LWVOR statement regarding STAR (Score then Automatic Runoff), May 2023

We fully recognize that STAR voting is preferred to plurality, as is true for almost every other electoral system. We further recognize that no system is perfect. Still, after much evaluation, we cannot support STAR when traditional Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is an option.

Of the many criteria considered when evaluating electoral systems, our **state and national** League positions emphasize several, which ultimately favor traditional RCV more than STAR. One example is that RCV, as an ordinal system, has a consistent translation of choices into votes, unlike STAR, which is a cardinal system. STAR's vulnerability on this criterion means that some voters can have more influence on election outcomes than others.

In addition, STAR, unlike traditional RCV, may elect a candidate who is clearly not the preference of the majority. These problems are due (1) to the fact that voters can rate more than one candidate at five or four stars and (2) to the way votes are counted in the first round of the STAR method, when all the stars for each candidate are totaled. The total number of stars determines each candidate's score and whether that candidate will advance to the final round. Because the sum of a candidate's stars includes ratings for voters' least preferred candidates, as well as duplicate high ratings for some candidates, STAR does not accurately reflect the voters' preferences.

The League positions also oppose strategic voting. Voters using STAR have opportunities to vote strategically in most three-or-more-candidate elections using the kind of polling data currently generated by the media. On the other hand, RCV Is quite resistant to strategic voting. With traditional RCV, voters can affect the outcome by voting strategically only in the very few races where voter support of different candidates falls within a narrow range, and only if extensive information about the preferences of other voters is available before the election.

The LWVOR 2017 advocacy position on Election Methods states,

> "*For single-winner systems, the League supports ranked-choice voting; we do not support range or approval voting. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports election systems that elect policy-making bodies–legislatures, councils, commissions, and boards–that proportionally reflect the people they represent*."

This position was adopted after a thorough study of various election methods followed by member discussion and consensus. It has also been re-adopted every two years since then. When League members completed a 2023 report on a two-year update-study of the 2016 Election Methods study, we found no reason to change this position. STAR voting is a form of range voting; therefore, it is not supported by the League for single-winner elections. Both STAR and RCV may be used for multi-winner elections, but STAR would not be preferable to traditional STV (Single Transferable Voting) in that case because of the vulnerabilities described above.