



S.F. No. 1071 – Ranked Choice Voting

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Date: February 13, 2025

S.F. 1071 allows home rule charter or statutory cities, school districts, and counties to adopt ranked choice voting as a method of voting for local offices at general or special elections. The bill establishes new a new chapter of law, chapter 204E, to govern the use of ranked choice voting.

Section 1 [204B.35, subdivision 1; Application] adds a cross reference to chapter 204E in the statute on ballot preparation.

Section 2 [204C.21, subdivision 4; Ranked choice voting election] amends the statute on counting and piling ballots to specify that ranked choice voting elections must be counted according to the procedures in chapter 204E.

Section 3 [204D.07, subdivision 3; Exception; certain nonpartisan candidate] specifies that candidates in nonpartisan ranked choice voting elections are omitted from the state and county primary ballot.

Section 4 [204E.01; Applicability; authorized local adoption only] specifies that chapter 204E applies to all elections conducted using ranked choice voting. Minnesota election law applies to ranked choice voting elections unless otherwise provided.

Section 5 [204E.02; Definitions] provides definitions for chapter 204E.

Section 6 [204E.03; Authorization for local adoption] allows home rule charter or statutory cities, school districts, and counties to adopt ranked choice voting as a method of voting for local offices at general or special elections. Adoption may occur after January 1, 2026, or after the secretary of state adopts administrative rules governing ranked choice voting, whichever is later. Ranked choice voting must be adopted or repealed by a ballot question voted on by the voters of the jurisdiction. Requires agreements among jurisdictions in specified circumstances. Provides timelines for adoptions and repeal in relation to elections. Notice of adoption or repeal of ranked choice voting is required.

Section 7 [204E.04; Ballots in local ranked choice voting elections] establishes requirements for ranked choice voting ballots. If there are three or more qualified candidates, the ballot must allow a voter to rank at least three candidates for each office and must allow for write-in candidates. The ballot must include instructions to voters and indicate the number of seats to be elected for each office. If an election has both ranked choice voting and non-ranked choice voting, both must appear on the same ballot but must be clearly separated. A jurisdiction must not deviate for ballot order for federal, state, or constitutional amendments, but may deviate from the standard ballot order for other officers to accommodate the separation of ranked choice voting offices. The secretary of state must adopt rules regarding ranked choice voting ballot format.

Section 8 [204E.05; Local ranked choice voting tabulation center] provides requirements related to vote tabulation centers and vote tabulation.

Subdivision 1 [Tabulation of votes; generally] requires the ranked choice voting local election official to designate one location to serve as the ranked choice voting tabulation center. If the tabulation includes a manual count of physical ballots, the center must be accessible to the public.

Subdivision 2 [Precinct tabulation] requires the county auditor, municipal clerk, or school district clerk to deliver one set of summary statements, spoiled ballots, and envelopes continuing the ballots to the tabulation center as soon as possible after vote counting is completed and the election judges have returned materials.

Subdivision 3 [Notice of recess in count] provides that the ranked choice voting local election official may declare a recess at any time following receipt of materials. Notice of the recess must be provided and electronic voting data and ballots must be secured.

Subdivision 4 [Recording write-in votes] requires the judges and any other election officials designated by the ranked choice voting local election official to, at a time set by the ranked choice voting local election official, convene at the tabulation center to record the names and numbers of write-in votes. Requires a candidate for city or school district office who wants write-in votes to be counted to file a request to have write-in votes counted.

Subdivision 5 [Ranked choice vote tabulation] provides that after all votes have been recorded, the process of tabulating votes cast for offices to be elected using ranked choice voting must begin. The time is set by the ranked choice voting local election official. The counting must continue until preliminary results for all races are determined, unless a recess is declared.

Section 9 [204E.06; Tabulation of votes; single-seat elections] specifies the process to be used when ranked choice voting is used for an office in which one seat is to be filled. Provides the method for counting votes in the initial and subsequent rounds.

Section 10 [204E.07; Tabulation of votes; multiple-seat elections] specifies the process to be used when ranked choice voting is used for an office in which two or more seats are to be filled. Provides the method for counting votes in the initial and subsequent rounds.

Section 11 [204E.08; Local ranked choice voting elections; reporting results] requires each precinct to print a precinct summary statement which must include the number of first choice votes cast for each candidate. The local election official must provide a tabulation summary statement of

each race that includes specified information. In jurisdictions where ballots are scanned and recorded electronically, the local election official must provide an electronic spreadsheet of the cast vote record. The jurisdiction must canvass the election returns pursuant to the applicable statutes for the election being held. The canvassing board report must include specified information.

Section 12 [204E.09; Local ranked choice election recounts] provides that a candidate defeated in the final round of tabulation may request a recount in the same manner as for non-ranked choice voting elections. A candidate defeated in an earlier round may request a recount as provided in this section. The recount may start with the round in which a candidate who is requesting a recount was defeated. The secretary of state must adopt rules governing recounts.

Section 13 [204E.10; Local ranked choice elections; postelection review] provides that, at the canvass, the ranked choice voting local election official must select, by lot, the offices and precincts to be reviewed and to set the date, time, and place of the postelection review. Postelection review is not required for a hand count election. Requires the postelection review to be conducted in public. Sets minimum requirements for the review. Specifies the number of precincts to be hand-counted as part of the review process. Provides the standards of acceptable performance and the circumstances under which additional review is needed. Upon completion of the postelection review, the ranked choice voting local election official must immediately report the results to the county auditor and make the results available to the public. If the postelection review results in a change in the number of votes counted for a candidate, the revised vote totals must be incorporated into the official results. If a voting system failed to record votes accurately, the system must not be used at another election until it has been approved for use by the county auditor. The county auditor may order the city to conduct a hand recount of all ballots cast in the election.

Section 14 [204E.11; Rules] requires the secretary of state to adopt rules to implement the requirements of chapter 204E.

Section 15 [205.13, subdivision 2; Notice of filing dates] specifies that the notice to file affidavits of candidacy must include the method of election to be used for that office.

Section 16 [206.57, subdivision 6a; Required certification for ranked choice voting] requires a voting system vendor to obtain a test report from a voting system lab accredited by the Election Assistance Commission or other appropriate federal agency.

Section 17 [206.802; Electronic voting systems; purchasing] provides that a voting system purchased for use in Minnesota to administer ranked choice voting must be able to perform the stated functions. This section is effective upon certification by the secretary of state that equipment meeting the standards in this section is available for purchase and implementation.

Section 18 [Testing of voting systems] specifies that the public accuracy testing must test ranked choice voting capabilities if ranked choice voting will be used.

Section 19 [Appropriation] makes blank appropriations in fiscal years 2026 and 2027 from the general fund to the secretary of state for costs associated with implementing this act.



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