THE CENTER FOR
ElectionScience

New Heights

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

10 YEARS

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MISSION

The Center for Election Science is dedicated to empowering people with voting methods that strengthen democracy.

VISION

Our vision is a world where democracies thrive because voters' voices are heard.

Welcome Letter

On behalf of the board and staff of The Center for Election Science, welcome to the 2022 annual report – New Heights.

For CES, 2022 was a year of growth, learning, and success, which has set us on a path toward unparalleled achievement in the future.

We are thrilled to have made progress in our mission to bring positive change to our democracy. We saw tremendous results in our campaigns, public education, and research, with our team helping to put approval voting on the ballot in the largest jurisdiction to date. We also revealed an unparalleled dataset of polling that clarifies the enormous scale of our future opportunity.

Our communications team also pushed boundaries and experimented with innovative digital media tactics and messaging to raise awareness and educate the public about the benefits of approval voting. All this was possible due to our team's dedicated efforts and the unwavering support of our donors, who contributed a record-breaking amount to our work.
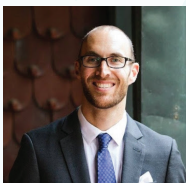
As much as we value success, we also recognize that setbacks are an inevitable part of any journey. In November, voters in Seattle had the opportunity to vote on Proposition 1A, which aimed to bring approval voting to the city.

Although the initiative was unsuccessful, we are incredibly proud of our grassroots partnership with Seattle Approves and our work together. Our coalition gave Seattle voters an opportunity to improve their elections. Despite the outcome, this experience only strengthens our resolve to continue advocating for better voting, which will lead to a more just and equitable democracy.

As Bill Gates said, "It's fine to celebrate success, but it is more important to heed the lessons of failure."

The results in Seattle taught us crucial lessons about movement building and partnerships to drive change. We are committed to putting these lessons into practice in the years ahead.

As we move forward, we remain dedicated to our core mission to improve American democracy through simple, transparent, and effective voting reform. Thank you for your ongoing support, which makes our work possible.

Michael T. Piel

MICHAEL T. PIEL
Director of Philanthropy
The Center for Election Science

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2022:
Reaching New Heights

The Center for Election Science continues to be the leading authority on approval voting. Our public education efforts have taken approval voting from an obscure concept confined to academia to the ballot box and beyond. Thanks to our academic research, campaign work, public relations, and social media, more people than ever before are engaging with our content and learning about our cost-effective reform to restore faith in our election system. This year we reached more people than ever!

Thanks to all our work, general awareness of approval voting as a viable political movement continues to grow.

PUBLICATIONS

Our public relations work also put approval voting in some of America's biggest newspapers and online publications during 2022, including:

THE HILL

FULCRUM

GeekWire

Richmond Times-Dispatch

VOTER TURNOUT

Beyond our work to spread the word anew, we can also celebrate the 2nd election in Fargo to use approval voting, and the heavy turnout to vote on a two-question ballot initiative that included approval voting.

15K
VOTERS WHO GOT TO CAST AN APPROVAL VOTING BALLOT

284K+
VOTERS WHO VOTED ON AN APPROVAL VOTING INITIATIVE

ONLINE PRESENCE

89K
WEBSITE VISITORS

19K+
FACEBOOK PAGE LIKES

59%
INCREASE IN LINKEDIN FOLLOWERS

3.6K+
TWITTER FOLLOWERS
(8% INCREASE)

A Learning Opportunity
in Seattle

Our campaign strategy has always been based on two foundational principles - local leadership and strong polling.

When we began supporting a ballot initiative campaign in Seattle in 2021, both of those requirements had been clearly met. Seattle Approves was spearheaded by two amazing Seattle residents, Troy and Logan. They had a history of community activism and political involvement, and our initial polling was overwhelmingly positive. According to a SurveyUSA poll from June - July 2021, 56% of respondents indicated they would support an approval voting initiative with the exact ballot language that was eventually used in 2022.

Under normal circumstances, these foundational elements point to victory, as they did previously in Fargo and St. Louis. Based on these results, CES provided unrestricted funding to help put approval voting on the ballot. Seattle Approves went through the painstaking work of gathering signatures to secure ballot access. Overall, Seattle Approves gathered more than 26,000 signatures from the general public. This process again pointed to a likely victory in the general election.

Unfortunately, the Seattle campaign was not normal. Less than four months before the election and with almost no notice, the Seattle City Council broke with precedent and unilaterally placed a competing ranked-choice voting ballot measure alongside approval voting. This action was due in-part to heavy last-minute collaboration with FairVote WA, despite the lack of any existing campaign or signature-gathering on their end. The Council and FairVote WA's proposal for a simulated runoff followed by a traditional runoff in Seattle was unusual. And due to Washington's existing top-two runoff requirement, RCV holds no practical value here. The city also estimated that this version of RCV will take many years to implement, which is not the case with approval. Recall that St. Louis was able to be implement approval voting in four months.

This unprecedented action upended the campaign, requiring voters to answer a two-question ballot initiative, and unexpectedly turned the campaign into a fierce competition for low-information voters. Voters were asked to first vote on reform in general in the first question, and then to choose between approval voting and ranked-choice on the 2nd question.

536 Registered Voters	All	Gender			Age				<50 / 50+		Race						Party Affiliation					
Credibility Interval: ± 5.1 pct points		Man	Woman	Other	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	18-49	50+	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Multirac	Other	Republic	Democrat	Independ	Socialis	Libertar	Other
Yes	56%	62%	50%	56%	67%	61%	40%	41%	64%	41%	60%	69%	63%	40%	26%	52%	62%	59%	48%	76%	88%	30%
No	17%	18%	16%	0%	9%	13%	28%	29%	11%	29%	18%	10%	4%	9%	39%	23%	16%	16%	20%	16%	4%	25%
Undecided	27%	20%	34%	44%	24%	26%	31%	30%	25%	31%	22%	21%	33%	51%	34%	26%	21%	25%	32%	9%	8%	45%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Composition of Registered Voters	100%	51%	47%	2%	37%	30%	20%	13%	67%	33%	67%	7%	6%	12%	5%	4%	7%	57%	24%	4%	2%	3%

Unfortunately, heavy spending from FairVote national's 501(c)4 arm and a party-backed infrastructure helped tip the scales for ranked-choice voting, and they won the head-to-head competition 3-to-1. On the first question, reform passed narrowly (50.1%-49.9%). It's a near certainty that the redundant and expensive runoff reform could not have passed in Seattle without the votes provided by supporters of approval voting.

There's much to learn from our experience in Seattle. Firstly, we must be prepared for the unexpected. In Seattle, the City Council intervened in an unprecedented way. In the future, we will be better prepared for meddling from elected officials or their allies. Secondly, the Seattle campaign emphasized the importance of strong communal ties and the support of political stakeholders during the preparation stage. Even though late polling showed the race tied between AV and RCV in October, they successfully leveraged their political ties. We overestimated the stability of our initial polling and goodwill generated through the signature-gathering, despite the changed political landscape.

As we look toward future campaign investments, we're focused on building strong relationships with established political networks and stakeholders long before an initiative hits the ballot. Our chapter network and supporters like you can play a pivotal role in establishing these relationships to ensure a robust response to attacks against our work.

In the end, our partnership helped give Seattle voters a chance to improve elections in their community, and we're proud to have supported this effort. But we will be ready for these challenges in the campaigns to come.
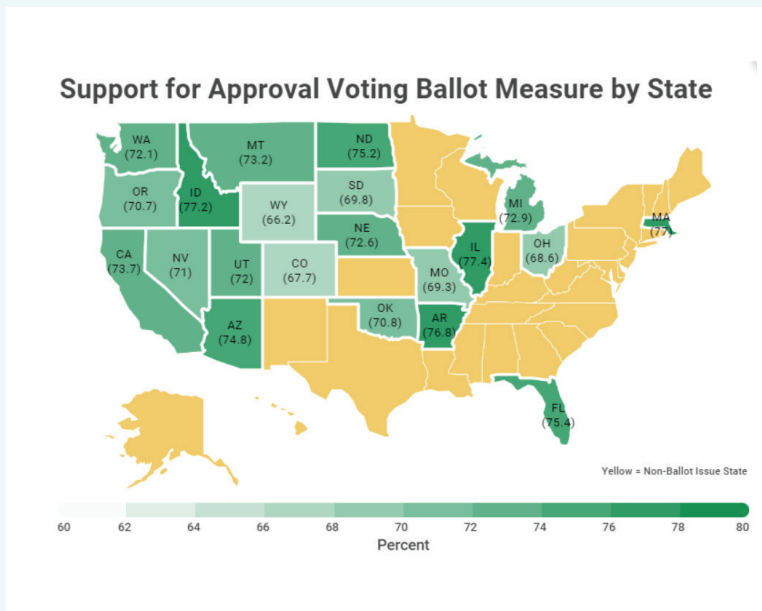

The CES family was happy to welcome our partners at Seattle Approves for a fun afternoon during our 2022 staff retreat in the Emerald City.

Fresh Polling
Leads the Way

From its founding, The Center for Election Science has taken a data-centered approach to our research and advocacy. Public support is essential to successful reform, and we're careful to poll public sentiment before investing in a reform effort.

In 2022, The Center for Election Science designed a comprehensive, two-part polling project to measure public opinion about approval voting. Our goal was to gain a comprehensive view of the opportunity space to guide our work.

Support for Approval Voting Ballot Measure by State

Yellow = Non-Ballot Issue State

Given our support for citizen-led advocacy, we polled the 21 states where ballot initiatives are legal. The results unequivocally show that Americans support approval voting.

The Toplines

Our sample of 21 states represents a broad cross-section of the American political landscape. We polled "blue," "red," and "purple" states as part of this project.

According to the results, at least 66.2% of voters in all 21 states would support a measure that included approval voting. Wyoming represents the "low-end" of support where "only" 66.2% of voters would support an approval voting measure.

On average, 7 out of 10 of all respondents said they would support an approval voting ballot measure in their state. This does not include any undecided voters. There, the number jumps higher.

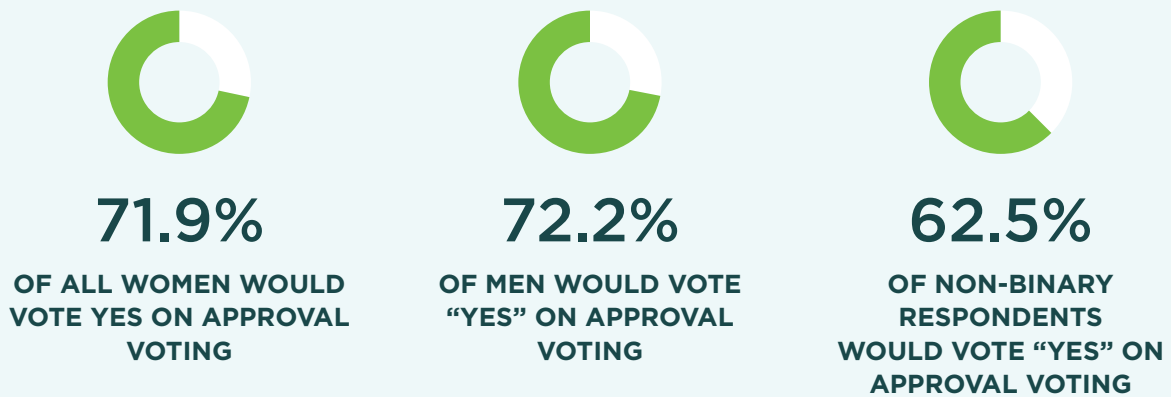### Support For Approval Voting Crosses The Political Divide

America's political camps are as divided as they've ever been. Few issues or reform ideas enjoy support from all sides of the political divide.

According to the results, roughly 8 out of 10 self-identified Democrats, 7 out of 10 self-identified Republicans, and 7 out of 10 self-identified Independents would support a measure that includes approval voting.
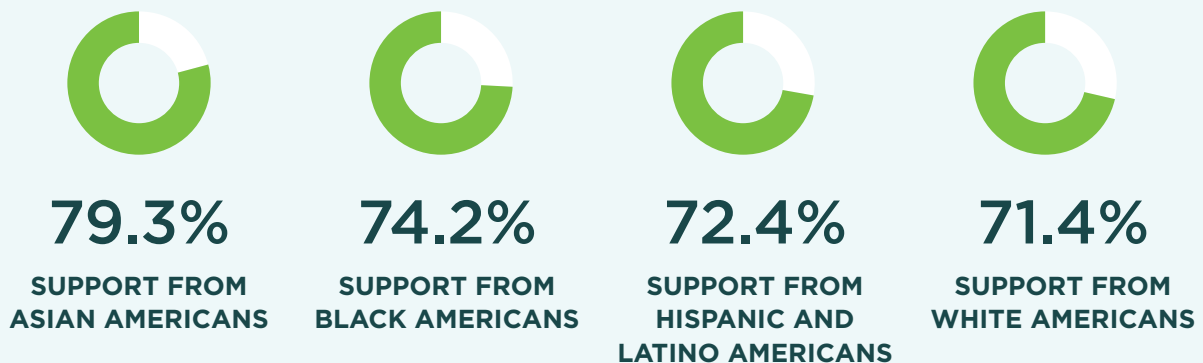
Approval Voting Has Broad Support Across Demographic Groups

Every election, political pundits pore over the demographic breakdown of the electoral results to discover the fault lines that defined the outcome. Regarding approval voting, the analysis is simple—there is support for the concept across the board.

As you can see from the data below, approval voting enjoys support among men and women and across ethnic and racial identities.

71.9%
OF ALL WOMEN WOULD VOTE YES ON APPROVAL VOTING

72.2%
OF MEN WOULD VOTE "YES" ON APPROVAL VOTING

62.5%
OF NON-BINARY RESPONDENTS WOULD VOTE "YES" ON APPROVAL VOTING

We see reliable support across the four largest racial and ethnic groups:

79.3%
SUPPORT FROM ASIAN AMERICANS

74.2%
SUPPORT FROM BLACK AMERICANS

72.4%
SUPPORT FROM HISPANIC AND LATINO AMERICANS

71.4%
SUPPORT FROM WHITE AMERICANS

Important Context

Our polling in each jurisdiction was based on optimal initiative language. In practice, Secretaries of State exercise a great deal of influence on the final ballot language. The process can vary from state to state.

It's also noteworthy that some states are more stringent than others regarding single-subject initiatives versus those where multiple reforms can be combined. Most states are single-subject rule states. In the states that aren't, we tested independent approval voting initiatives in each state, but also packages of policies centered on approval voting. Finally, we looked into multiple formats of approval voting, including a top-four runoff and approval voting with a top-two runoff.

Board Spotlight:
Kristine Reeves

Approval voting is a simple, yet novel, approach to bridging the ideological divide that threatens our democracy. Our movement aims to find out where we agree, and in it, there is room for people of all backgrounds. Ultimately, change will come through the combination of public activism and leadership from elected officials who recognize the need for change.

In 2022, CES was honored to welcome our first elected official to our Board of Directors, State Representative Kristine Reeves. Kristine brings a unique perspective to our team, because she has experienced the vote-splitting and divisive politics created by choose-one voting as a candidate. During her run for Congress in 2020, Kristine joined a field of 19 candidates vying for Washington's 10th congressional district. In the end, she finished in third place, amassing more than 29,000 votes (about 13% of the total). She missed advancing to the runoff by a little more than 5,000 votes. More important than the results of the vote-split were the politics that choose-one voting necessitated during the campaign.

"I got into that race to promote a positive, productive agenda for the voters. But because there were so many candidates, the competition became focused on differentiation from other candidates, in any way possible."

Choose-one voting is the root from which divisive politics grows. For Kristine, it was challenge to see the mudslinging all over the campaign from candidates that she knows and respects.

"I got into politics to solve problems and make progress on difficult issues. I like and respect many of the people who were in that primary, but my experience was a reflection of where choose-one voting fails the voters and the system. Elections should be about issues and goals, period."

When she was first elected in 2016, she became the African American woman elected to the Washington House in 18 years and the only woman in the legislature with children under the age of 5. Last fall she regained her seat after winning 57% in a hotly contested election.

As always, Kristine is focused on results for her constituents, valuing progress above ideology and the need for consensus.

"Productive government happens when you combine good ideas with a process that allows people to work together. Approval voting is a solution that can aide that perspective in political campaigns. It can give voters a louder voice and focus our elections on the things that matter."

The CES family is proud to have Kristine on the team.

> "Productive government happens when you combine good ideas with a process that allows people to work together. Approval voting is a solution that can aide that perspective in political campaigns. It can give voters a louder voice and focus our elections on the things that matter."

Donor Spotlight:
Evan Seagraves

What would a true consensus candidate look like on a national scale in America? That's the question CES supporter Evan Seagraves wants to answer when thinking about solutions to heal America's divisive politics.

Like most people, Evan has grown tired of the neverending campaign cycle, and the manufactured conflict that feeds it. According to Evan, "It feels like we're perpetually in campaign season." The environment created by choose-one voting has made it nearly impossible to address big problems. As someone with a background in life sciences, Evan has a deep concern for the environment, and the impact of pollution on the planet and individual humans. "Challenging problems like pollution caused by plastics can't be addressed when our leaders are more concerned with playing to their political base."

It was this desire for systemic political change that led him to Aaron Hamlin's interview on the 80,000 hours podcast, and approval voting. "I was already familiar with ranked-choice voting and it sounded good to me, but I hadn't really thought of our current voting method itself as a major culprit for our political dysfunction. But I became aware of RCV's administrative complexity, and its capacity to distort voter intent. Approval voting achieves all the intended goals of RCV in a much simpler way."

As an effective altruist, Evan is drawn to long-term experimentation and a data-backed approach to reform. He wants to see approval voting tested over the long-term in jurisdictions of all sizes. That thirst for more evidence is why he is motivated by CES' bottom-up, locally-led approach. "It makes sense to me that we should build this movement in phases. We have now put approval voting on the radar in bigger places, and we must keep going."

Another reason why Evan is drawn to approval voting is its flexibility as a reform. Rather than pinning all his hopes on one idea, Evan wants to see a broader approach to fixing our democracy. "Complementary reforms like open primaries would increase the consensus-forming value of our elections. I love that CES is all about getting results." Additionally, he appreciates the ongoing research to test our own assumptions. "I can't wait to dive into more research about the long-term impact of approval voting in Fargo and St. Louis. CES is the only organization out there doing this important research."

Thanks to supporters like Evan, our ambitions are only growing, as we look for bigger jurisdictions to test approval voting.

> "Complementary reforms like open primaries would increase the consensus-forming value of our elections. I love that CES is all about getting results."

Donor List

$100,000+

Building a Stronger
    Future
Dylan Hirsch-Shell
Survival & Flourishing
    Fund
Jeff Justice
John Hegeman
McKelvey Family
    Charitable Fund

$10,000-$99,999

Aidan Hendrickson
Eric Rogstad
Evan Seagraves
Jon Roberts
Jonathan Summers
Justine Metz
Patrick Purvis

$2,500-$9,999

Adam Moore
Brian Hegarty
Daniel Hegeman
Douglas Cantrell
Dustin Sands
Felix Sargent
Kerry Keys
Patrick Flanagan
Renee Slade
Timothy Morton
Timothy Swast
Todor Markov

$1,000-$2,499

Andrew Mehler
Ashby Foltz
Barbara Dijker
Brian Stephenson
Chris Loer
Clay Shentrup
Daniel Gierl
Frank Atwood
Greg Wolfe
Grey Nearing
Harvie Branscomb
Jason Lamb
Jennifer Doleac
Jordana Cox
Matthew Schnaider
Michael Ruvinsky

Michael VanBemmel
Michael Weinbaum
Peter McCluskey
Rick Joi
Robert Gressis
Steven Brams

$500-$999

Aaron Tellier
Adam Pickersgill
Auros Harman
Christine Morshedi
Dana Dahlstrom
Dominic Paris
Joe Kirby
Joseph Corliss
Joshua Staller
Justin Waterfield
Leon Smith
Matt Griffith
Michael Elgart
Neal DeVorsey
Randall Henderson
Robert Chen
Sairah Joseph
Tyler NeuCollins

$250-$499

Aaron Hamlin
Alfred Mikula
Bart Ingles
Benjamin Creasy
Bob Kresek
Brian Schultz
David Shivak
David Sokal
Eric Bell
Eric Bischoff
Frank Weible
Fuzzy Konner
Gabriel Nunes
Ian McCullough
Jan Kok
Jay Quigley
Jeffrey Bayes
Joshua Caplan
Lauren Fernandez
Les Vogel
Linda Bell
Matt Otis
Scott Burson
Tamir Duberstein

Thomas Kiefer
Valdon Hancock
Walter Horn

$100-$249

Adam Hoffman
Adrian Winchell
Andrew Jenkins
Barry Rafkind
Ben Payne
Bob Myers
Brett Bavar
Brian Kaufman
Britton Kerin
Catherine Watson
Chad Furman
CJ Cabourne
Clay Fouts
Dan Sanche
Danny Sleator
Debra Morrison
Dee M
Derek Britz
Dylan Payne
Elaine Rybski
Eric Leventhal Arthen
Erik Kuefler
Garett Jones
Grant Mathews
Jack Swiggett
Jacob Erbes
Jamie Walker
John and Mary Lehuta
John Baber-Lucero
John Turpish
Jonathan Heebner
Jordon Kalilich
Joseph Stormes
Kathleen Farrell
Kay Johnson
Kerry Devery
Linda J Albertano
Lindsey Cormack
Logan Bowers
Malte Skarupke
Mark Ulrich
Martin Racak
Matt Budde
Matthew Cormack
Matthew Welland
Meghan Day
Mike Osenar
Morton Brooks

Corporate Workplace Giving

Google Employee
    Matching
Facebook Employee
    Matching
Intel Foundation
    Employee Matching
Microsoft Matching
Oracle Matching Gifts
GitHub Employee
    Matching
Comcast Employee
    Giving
Playstation Cares Giving

Thank you to our many corporate donors for supporting our donors' philanthropy this year through matching gifts!

In 2022, these companies helped our individual donors double their donations through matching gifts. Interested in making your gift go twice as far? **Contact Mike Piel**, Director of Philanthropy, for more information on employer matching gift programs.

Board members' names appear in italics.

The foundation of our fundraising is a strong internal commitment to our programs—demonstrated by the fact that 100% of our board financially supports our work to implement fairer, more representative voting methods.

FINANCIALS

TOTAL REVENUE
$2,092,549

INDIVIDUAL PUBLIC SUPPORT
$860,163

BOARD SUPPORT
$336,152

CORPORATE SUPPORT
$274

DIRECT PUBLIC GRANTS
$888,248

INVESTMENTS
$5,397

MISCELLANEOUS REVENUE
$2,314

TOTAL EXPENDITURES
$1,450,204

RESEARCH ADVANCEMENT
$122,348

PUBLIC OUTREACH
$164,094

VOTING METHOD ADVANCEMENT
$351,172

FUNDRAISING
$141,393

ADMINISTRATIVE
$170,190

STAFFING AND RELATED COSTS*
$501,008

*Includes staff time appropriated to programs