

Public Comments for EAC concerning the proposed VVSG 2.0 Appendix A Glossary  
Date: Monday, June 8, 2020

We, the members of the League of Women Voters (LWV) of Boulder County's Voting Methods Team in Colorado, are submitting these comments on the draft VVSG 2.0 Appendix A Glossary terms that relate to voting methods or "vote variations." We have been meeting regularly since 2012 and were instrumental in improving the language for the proposed concurrence to be voted upon at the national LWV convention.

We write to request corrections and revisions to the Glossary. Some of the comments below were submitted in late January to the NIST Voting Methods and Tabulation Subgroup who replied in February, agreeing with several of the comments. No changes were made to the VVSG Glossary at that time, but we hope that many of the changes will be implemented after the VVSG public comment period.

We hope our comments will be posted soon and made easily accessible so others may consider them and agree, disagree or make their own comments. A uniform and precise understanding of the Glossary terms will benefit everyone involved with our elections.

Each Glossary term is highlighted in yellow. We note our changes in blue text. Our comments have a green background. Some draft VVSG 2.0 page and line numbers are listed for reference.

Thank you for welcoming and considering our comments.

Sincerely,

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p. 279

### approval voting 7537

A **vote variation** used for **elections** in which each **voter** may "approve" of (that is, select) any number of **candidates**. Typically, the winner(s) is the most-approved candidate(s). For single-seat contests and multi-seat block approval voting, the candidate(s) receiving the most votes win(s). Other versions of multi-seat approval voting typically require multiple tabulation steps in order to achieve **proportional representation**.

Synonyms: equal-and-even-cumulative-voting, proportional-voting

[Comment: Approval voting, unlike equal-and-even cumulative voting, allows the voter to choose more candidates than there are seats to fill.]

p. 283

### baseline voting 7644

A **vote variation** in which the **candidate** with the most **votes** wins. In single-seat contests, the **voter** may only select one **contest option**. In **multi-seat contests** for  $n$  seats, the voter may select up to  $n$  contest options.

Synonyms: Plurality voting

[Comment: We recommend deleting "baseline voting." Baseline voting is not a vote variation and not a synonym for plurality.]

p. 289

### cumulative voting 7786

A **vote variation** used in **multi-seat contests** to fill  $n$  seats where a **voter** is permitted to distribute up to  $n$  votes ~~allowed selections~~ to 1 or more **candidates**. In the points version, votes are distributed in whole-**vote** increments. In the equal-and-even version, each of the  $c$  candidates selected receives  $n/c$  votes.

p. 295

### exhausted ballot 7954

Refers to processing a ~~ranked-choice~~ **ranked voting contest** on a **cast ballot**, when that **ballot** becomes inactive and cannot be advanced in the tabulation for a contest because there are no further valid rankings on the ballot for continuing **contest options**.

[Comment: This more general definition allows for exhausted ballots in other ranked voting methods, such as Coombs' method.]

## NEW TERM for p. 301

### instant-runoff voting

A ranked-voting **vote variation** used in single-seat contests. Only the vote for the highest ranked non-eliminated candidate on a ballot is counted during tabulation. If one candidate gets a majority of the votes in the first round, that candidate is the winner. Otherwise, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and the eliminated candidate's votes go to the next highest ranked available candidate on each ballot. The process of elimination and transfer continues until one candidate has an insurmountable lead.

Synonyms: IRV, single-winner RCV

## p. 307

### N-of-M voting 8150

~~**Vote variation** in which the **voter** is entitled to allocate a fixed number of **votes** (N) over a list of M **contest options** or **write-in options**, with the constraint that at most 1 vote may be allocated to a given contest option. This usually occurs when multiple **seats** are concurrently being filled in a governing body such as a city council or school board where **candidates** contend for at-large seats. The voter is not obliged to allocate all N votes. 1-of-M is N-of-M voting where N = 1.~~

## p. 312

### plurality voting 8258

A **vote variation** in which the **candidate** with the most **votes** wins, without necessarily receiving a majority of votes. In single-seat **contests**, the **voter** may only select one **contest option**. In **multi-seat contests** for n **seats**, the voter may select up to n **contest options**.

[Comment: Extra wording is from the draft VVSG 2.0 definition for **baseline voting**, which we recommend for deletion.]

## NEW TERM for p. 314

### proportional representation

A feature of a **vote variation** for a multi-seat elected body which results in the elected body proportionally reflecting the divisions expressed by the electorate.

### proportional voting 8310

~~A **vote variation** used in **multi-seat contests** where the **votes** allowed in the **contest** are distributed to the selected **candidates** proportionally depending on the number of selections. This may result in candidates receiving fractional votes.~~

[Comment: Delete this term because most people think it refers to proportional representation which we have suggested as a new term. Peoria's equal-and-even cumulative vote variation should be described in the "cumulative voting" entry and is generally considered semi-proportional.]

p. 317

## range voting 8337

A **vote variation** for single-seat **contests**, in which **voters** give each **candidate** a score within a specified range. In single-seat **contests**, the scores are added (or averaged), and the candidate with the highest total (or average) is elected. In the score runoff variant, the winner is the candidate of the two with the highest totals who scores higher on more ballots.

Synonyms: score voting

## ranked choice voting Ranked Choice Voting 8341

A **vote variation**:

- which allows each **voter** to rank **contest options** in order of the voter's preference,
- in which **votes** are **counted** in rounds using a series of runoff tabulations to defeat contest options with the fewest votes, and,
- which elects a winner with a majority of final round votes in a single-winner **contest** and provides proportional representation in multi-winner contests.

Synonyms: IRV, RCV, instant run-off voting, ranked order

For single-seat contests, see **instant-runoff voting**. For multi-seat contests using the traditional proportional voting form of RCV, see **single transferable vote**. A non-proportional multi-winner form of RCV was used in 2019 in Utah.

Synonyms: RCV

[Comment: Sequential At-Large IRV or Multi-Pass IRV for multi-seat contests was first used in two 2019 local Utah elections.]

## NEW TERM

### ranked voting

A ballot format in which each voter ranks one or more candidates on a ballot where 1 is the highest ranking (most preferred choice), 2 is the second-highest ranking and so on. **Instant-runoff voting**, **single transferable vote**, and Borda count all use ranked voting.

Synonyms: preference voting, preferential voting

## recall issue with options 8352

**Vote variation** A **contest** that allows **voters** to remove elected representatives from **office** before their terms of office expire. The recall may involve not only the question of whether a particular officer should be removed, but also the question of naming a successor in the event that there is an affirmative **vote** for the recall.

[Comment: A recall issue with options is a set of associated decisions being put before voters, i.e., a contest.]

## NEW TERM for p. 320

### score voting

See **range voting**. **Range voting** permits rational-number scores such as 0.4 and 17.5, but score voting is limited to whole-number scores.

## NEW TERM - also for p. 320

### single transferable vote

A proportional ranked-voting **vote variation** used in multi-seat contests. The votes for candidates ranked 1 are counted. Any candidate receiving a number of votes equal to the quota is elected. If a candidate receives more votes than the quota, the surplus votes are distributed according to specified transfer rules. If there are unfilled seats, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and the eliminated candidate's votes go to the next highest ranked available candidate on each ballot. The process of elimination and transfer continues until the number of non-eliminated candidates equals the number of seats to fill.

Synonyms: STV

## p. 323

### tabulate 8480

Process of ~~totaling votes~~ using the **vote variation**'s algorithm to count, sum, weight or transfer votes, sometimes in multiple rounds, to determine the final vote count for each contest option.

~~Synonyms: count~~

## p. 325

### undervote 8532

Occurs in a non-approval voting, **vote for N-of-M** contest when the number of **voter** selections ~~in a contest~~ is less than N. Also occurs in any contest ~~the maximum number allowed for that contest or~~ when no selection is made. The number of undervotes is equal to the number of **votes** lost, for example, if no selection is made in a **2-of-7** ~~vote-for-two~~ contest the number of votes lost is two. If no selection is made in an approval or IRV contest, the number of votes lost is one.

Synonyms: under-vote

[Comment: Without this change, practically every ballot in an approval voting contest would contain one or more undervotes.]

## p.327

### vote for N-of-M 8573

A **multi-seat contest** in which **voters** are allowed to **vote** for a specified number ("N") of **M candidates**. A variety of tabulation and decision rules can be used with this method of marking a ballot.

## vote variation 8576

A ~~voting style or feature~~, and its associated tabulation and decision rule for determining the outcome of an election. Vote variations include, ~~including~~ but are not limited to, the following: **approval voting**, Borda count, **cumulative voting**, **instant-runoff voting**, ~~n-of-m voting~~, **plurality voting**, ~~proportional voting~~, **range voting**, ~~ranked-choice voting~~ **Ranked Choice Voting**, **score voting**, and **single transferable vote** and ~~super-majority voting~~.

Synonyms: voting method

[Comment: We would prefer replacing “variation” with “variant.” A variation is “a departure from a standard” or from a “normal condition,” whereas a variant is “differing in form or in details” from others in its own class. Variation implies deviance. Variant does not. Source: *Garner’s Modern American Usage*, 3rd ed.]]

## NEW TERM for p. 329

### voting method

See **vote variation**.

[Comment: The draft NIST SP 1500-107 uses voting method in place of vote variation and “Voting methods” is the title of Section 1.1.1-G in the draft VVSG 2.0 so the term should be listed in this glossary. Outside of these NIST documents, voting methods is the more common term.]