

ELECTION-RELATED BILLS PRE-FILED IN FLORIDA LEGISLATURE

<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>
HB 0065	Percentage of Elector Votes Required to Approve Constitutional Amendment or Revision
SB 0978	Percentage of Elector Votes Required to Approve an Amendment or a Revision
HB 0367	Agreement Among the States to Elect the President by National Popular Vote
SB 0194	Limitation of Terms of Office for Members of a District School Board
HB 0149	Automatic Restoration of Felons' Voting Rights
SB 0810	Vote-by-mail Ballots
HB 0317	Local Tax Referenda
SB 0506	Election of Secretary of State/Membership of Cabinet
HB 0613	Legislation by Initiative
SB 0964	Voting Systems
HB 0709	Voting Systems
HB 0609	Vote-by-Mail Ballots
SB 0428	Restoration of Civil Rights
HB 0059	Restoration of Civil Rights
HB 0761	Public Records/Voters and Voter Registration
WMC1	Supermajority Vote for State Taxes or Fees
SB 0278	Public Records/Department of State
HB 0087	Public Records/Statewide Voter Registration System
SB 0064	Voter Registration
SB 0704	Voter Registration
HB 7001	Supermajority Vote for State Taxes or Fees
HB 0085	Voter Registration List Maintenance
SB 0276	Voter Registration List Maintenance
SB 0272	Local Tax Referenda
HB 0061	Restoration of Civil Rights
SB 0430	Restoration of Civil Rights

# What's 'Proportional Voting,' and Why Is It Making a Comeback?

*Most U.S. cities abandoned it in the mid-20th century.*

BY: [Alan Greenblatt](#) | September 2017

It's a sign of popular disillusionment with the current course of American democracy that the past couple of years have produced a flurry of reform ideas aimed at changing the way elections are conducted. The newer proposals allow voters to rank several candidates in order of preference, or create nonpartisan primaries in which the top-two finishers are nominated, regardless of party. One older idea that's being talked about again is proportional voting.

Proportional elections are conducted in other countries, and in many of those places, the rules are pretty simple. If a party wins 30 percent of the national vote, it wins 30 percent of the legislative seats. That's not the way it's generally been tried in the United States. The cities that have used proportional voting here -- which at one time was as many as two dozen, including Cleveland, Cincinnati and New York -- created multiseat districts. Candidates were all listed together on one ballot and the individuals who finished in, say, the top five in a five-seat district would all win, whether they came from one party or five parties.

Regardless of how it's done, proportional voting has the potential to address two major problems with our politics, says Lee Drutman, a senior fellow at New America, a nonpartisan think tank. Under our current winner-take-all system, most votes don't matter. Districts are either comfortably Republican or Democratic, and the only important contest is the primary in the locally dominant party. Many officeholders are more concerned about being unseated in a primary if they break with party orthodoxy than they are about winning general elections by appealing to broader groups of people.

Under proportional voting, more votes would matter. Even the conservative precincts of, say, New York would have a chance of electing one of their own, since candidates with a minority share of the vote would be able to claim a seat. And the need to win over more voters would alter the incentives that currently promote demonization of the other side. "They would have to build coalitions," Drutman says. "They would have to compromise."

Maybe. But building coalitions in what could become a multiparty system would present its own challenges. In fact, that's why most cities moved away from proportional voting by the middle of the 20th century. (Cambridge, Mass., is the only decently big city that still uses it.) In a proportional system, candidates can be elected with 15 or 20 percent of the vote, supported with the backing of narrow interest groups. This hampers policymaking in government, says Jack Santucci, a political scientist who has studied the subject. "You'd have a lower threshold to win election, so you'd have more people elected with diverse policy preferences, at least within legislatures," Santucci says. "What provoked the repeal of this thing appears to be the difficulty in holding together a legislative coalition."

But as Santucci notes, proportional voting worked well in some cities for decades. Nowadays, many people might not mind trying a system that would empower a more diverse set of voices, rather than continuing the rigid version of party discipline currently on display. "We need to make general elections matter again," says Rob Richie, executive director of FairVote, a nonprofit that favors proportional voting. "In this climate, that's not going to happen without changing elections."

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## **U.S. Supreme Court Picks Up 3 Free-Speech Cases**

by Tribune News Service | November 14, 2017

*By David G. Savage*

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In addition to *NIFLA vs. Becerra*, the justices agreed to hear two other free-speech claims Monday. In *Minnesota Voters Alliance vs. Mansky*, the court will decide whether states can forbid voters from wearing a "political badge, political button or other political insignia" in a polling place on Election Day. A tea party leader sued after he was temporarily blocked from voting because he wore a T-shirt that sported a tea party logo and read "Don't Tread on Me."

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