

RRP Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is an electoral system where voters rank candidates in order of preference rather than selecting just one. The idea is that if no candidate gets a majority (over 50%) of first-choice votes, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and their votes are redistributed to the voters' next preferences until someone achieves a majority. The argument that RCV helps "Republicans In Name Only" (RINOs)—typically moderate or less ideologically rigid Republicans—stay elected stems from how this system can favor candidates with broader appeal over those with a strong but narrow base of support.

Here's how it might work in practice: In a traditional "first-past-the-post" system, a staunchly conservative candidate could win a Republican primary or a general election with, say, 35% of the vote, as long as no other candidate gets more, even if the remaining 65% of voters prefer more moderate options but split their votes among several candidates. This can happen in crowded primaries or districts with multiple factions. RCV changes this dynamic by allowing voters to rank their preferences, meaning a moderate Republican—a so-called RINO—could pick up second- or third-choice votes from voters who initially supported other candidates, including conservatives, independents, or even some Democrats in nonpartisan or open-primary settings. This can give the moderate a better shot at winning if they're seen as a "compromise" candidate acceptable to a wider swath of voters, rather than a polarizing figure who only energizes a smaller, fervent base.

Take Alaska's 2022 elections as an example. Senator Lisa Murkowski, often labeled a RINO for her moderate stances and willingness to break with party lines (like voting to convict Trump post-January 6), won re-election under RCV. In the first round, she trailed her Trump-backed conservative challenger, Kelly Tshibaka, but neither got a majority. As lower-tier candidates were eliminated, Murkowski gained enough second- and third-choice votes—likely from voters who leaned independent or preferred her over a hardline conservative—to secure the win. Similarly, in the special election for Alaska's House seat, Democrat Mary

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Peltola beat out two Republicans, Sarah Palin and Nick Begich, partly because RCV allowed voters to rank her as a second choice over Palin, even if they initially backed Begich. Critics, especially some conservatives, argue this shows RCV dilutes the influence of a strong partisan base, letting "less Republican" Republicans or even Democrats sneak through by appealing to a broader, less ideologically pure coalition.

The theory is that RCV rewards candidates who avoid extreme positions and seek wider support, which often aligns with RINOs—Republicans who might not toe the party line but can attract crossover votes. In a polarized primary, a hardline conservative might dominate first-choice votes but alienate too many voters to gain later preferences, while a RINO could lose the first round yet win by being "everyone's second favorite." Critics on the right, like some voices on X, claim this is "anti-democratic" because it can override the plurality winner, but supporters say it ensures winners have true majority support, not just a passionate minority.

That said, it's not a guarantee—RCV's impact depends on voter behavior and the specific field of candidates. In a deeply red area with mostly conservative voters, a RINO might still struggle if they can't rank high enough on enough ballots. But in competitive or diverse districts, RCV can indeed give moderates an edge by amplifying their appeal beyond a single faction.

Voting is paramount along with lobbying to repeal RCV. Alaska and Maine are the two states that currently have RCV.