

Are you ready for ranked-choice voting?

The Nov. 6 General Election for the offices of U.S. Senate and U.S. Congress will be conducted using a method of ranked-choice voting. Ranked-choice voting, sometimes called “instant run-off voting,” allows voters to choose their candidates in order of preference, by marking candidates as their first, second, third, and subsequent choices.

The votes are tabulated in rounds, with the lowest-ranked candidates eliminated in each round until there are only two candidates remaining in the final round and the candidate with the most votes is declared the winner. It is different from our previous method of voting, in which voters choose only one candidate for each office and the winner is determined by plurality (whoever gets the most votes).

Ranked-choice voting is only applied when there are three or more candidates running for the same office. Thus, for the Nov. 6 General Election, you will receive a ranked-choice ballot for:

- The U.S. Senate race: Incumbent U.S. Sen. Angus King (I), Maine Sen. Eric Brakey (R), and Zak Ringelstein (D)
- The U.S. Congressional District 1 race: Incumbent U.S. Rep. Chellie Pingree (D), Mark Holbrook (R), and Maine Rep. Martin Grohman (I)
- The U.S. Congressional District 2 race: Incumbent Rep. Bruce Poliquin (R), Maine Rep. Jared Golden (D), Tiffany Bond (I) and William Hoar (I).

To mark the ballot for your first-choice candidate – the person who you would most like to see win the office – simply fill in the oval next to their name in the “1st Choice” column. If you wish to rank some or all of the remaining candidates in order of your preference, you may do so, or you can choose to vote for only your first choice. To mark a candidate as your second choice, fill in the oval next to their name in the “2nd Choice” column, and so on.

U.S. Senator	1 st Choice	2 nd Choice	3 rd Choice	4 th Choice	5 th Choice	6 th Choice	7 th Choice	8 th Choice
Duck, Donald	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○
Flintstone, Fred	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○
Grainger, Hermione	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Mouse, Michael	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○
Man, Spider	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○
Man, Super	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○
Woman, Wonder	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○
Write-in <i>Bear, Smokey</i>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●

In the ballot example at right, the voter is choosing candidates in the race for U.S. Senator. This person chose to rank all of the candidates, with Hermione Grainger marked as their first-choice candidate and Spider Man as their third-choice candidate.

You can find additional resources and details about ranked-choice voting on the Department of the Secretary of State website RCV Resources page, <http://maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/upcoming/rcv.html> You can vote at the polls on Election Day, Nov. 6, or request an absentee ballot from your town clerk or online at <http://maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/voter-info/absent.html>