

Clean and Open Elections Task Force

Meeting Notes, March 19, 2018

I. Participation

In attendance

Joe Beckmann, Nate Clauser, Ariel Horowitz, Andrew Levine, Sara Oaklander, Vishal Doshi, Josh Rosmarin

Not in attendance

Annie Connor, Nick Salerno, J.T. Scott, Eric Weisman

II. Voter Turnout Matrix – Josh Rosmarin

Notes will capture larger thoughts on format and anything that may be missing

Impact – what is the unit?

- Percentage points – if turnout increases from 30% to 33%, that would be a 3pp increase

Any categories/features we could add to the matrix?

- Description Line
 - Would be helpful to summarize the policy
 - Makes it easier to look at variations of these policies too
- Rating System
 - Could add some kind of rating system with an icon/scale for some of these criteria
 - A visual shorthand (say 4 out of 5 light bulbs to show something ranks high in novelty) that makes it easier to follow for a public audience
- Home Rule
 - Whether a policy requires a home rule petition or not could be its own category
 - Jurisdiction as most important category – will show what the city can do and what requires state approval
- Applicability
 - Applicability to other cities – makes things potentially more feasible, including in getting passed legislatively through the State
- Chronological differences
 - When are these recommendations implemented?
 - Within or outside of election season?
- Symbolism
 - Gets at how much these policies will work to solve the problem versus existing instead as a symbolic action

Other Reforms Matrix Could Include

- Single representation voting/ other forms of elections besides first past the post
 - Operates on a different dimension from voter turnout
 - However, ranked choice could eliminate a primary election, which is often marked by low turnout, and may improve turnout
- Automatic Voter Registration (By definition needs to be statewide)
- Vote by mail (Would need to be from the state)

Could this matrix/categories also be used for issues on candidate side?

- Quite possibly – gives relevant factors to consider
- Harder to measure on the impact side

Description of reforms in the matrix we have not talked about as much

- Moving municipal elections to align with state and federal
- Vote centers
 - Instead of having a specific polling place, you can vote anywhere in a city – a grocery store, the T, other convenient places (Requires significant state intervention)
- Election Day Registration
 - (Requires significant state intervention, but could be driven more at the local level)
- Outreach from Election Officials
 - Local clerks tell people voting is important using pro-social norms
- Polling place festivals
 - Celebrate voting, offer free things, and make voting family friendly; Make voting fun; evidence supports this idea; super novel;
- Longer polling place hours – less evidence behind this one
- Election Day Holiday
 - Closing schools can make it harder to vote. Possible backlash. Not lots of evidence of success on this.
- Voter Guides – Something official coming from city telling you everything in ballot
 - Voter guides from campaigns help with persuasion, not necessarily for turnout
 - More on level of civic innovations that could help but aren't as connected
- Weekend Voting – Can take several forms – replace Tuesday, or offer it as another day
 - Effects are ambiguous, and already have early voting for state elections
- Move polling places that are located in police stations
 - Don't have a measure of effect, but there are some concerns on its face in certain voter advocate circles

- Are there other locations that may make certain voters uncomfortable, like churches?
 - May be a bucket here of moving polling places to civic spaces only – may be ADA challenges to this currently
- Non-citizen Voting
- Under 18 Voting
- Incarcerated Voting Rights

III. *Process for Recommendations*

- Options for how much we want to share our process along with our recommendations
 - Share our top recommendations alone, without process
 - Share criteria and recommendations based on them
 - Share references and bibliography, including places that have done this before to prove feasibility
 - Share research, rationale, and ratings, like this matrix
- Would also help to share what will require a home rule petition and what will not

IV. *Timeline*

- Have two more months – could make it three, but need to be mindful
- Want to discuss disclosure, and additional pending items
- May help to have a longer meeting to discuss recommendations
- Would like to have templates of issues and a notional outline
- How fully formed should our recommendations be?
 - Draft legislation is absolutely not necessary
- Where else do we need more information?
 - Follow up with Nick about feasibility of consolidating elections

V. *Next Steps*

- Next meeting: March 27
 - Alternative voting systems (ranked choice, Instant runoff) - Vishal
 - Disclosure laws – Ariel
 - Outline template – Ariel
- April 10th may need to change
- April 24 – longer meeting for discussion of recommendations, 6-9 pm, with food