Lesil McGuire & Jeremy Gruber; January 1, 2020
[Let's restore Alaska's tradition of open primaries](#)
- Author: Joe Geldhof; April 21, 2020
[Opinion: the 49th State should be the 21st State to call for the 28th Amendment \(Juneau Empire\)](#)

[Alaskans for Better Elections Logo \(link\)](#)

Experts:

- [Michael Latner](#) at Cal Poly is an expert on political participation and representation.
- [Michael Parsons](#) at NYU Law is an expert on alternative voting methods and election law.
- [Benjamin Reilly](#) at Murdoch University in Australia can speak to RCV's use internationally.
- [Caroline Tolbert](#) at the University of Iowa is an expert on American politics and political methodology
- [Todd Donovan](#) at Western Washington, and [David Kimball](#) at the University of Missouri-St. Louis have both published quality work on RCV.
- Former FairVote research manager, [Sarah John](#) at the University of Virginia, has also published a lot about RCV and representation.