

# Ranked-choice voting could come to Massachusetts in 2022

Matt Murphy

State House News Service

Elections may never be the same after COVID-19. As the Legislature steams toward passage of a massive expansion of vote-by-mail for the 2020 elections, ranked-choice voting could be implemented in 2022.

The Legislature may have given itself until the end of the month to consider proposals for ranked-choice voting in future elections, but the extension for lawmakers did not change the deadline ballot campaigns face to turn in the final 13,374 voter signatures to local clerks by 5 p.m. On Wednesday.

Voter Choice for Massachusetts said Wednesday that it had submitted 25,000 additional signatures for inspection, adding to the record-setting 111,268 signatures the campaign had certified during the first round of gathering.

“Ranked Choice Voting is simple, fair and easy. On your ballot, you can vote for just one candidate like you always have, or you can rank your first choice, your second choice and your third choice, just like you rank things in order in your everyday life,” said Shauna Hamilton, Deputy Campaign Manager. “If your favorite candidate can’t win, your vote is instantly counted for your second choice so your vote matters more.”

Under a ranked-choice system, no candidate would win an election until they receive 50 percent of the vote. If no candidate has a majority after the initial votes are counted, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated and the ballots are recounted based on a voter’s highest-ranked remaining candidate until someone clears 50 percent.

Critics of ranked-choice voting argue that it's too complicated and could lead to unintended electoral consequences. The Legislature hasn't taken a position. The Committee on Election Laws has extended its deadline to June 26 to issue recommendations on all ranked-choice voting bills, including the initiative petition that could wind up on the ballot regardless of what the House and Senate decide.