

HB 739 -- INSTANT RUNOFF VOTING

SPONSOR: Woods

This bill implements a system of instant runoff voting. Voters rank candidates in order of preference on their ballots. During tabulation, if no candidate receives a simple majority of the votes cast, the candidate with the fewest votes shall be eliminated and each ballot in which that candidate was the voter's first choice will be allocated to the second choice marked on that ballot. This process repeats until a candidate receives a simple majority of the votes cast.

The bill prescribes procedures for counting, recording, and certifying ranked-choice ballots and includes procedures for elections in which more than one candidate is to be elected in a multiple-seat district or when multiple at-large seats are being filled. Local election authorities are allowed to limit the number of choices to no fewer than three per open seat when a voting system cannot accommodate choices equal to the total number of candidates running. Such a limitation may be appealed to the Secretary of State then to any court of competent jurisdiction. Procedures for handling exhausted ballots, as defined in the bill, are provided.

Beginning January 1, 2024, any voting machine not compatible with a ranked-choice ballot that is removed from an election authority's inventory shall not be replaced. Any new voting equipment procured after that date must be compatible with a ranked-choice ballot.

Rank-choice voting shall be applied by an election authority when a sufficient inventory of ranked-choice voting compatible equipment is acquired.