

## Political Buzz

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### Pierce County voters will decide fate of new voting system

Posted by **David Wickert** @ 04:29:19 pm

Pierce County voters will decide in November whether to repeal an election system they used for the first time last fall.

By a vote of 6-1, the County Council approved an amendment to the county charter this afternoon that would repeal ranked choice voting. Now the fate of the election system goes to voters for the third time in three years.

Pierce County voters approved ranked choice voting in 2006 and modified it in 2007. The vote was widely interpreted as a rebuke of the state's unpopular "pick a party" primary, which required voters to state a party preference in primary elections.

Ranked choice voting addressed that issue by eliminating primary elections for most county offices. Instead, all candidates for those offices advance to the general election.

Under the new system, voters rank candidates in order of preference. If no one receives a majority of first-place votes, the candidate with the fewest number of votes is eliminated and voters' second and third choices are taken into account.

The process of eliminating candidates continues until someone gets a majority of votes.

Supporters of ranked choice voting say it encourages more candidates to participate and gives voters more choices in the general election. That seemed to be the case last November, when four candidates vied for county executive and six ran for assessor-treasurer.

Opponents say the system is too confusing and didn't give voters the chance to properly vet all the candidates.

Today the council elected to let voters decide who's right.

[More:]

"I think voters are wanting to revisit this question," said Councilman **Shawn Bunney**, R-Lake Tapps.

Councilman **Dick Muri**, R-Steilacoom, cast the lone vote against the proposal.

"I think this is a good system and I want to see us get one more shot at it," Muri said.

No matter what voters decide, they will get one more shot at ranked choice voting. Next November the system will be used in a special election for county auditor.