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December 16, 2008

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Commissioner Mulroy Honored for Reform Efforts

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Shelby County Commissioner Steve Mulroy has been awarded one of three inaugural Democracy Innovator Awards by FairVote, a national nonprofit election reform and voting rights organization. Mulroy received the award in the Local Reform category for "his effective advocacy of instant runoff voting, which was supported this year by 71% of voters for future city elections in the City of Memphis, and for his ground-breaking law review articles about proportional voting systems and the Voting Rights Act."

Other awardees were U.S. Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) in the National Reform category and Maryland state legislators Jamin Raskin and Sheila Hixson in the State Reform category.

The full text of the press release announcing the awards is as follows:

FairVote Announces Inaugural Democracy Innovator Awards

FairVote, a national nonpartisan, nonprofit election reform and voting rights organization, yesterday announced the inaugural winners of its Democracy Innovator awards at the conclusion of a conference about innovative election reforms. FairVote will issue its Democracy Innovator annually in recognition of outstanding local, state and national leaders for their effective advocacy of innovative policies to improve our elections,

This year's 2008 winners are:

National Reform: Senator Bill Nelson (FL) won for developing and introducing an omnibus package of needed electoral reforms that include direct election of the president and innovative ways to improve voter registration, secure elections and meaningful primaries. Sen. Nelson's legislative counsel Matt Nosanchuk accepted the award on behalf of Sen Nelson

State Reform: Maryland state senator Jamin Raskin and Maryland state representative Sheila Hixson won for their leadership in Maryland in 2007 becoming the first state to adopt the National Popular Vote plan for presidential elections and for advancing several innovative proposals encouraging voter participation. Sen. Raskin accepted the award for himself and on behalf of Delegate Hixson.

Local Reform: Shelby County (TN) commissioner and University of Memphis law professor Steven Mulroy won for his effective advocacy of instant runoff voting, which was supported this year by 71% of voters for future city elections in the City of Memphis, and for his ground-breaking law review articles about proportional voting systems and the Voting Rights Act. Commissioner Mulroy accepted the award.

"Each of these leaders has been a true inspiration to Americans across the country," said Rob Richie, executive director of FairVote. "They embody the spirit of innovation and bold leadership that defines our country."

FairVote is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization that promotes such electoral reforms as universal voter registration; advance voter registration and civic learning for 16-year-olds; instant runoff voting for one-winner offices; the

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Steve Mulroy

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National Popular Vote plan for presidential elections; and proportional voting and redistricting reform for legislative elections. Musician and author Krist Novoselic heads FairVote's board, where he is joined by the *New Yorker's* Hendrik Hertzberg, former presidential candidate John B. Anderson, Advancement Project counsel Edward Hailes, Jr. and other reform leaders. For more information, contact Rob Richie at (301) 270-4616.

COMMENTS

10 comments posted for this article

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Brad Watkins (Bradwat@gmail.com), Midtown 12/ 8/2008 - 12:30pm

Congrats to Commissioner Mulroy and also a special thanks to Yesonfive campaign director Derek Haire. You both did outstanding work and have provided a service to the community. Instant Runoff Voting is a major reform, and we at Change Memphis feel that there needs to be an ongoing voter education program for Memphis voters BEFORE the next election cycle, so that these reforms will be fully understood by the residents of Memphis for IRV and other reforms like Staggered Terms for City Council members. Change Memphis plans on continuing our efforts to raise awareness in the upcoming year www.changememphis.net

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mvymvy 12/ 8/2008 - 12:51pm

The National Popular Vote bill would guarantee the Presidency to the candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states (and DC). Every vote would be politically relevant and equal in presidential elections. The bill would take effect only when enacted, in identical form, by states possessing a majority of the electoral votes—that is, enough electoral votes to elect a President (270 of 538). When the bill comes into effect, all the electoral votes from those states would be awarded to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states (and DC). The bill is currently endorsed by 1,181 state legislators — 439 sponsors (in 47 states) and an additional 742 legislators who have cast recorded votes in favor of the bill. The National Popular Vote bill has passed 21 state legislative chambers, including one house in Arkansas, Colorado, Maine, North Carolina, and Washington, and both houses in California, Hawaii, Illinois, New Jersey, Maryland, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The bill has been enacted by Hawaii, Illinois, New Jersey, and Maryland. These four states possess 50 electoral votes — 19% of the 270 necessary to bring the law into effect. See <http://www.NationalPopularVote.com>

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tomguleff (tomguleff@gmail.com), tomguleff 12/ 8/2008 - 8:14pm

Congrats to Steve M. ! I would also honor Brad Watkins, David Holt, Derek Haire, and Steve Steffen for voicing their concerns over bogus sample ballots that attempted to disrupt the other measures, too. Let's not forget the father of the charter commission : Mr John Lunt and his team that put this all in motion. Real reform never starts with politicians.

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Dmirth, southwest 12/ 9/2008 - 8:56am

This award for pushing IRV was given by FairVote - another George Soros type -ACORN type activist group who are trying to steal elections and create rigged election systems like Instant Runoff voting. With IRV your vote can be manipulated after the fact. They call it "reform" but IRV was concocted over 100 years ago and it violates one-person,one-vote. Mr. Mulroy is either a co-conspirator, or a dupe. Wake up people - they're trying to steal your democracy!

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Packrat, mempho 12/ 9/2008 - 9:28am

"Wake up people!" The shrill battle cry of tinfoil hat enthusiasts everywhere. (var. "wake up America!")

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Dmirth, southwest 12/ 9/2008 - 9:58am

Typical - debate avoidance via demonization. THAT is a tactic of the Tinfoil Hat wearing crowd. People do need to wake up. Most of them don't understand what IRV is. IRV is not reform - it's regression. Here are some links you could use to educate yourself - unless you choose to remain ignorant: <http://reformthelp.org/issues/voting/runoff.php> <http://champaigncountymdemocrats.org/2007/11/29/why-i-oppose-irv-for-urbana/> <http://bluenc.com/%22now-how-did-this-guy-get-elected%22-or-election-reform-and-cary-ncs-future>

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Packrat, mempho 12/ 9/2008 - 11:46am

dmirth, I'm just making sport of the use of the battle cry of telling everyone else who one doesn't see the urgency of one's opinion to "wake up." Perhaps you're not familiar with Floyd R. Turbo, American?

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autoegocrat, Memphis 12/10/2008 - 12:55am

For the class, please tell us what "George Soros type ACORN type activist group" means.

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B, midtown 12/10/2008 - 9:27am

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Silvio vs. the Buses

tcby32: i spent a day with silvio a few years ago and it was the best...

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Ice, Ice, Baby!

Jeff: Is it over?

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olemiss: I don't know if the owners are right-wing sugardaddies, but when I'm in Little Rock...

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Man Bites Dog! Newspaper Gives Hundreds of Thousands in Christmas Bonuses!

Jeff: It always helps when you have billionaire right-wing sugardaddies padding the P&Ls. Nobody ever talks...

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"Chinese Democracy" Tanks

Chris Davis: Wow. It's so "meh" nobody even wants to pile on. Has anybody used the headline...

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rantboy: Uh..no. It was never based in reality....

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Your links misrepresent how IRV really works (not to mention that I could care less if some libertarian in Wisconsin feels about the issue).

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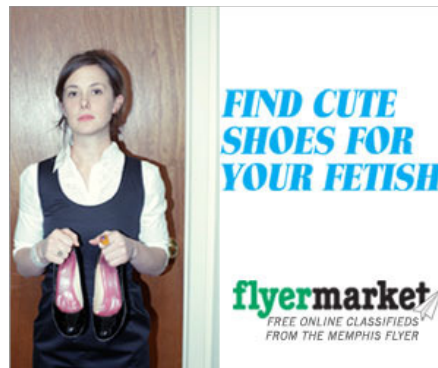
bluevoter, NE

12/10/2008 - 12:38pm

IRV is an important pro-democracy reform. My own city of Burlington, VT started using IRV in our mayoral elections in 2006. We had five candidates with no concerns about "spoilers." Exit polls showed that voters overwhelmingly preferred IRV to the former election method. And voters had no difficulty with the ranked-choice ballot. Fully 99.9% of the votes cast in the mayor's race were valid. The polls closed at 7 pm and by 8:37 pm election night the IRV tally had been completed (since no candidate received a majority of first choices), and the winner was announced. IRV worked great. I hope more jurisdictions adopt it.

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