



JOHN ZOGBY STRATEGIES

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June 10, 2021 - Poll of Likely Voters in New York City

Executive Summary

A new poll commissioned by Unite NY and conducted among 1003 likely voters in all five boroughs by John Zogby Strategies, finds that overall, 75% of voters agree with having up to five candidates they can choose in rank order - known as ranked choice voting - for both the primaries and general election. Only 21% disagree.

The poll was conducted on June 7 and has a margin-of-sampling error of +/- 3.2 percentage points for overall results. Error margins are higher for sub-groups. For our detailed online methodology, please click [here](#).

Approval of ranked choice voting (RCV) was across the board, including Democrats (80% agree-14% disagree), Republicans (69%-17%), and independents (77%-19%).

Among the features of RCV most appreciated was that the process of ranking avoids a costly post-primary runoff – 70% were favorable while only 23% were unfavorable.

When asked top-of-mind what they liked the most about RCV, the most popular response at 30% was the fact that it “offered voters more choices”, followed by “everything” (8%), both “ease” and “fairness” (5% each), and “no runoff” (3%). Seventeen percent said there was “nothing” they liked most.

What do they like least about RCV? Two in five said “nothing” (39%), while a total of one in four cited either “confusion” (15%) and “too many choices” (11%).

A total of 14 statements favorable to RCV were presented to respondents. In every case, at least three in five agreed with the statement while no more than one in four (27%) disagreed. Here are the statements in rank order of agreement:

Message	Agree	Disagree
<i>The politics of extremes is tearing country apart</i>	75%	18%
<i>It is better to have multiple options, still can vote for one</i>	75%	18%
<i>Greater voice to candidates not endorsed by party/interests</i>	72%	19%
<i>Can help non-established candidates not beholden</i>	71%	27%
<i>Shifts power away from party officials</i>	69%	22%
<i>Need to see more choices beyond 2 parties</i>	68%	21%
<i>Puts people back in charge</i>	68%	23%
<i>Produce a majority winner without a costly runoff election</i>	68%	24%
<i>Tired of only 1 choice, lesser of two evils</i>	66%	27%



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Agree with both “99% are squeezed” and “drain the swamp”	65%	22%
<i>People now have the power that party bosses had exclusively</i>	65%	21%
<i>Will improve politics in New York City</i>	64%	22%
<i>Can reduce corruption</i>	63%	25%
<i>Not in NYS’ interests to be only 1 of 10 with closed primary</i>	61%	25%

Analysis

On November 5, 2019, New York City voters passed Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) by a 3 to 1 margin for mayoral and city elections. As New Yorkers prepare to vote in local primaries on June 22, they have no less enthusiasm for the new process. Only a fraction – one in five -- disapprove of RCV as a whole and just about the same percentages – one in five to one in four – disagree with the key arguments on behalf of the voting change.

The polling numbers reveal a local electorate that reflects the national mood of distrust in the electoral process as it has existed and a willingness to transfer power to the voters themselves away from “*party bosses*” and “*special interests*”. Contrary to the counter-argument that RCV only causes confusion and unnecessary complication, an overwhelming majority of respondents say they prefer genuine choice, multiple candidates, more opportunities to consider independent (i.e., non-beholden) candidates, and an avoidance of costly runoffs following traditionally brutal primaries.

Of great significance is the fact that 75% agree that the current politics which encourages extremes is “*tearing this country apart*” and that 65% actually agree with popular slogans from both populist wings of the two parties that “*the 99% are getting squeezed*” and it is time to “*drain the swamp.*” Further, about two in three agree that RCV “*provides a step forward that can reduce corruption*” and “*improve the politics of New York City*”.

While 75% agree that their “*vote is counted accurately*”, 16% disagree and another 9% are not sure. It appears from the poll’s findings that New York City voters are hopeful, if not outright optimistic, that this voter reform is a step towards major improvement of how elections are conducted.