



Liberal Dark Money Bankrolling the Push for Ranked-Choice Voting



Part of their broader efforts to remake the elections process in their favor, liberal dark money groups are leading the push to spread the flawed ranked-choice voting system across the country.

LEFT-WING SCHEME TO OVERHAUL OUR ELECTIONS

- Leading liberal dark money organizations are behind a coordinated push to radically overhaul the way our elections are conducted.
 - From [opposing](#) common sense election security measures like voter ID to [using](#) privately funded grants to influence election administration, the left has sought to transform our election process in their favor.
- Ranked-choice voting (RCV) is a key part of the left's strategy to remake elections across the country.
 - The RCV [process](#) would fundamentally change how elections work in America leading to extensive complications and undermining voter confidence in our democracy.
- While advocates of RCV claim the movement is bipartisan, records show that their push is bankrolled by a range of liberal dark money groups.
 - Notable [backers](#) behind RCV include Arnold Ventures, the Hewlett Foundation, Arabella Advisors' network, Soros groups, Tides Foundation, along with others.

RCV BANKROLLED BY LIBERAL DARK MONEY

- Arnold Ventures, tied to former Enron executive [John Arnold](#), has been a prolific [funder](#) of RCV initiatives throughout the United States.
 - Arnold Ventures has [funded](#) efforts to push RCV in states across the country, including Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Tennessee, Utah, Maine, Kansas, Oregon, Alaska, Georgia, Wisconsin, New Mexico, Wyoming, and Texas.
 - Arnold Ventures has [sent](#) over \$8.9 million to the leading RCV advocacy group FairVote.
 - Article IV, a group tied to Arnold, [contributed](#) over \$6.7 million in an effort to get RCV on the 2022 Missouri ballot. The Arnold's Action Now Initiative also reportedly contributed [\\$3 million](#) to Nevada Voters First, the in-state group backing jungle primaries and RCV in Nevada.
- Unite America has been another key [backer](#) of RCV initiatives across the United States.
 - Kathryn Murdoch, who is [noted](#) to be one of the most liberal members of her family, [primarily](#) funds Unite America and has individually given at least [\\$2.5 million](#) to Nevada Voters First, the group supporting RCV in Nevada.
 - In Massachusetts, Unite America and its board members were responsible for [\\$2.72 million](#) of the roughly \$7.77 million raised in favor of the RCV ballot initiative in 2020.

- Annual tax filings from 2018 to 2021 show [Unite America Institute](#) and [Unite America Inc](#) have together sent at least \$5.34 million to RCV initiatives.
- In addition, FairVote [notes](#) Unite America has been one of its leading funders.
- The Institute for Political Innovation (IPI) is “[leading](#) the effort to seed and support state-based campaigns for Final-Five Voting,” while receiving extensive dark money backing.
 - [IPI](#) is a 501(c)(3) created in 2020 to “advance the ideals of its founder,” Katherine Gehl, a former fundraising bundler for Barack Obama.
 - IPI and its affiliates reportedly received “[about \\$1 million](#)” from Democratic megadonor Reid Hoffman, [\\$100,000](#) from the Hewlett Foundation, and [\\$3 million](#) from Arnold Ventures’ Action Now Initiative, in addition to a [portion](#) Katherine Gehl’s fortune.
- The Hewlett Foundation has been a major [funder](#) of RCV initiatives in the United States, providing millions of dollars on FairVote.
 - The Hewlett Foundation has given at least [\\$3.62 million](#) to FairVote, [\\$1.85 million](#) to the Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center, and has [backed](#) research supporting RCV.
 - The Hewlett Foundation has noted it plans to “[wind down](#)” funding to RCV initiatives now that the coalition led by FairVote has grown and other funders are now involved.
- The Soros-backed Open Society Foundations has [contributed](#) to RCV initiatives.
 - The Open Society Policy Center gave \$150,000 to the Democracy for America Advocacy Fund to support “policy advocacy on ranked choice voting.”
 - Open Society Foundations is one of the largest left-wing dark money organizations that has contributed millions to liberal PACs and progressive advocacy groups.
- Arabella Advisors’ dark money network has backed groups pushing RCV initiatives.
 - Arabella’s Hopewell Fund contributed \$433,108 to Article IV, which bankrolled a push for RCV in Missouri.
 - Arabella Advisors operates the “largest left-wing dark money network” in the nation and spent over \$1.4 billion in 2022 alone on left-wing candidates and progressive issues.
- Tides Foundation, a major [network](#) of left-wing dark money groups with ties to Arabella Advisors, has contributed at least [\\$505,000](#) to FairVote since 2018.

THE FATALLY FLAWED RCV SYSTEM

- Numerous places have tried RCV only to repeal it soon after, often after only a single election.
 - In Utah, more than half of the [cities](#) participating in an RCV pilot program have walked away [citing](#) voter confusion and distrust.
 - Arlington County, Virginia [canceled](#) plans to adopt RCV for general elections in 2023 after using it to conduct a primary election earlier in the year.
- RCV makes it harder to vote and [increases](#) the risk of voters committing mistakes on their ballots that consequently cause their vote to be rejected.
 - Because voting takes longer, RCV risks longer lines at the polls. Lengthier ballots are also more expensive to print and mail.
 - Research has [indicated](#) that overall voter turnout may be negatively impacted under an RCV system, in particular among minority and low-propensity voters.

- RCV also complicates ballot tabulation and has proven to create delays and errors in the process.
 - In Oakland, California, officials failed to detect a tabulation error and certified the [wrong](#) winner in a 2023 RCV school board race. The true winner was forced to file a lawsuit in order to take his seat.
 - The Alaska Division of Elections [withheld](#) initial round-by-round tallying in the 15-day ballot return window in its first RCV election due to concerns over confusing the public.
 - In 2021, the results of the Democratic primary in New York City mayoral race were delayed by 14 days due to widespread absentee voting and multiple rounds of RCV tabulation, and further devolved into “[chaos](#)” after test ballots were erroneously tallied.
- The RCV pitch claims it will ensure candidates win true electoral majorities, but the RCV “majority” is only created by tossing out ballots and redistributing votes to other candidates.
 - In 2021, Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey was reelected with just [43%](#) of first-choice votes but was able to claim 56% of votes after they were redistributed using the RCV system.
 - In 2018, incumbent Rep. Bruce Poliquin (R-ME) initially [won](#) the plurality of first-place votes but ultimately lost to Democrat Jared Golden under the RCV system.
 - In 2010, *The New York Times* even [proclaimed](#) the “power of finishing second in a ranked-choice election” after Don Perata won the first-place votes as candidate for Oakland mayor but ultimately lost due to RCV.
- RCV effectively [disenfranchises](#) voters if their candidates are eliminated, an [study](#) has shown that a significant number of votes are routinely tossed out in RCV elections.
 - Under RCV, voters’ ballots become “exhausted” and are tossed out if voters do not rank every candidate and their picks are eliminated.
 - Importantly, even the RCV advocacy group FairVote has [acknowledged](#) that close to one in three voters, on average, do not rank more than one candidate in RCV elections.
- Under RCV, it is possible that so many [ballots](#) can be tossed out that the chosen winners do not even secure a majority of the total number of votes cast in an election.
 - In 2022, Democrat Mary Peltola won just [40.2%](#) of first-choice votes but was still elected to Congress under the new RCV system implemented in Alaska. In fact, Mary Peltola won just 48.4% of the total votes cast but was able to claim 51.5% after [11,222](#) ballots were “exhausted” following the first round and were subsequently tossed out.