1   H.363

2   Introduced by Representatives Hooper of Burlington and Nugent of South

3   Burlington

4   Referred to Committee on

5   Date:

6   Subject: Elections; local elections; ranked-choice voting

7   Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to permit towns,

8   cities, and villages to opt-in to a uniform ranked-choice voting system for

9   elections of candidates running for single-seat offices.

10   An act relating to town, city, and village elections for single-seat offices
11   using ranked-choice voting

12   It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

13   Sec. 1. 17 V.S.A. chapter 55, subchapter 4 is added to read:

14   Subchapter 4. Ranked-Choice Voting

15   § 2691a. DEFINITIONS

16   As used in this subchapter:

17   (1) "Candidate" means a candidate running for a single-seat office in a

18   town, city, or village that has adopted the ranked-choice voting system

19   pursuant to section 2691b of this title.

1   (2) "Candidate pairing" means a unique dyadic arrangement of two

2   different candidates contending for an office in an election. If N is the number

3   of candidates contending for an office, then the number of candidate pairings is

4     $N(N-1)/2$.

5   (3) "Consistent majority winner" means the sole candidate who is the

6   winning candidate in every paired comparison among all candidates.

7   (4) "Paired comparison" or "head-to-head comparison" means an

8   evaluation of two candidates for the purpose of determining which candidate

9   has the greater number of ballots ranking that candidate over the other

10   candidate in the pair.

11   (5) "Plurality" means the election outcome in which one candidate

12   receives more votes than any other candidate, but not necessarily a majority of

13   the votes cast.

14   (6) "Presiding officer" means the town clerk or an alternative official as

15   provided for in section 2452 of this title.

16   § 2691b. RANKED-CHOICE VOTING SYSTEM; APPLICATION

17   (a) Application. Unless otherwise specified by State law, the provisions of

18   the ranked-choice voting system described in this subchapter shall not apply to

19   the election of a candidate running for a single-seat office in a town, city, or

20   village unless that town, city, or village votes, at its annual meeting or at a

21   special meeting called for that purpose, to have those provisions apply.

1   (b) Duration. Once a town, city, or village votes to adopt the ranked-choice

2   voting system described in this subchapter, this ranked-choice voting system

3   shall be used in that manner until the town, city, or village votes to discontinue

4   use of the system.

5   (c) Australian ballot system. In order to begin using a ranked-choice

6   voting system, a town, city, or village must be using the Australian ballot

7   system, pursuant to section 2680 of this title, at the time of an election using a

8   ranked-choice voting system.

9   § 2691c. RANKED-CHOICE VOTING SYSTEM; BALLOTS

10   (a) Form of ballot. Notwithstanding any contrary provisions in section

11 2681a of this title, a ballot for an election using the ranked-choice system in a

12 town, city, or village shall allow voters to rank candidates in order of ordinal

13 preference. The names of all candidates on the ballot shall be listed in

14 alphabetical order. The ballot shall allow voters to assign rankings to

15 candidates that are equal to the number of printed candidate names and blank

16 write-in lines.

17   (b) Counting votes.

18   (1) A ballot assigning a candidate a lower ordinal preference shall be

19 considered to have assigned a higher ranking to that candidate than to a

20 candidate who was assigned a higher ordinal preference. A ballot assigning a

21 candidate with the lowest ordinal rank shall be considered to have designated

1   that candidate as the highest-ranked candidate on that ballot and the voter's

2   first-ranked preference.

3   (2) A voter may assign multiple candidates the same ranking.

4   (3) Any candidate not assigned a ranking on a ballot shall be considered

5   to have a lower ranking than every candidate assigned with any ordinal

6   ranking.

7   § 2691d. RANKED-CHOICE VOTING SYSTEM; IMPLEMENTATION

8   (a) Implementation. A town, city, or village that has adopted the ranked-

9   choice voting system pursuant to section 2691b of this title shall implement its

10   elections of candidates running for single-seat offices in that town, city, or

11   village in accordance with this section.

12   (b) Tabulation at polling places. All elections using the ranked-choice

13   voting system shall be tabulated at polling places by the presiding officer.

14   (c) Initial tabulation. Upon tabulation of the ballots, if a candidate receives

15   a majority of first-ranked preferences, that candidate is declared the winner of

16   the election.

17   (d) Additional tabulation.

18   (1) Upon tabulation of the ballots, if no candidate receives a majority of

19   first-ranked preferences, the ballots shall be tabulated again by paired

20   comparison and examining every possible paired comparison. In each paired

1   comparison, the presiding officer shall note the winning candidate in each

2   paired comparison or if there is instead a tie.

3   (2) Consistent majority winner. If a candidate is the winning candidate

4   in every paired comparison, the candidate shall be declared the winner of the

5   election.

6   (3) No consistent majority winner. If there is no candidate who is the

7   winning candidate in every paired comparison, then the winning candidate of

8   the paired comparison involving the two candidates having the most first-

9   ranking preferences is declared the winner.

10   § 2691e. RESULTS REPORTING

11   Results for an election using the ranked-choice voting system shall be

12   published at polling places on the day of the election as soon as practicable

13   after the closing of polling places. Results shall indicate:

14   (1) the number of first-ranked preference ballots each candidate received

15   in the initial tabulation; and

16   (2) an accounting of the paired comparisons, including a list of all paired

17   comparisons, the candidates in each paired comparison, the number of ballots

18   assigned ranking each candidate over the other candidate in each paired

19   comparison, and the winner of each paired comparison.

1 § 2691f. RULEMAKING

2 The Secretary of State shall adopt rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 for

3 the proper and efficient administration of the ranked-choice system in towns,

4 cities, and villages.

5 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

6 This act shall take effect on passage.