



Legislation Text

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CITY of ALBUQUERQUE
TWENTY FIFTH COUNCIL

COUNCIL BILL NO. O-22-42 ENACTMENT NO. _____

SPONSORED BY: Isaac Benton and Tammy Fiebelkorn, by request

ORDINANCE

Ranked Choice Voting Deleting And Replacing Article II, Sections 7 And 8 Of The City Charter
(Benton, Fiebelkorn by request)

WHEREAS, the City of Albuquerque City Charter includes an election provision requiring elected office holders to receive at least 50% of the total number of votes cast for their respective office in order to be elected stating:

“Those persons who are candidates for Mayor or Councilor and receive the largest number of votes cast for the office in question are elected, provided the number of votes equals or exceeds 50% of the total number of votes cast for the office;” and

WHEREAS, at present, if no candidate for office meets the 50% threshold required by the Charter, a runoff election must be held within 45 days where the two candidates with the highest number of votes cast are placed on the ballot; and

WHEREAS, since the runoff provisions have been in place, the City has been required to hold four runoff elections, including a runoff election in 2013 for Council District 7 (which included a city-wide election in order to also accommodate a ballot initiative) which cost the City \$667,045, a Mayoral runoff election in 2017 which cost the City \$840,890, a City Council runoff election in 2019 which cost the City \$368,675, and two City Council runoff elections in 2021 which cost the City \$610,424; and

WHEREAS, in contrast to the City’s current post-election runoff system, a ranked choice voting system would provide voters the opportunity to rank candidates by preference on their ballots during regular local elections; and

WHEREAS, a ranked choice voting system, also commonly referred to as an “instant runoff” would help eliminate costly separate runoff elections in the City, and avoid the runoff in the middle of the winter holiday season for candidates and elected officials.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL, THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE:

SECTION 1. Article II, Sections 7 and 8 of the City Charter are hereby repealed and replaced with the following:

Section 7. RANKED CHOICE VOTING

(a) Pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 1-22-16 the City of Albuquerque adopts a ranked-choice runoff election to allow voters participating in the regular local election to rank the candidates for Mayor and City Council in the order of preference for the voter.

(b) The City will begin using ranked-choice voting with the regular local election held in November of 2023 and will continue to do so in all subsequent elections.

(c) A ranked-choice runoff election shall be conducted on the same ballot as the regular local election to allow the voter to rank the candidates for office in the voter’s preferred order.

(d) The City will adopt and comply with the rules governing ranked-choice runoff elections issued by the New Mexico Secretary of State.

SECTION 2. SEVERABILITY CLAUSE. If any section, paragraph, word or phrase of this ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid, or unenforceable by any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions of this ordinance. The Council hereby declares that it would have passed this ordinance and each section, paragraph, sentence, clause, word or phrase thereof irrespective of any provision being declared unconstitutional or otherwise invalid.

SECTION 3. COMPILATION. Section 1 of this ordinance shall amend, be incorporated in, and be made part of the City Charter.

SECTION 4. EFFECTIVE DATE. This ordinance shall take effect five (5) days after publication by title and general summary.