

**Elections Oversight Committee:
Ballot Rotation
City of Long Beach, California
September 27, 2011**

What is ballot rotation in California?

- Enacted 1975 in response to a Supreme court ruling that standard alphabetical order or incumbent-first was unconstitutional since there is a 5% positional bias among undecided voters.
- Rotation works to neutralize ballot order advantage or disadvantage of being first, last or in the middle of a ballot's listing
- On the 82nd day before the election, the Secretary of State conducts a random alphabet drawing so that:
 - o Statewide candidates rotate by Assembly district;
 - o Congressional candidates rotate within their districts with the lowest numbered Assembly district leading the rotation;
 - o State Senate and Assembly candidates rotate when a legislative district crosses county lines; and
 - o Countywide offices are rotated by supervisor or assembly district.

Ballot rotation per Elections Code Section 13114

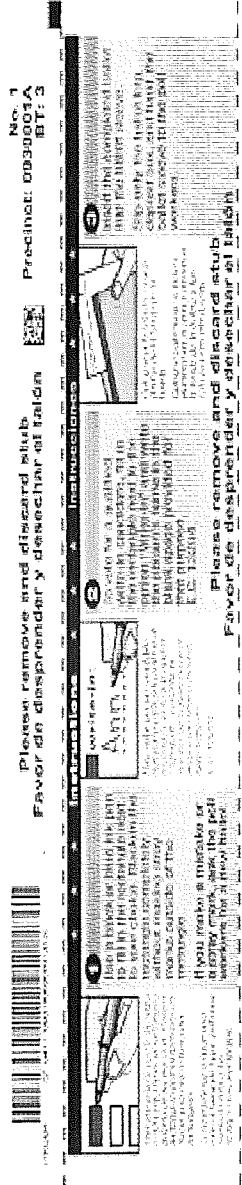
Adoption of resolution prior to 82nd day that provides for:

- Creation of precinct “clusters” within 10% of average of each other;
- Provision of a cost estimate for rotation by the City election official;
- Agreement pay to counties for programming and administrative costs for creation of rotation.

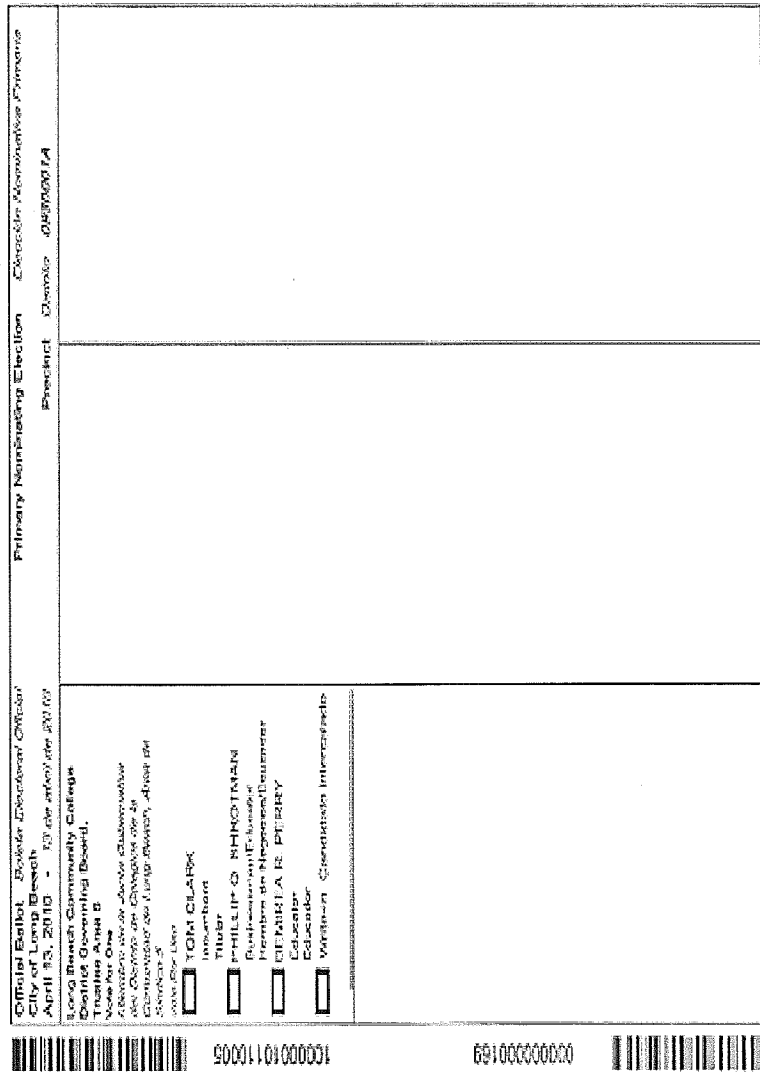
The these provisions were once referred to as “clusters last stand.”

Current practice

- Secretary of State alpha draw determines order of candidate names on all ballots for Council district and Citywide contests.



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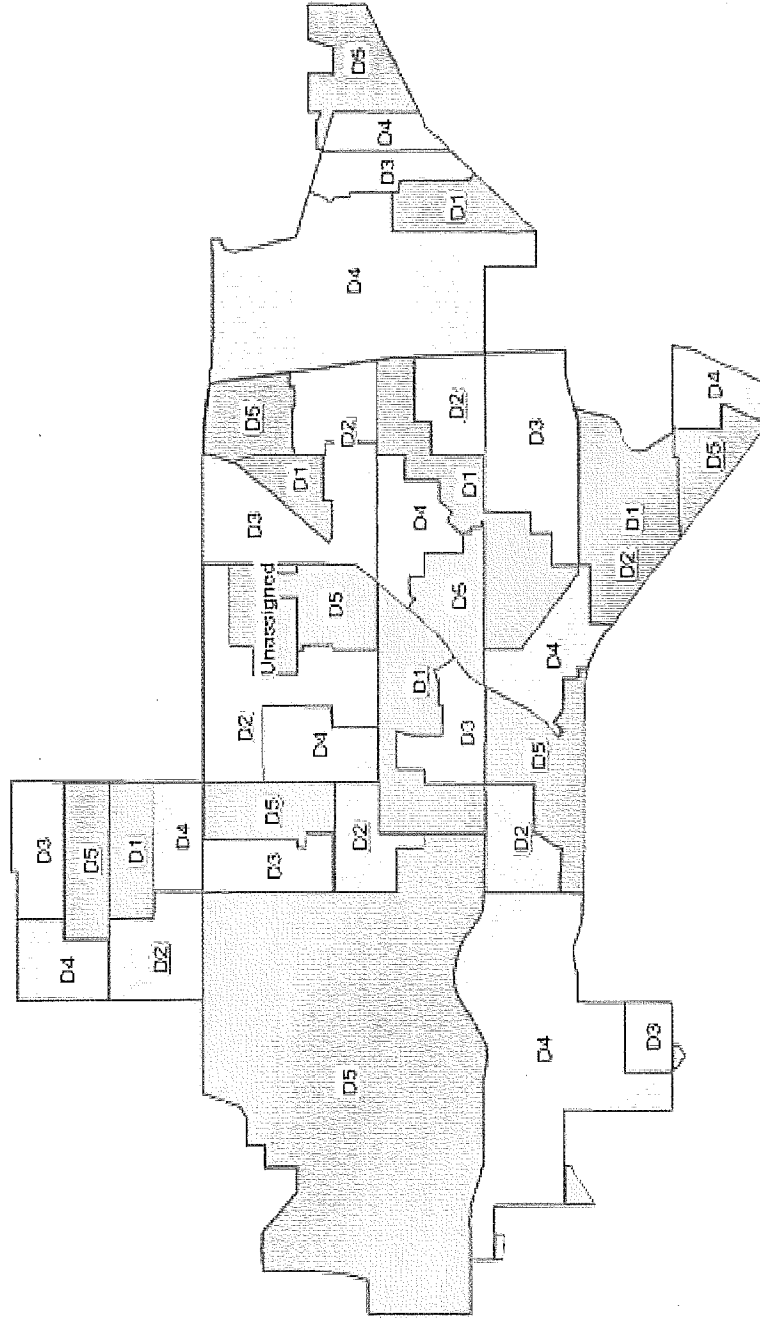


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How would ballot rotation work in Long Beach?

1. For Council races, create 5 precinct clusters in each district of approximate equal voter registration, prior to candidate filing deadlines;
2. For citywide contests 9 Council districts would serve as precinct clusters;
3. On 82nd day before the election, the City Clerk Department use the Secretary of State random alphabet draw to determine candidate and cluster first order rotation;
4. Apply rotation orders into the City's voting system;
5. Print ballots and sample ballots reflecting rotation orders.
 - (Note: Ballot rotation is not proposed for LBUSD or LBCCD contests.)

A map view of clusters:



District 5 - 5 Clusters

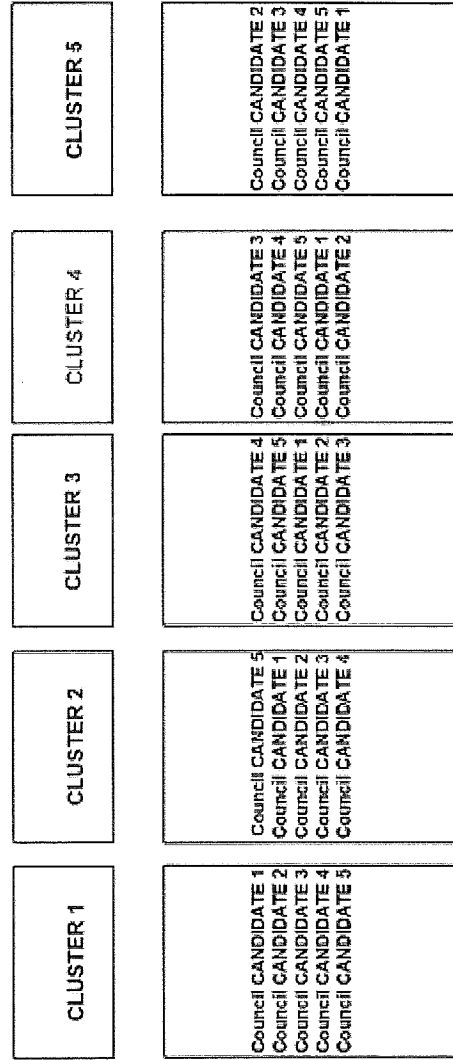
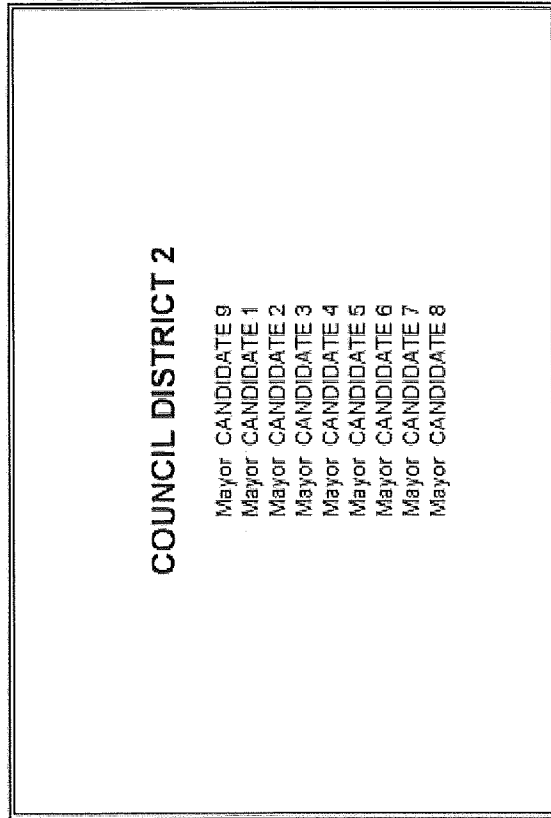
Ballot rotation for Citywide contests?

MAYOR CITY-WIDE

MAYOR CANDIDATE 1
MAYOR CANDIDATE 2
MAYOR CANDIDATE 3
MAYOR CANDIDATE 4
MAYOR CANDIDATE 5
MAYOR CANDIDATE 6
MAYOR CANDIDATE 7
MAYOR CANDIDATE 8
MAYOR CANDIDATE 9

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Ballot rotation for Council District contests?



What might ballot rotation cost?

ELECTION YEAR	NUMBER OF CANDIDATES	ESTIMATED COSTS
PNE 2006	28	\$9,520
GME 2006	19	\$6,460
SME 2007	7	\$2,380
PNE 2008	2	\$680
SME 2009	7	\$2,380
PNE 2010	22	\$7,480
	Total	\$28,900

Final comment, what does research conclude?

- One study shows 2.59% positive increase in votes for being first;
- In races with 3 or 4 candidates, being listed first increases the probability of winning office by 5.1%, and by 13% in those races with 5 or 6 candidates, and by 24.9% in races with 7, 8, or 9 candidates;
- There is enough evidence of a ballot order effect to justify a legislative decision to use randomization and rotation, but there is yet enough evidence for courts to mandate such a change, especially given the costs that are associated with the process of randomization and rotation; and
- The policy question presented is whether the cost of rotation (printing of sample ballot and possible voter confusion) outweighs the benefits (elimination of ballot order effects)?

