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Noncitizens are already banned from our elections. This amendment is really just a way for politicians to kill ranked choice voting in Missouri.

Resist misleading insider attempt to silence your voice

BY LARRY R. BRADLEY
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Missourians voting on Amendment 7 this November will be taking a gullibility test. Dishonest political insiders are trying to convince voters that this amendment to the Missouri Constitution is needed to stop noncitizens from voting. But the reality is that constitution already bans noncitizens from voting.

Rather than combating voter fraud, Amendment 7 attempts to trick Missourians into banning something which has nothing to do with noncitizens casting ballots: Ranked Choice Voting.

This is the Show-Me State, and several Missouri election reform allies filed suit July 10 to force the backers of Amendment 7 to be honest with voters. But why was the proposed amendment ruse necessary?

The insiders hoped that the “ballot candy” of keeping noncitizens from voting would stop Missourians from seeing the truth. Amendment 7 bans something that would give voters a greater voice in government. Perhaps more ridiculous, banning does so despite the fact that ranked choice isn’t even used (yet) in Missouri.

If you’re one of the countless Americans who want better choices in your elections, know this:

The method we use to vote today, with its unfixable flaws, can’t give them to you. The ballot we use now cannot guarantee a majority winner if there are more than two candidates in a race. Our country was founded upon “the consent of the governed.” How do you have the consent of the governed when you use a ballot that allows people to win elections with less than 50% of the vote?

Our current ballot forces you to choose a single candidate. With multiple candidates, you know from bitter experience that voting for your favorite candidate could actually help your least favorite candidate win (Google “spoiler effect.”)

The only way to overcome these flaws is to change to a ballot that lets voters express their true preferences without fear. ranked choice voting does exactly that.

In a ranked choice election, voters can rank candidates in order of preference — first, second, and so on. If a candidate wins a majority of first choices, he or she wins. If not, the race goes to an instant runoff. If a voter’s favorite candidate has no chance of winning, that candidate is eliminated and the vote automatically counts for the selected backup choice.

Fifty jurisdictions across the country (including two states and major cities such as New York, Minneapolis and Salt Lake City) use ranked choice voting in their elections. As many as nine states could be voting to join them this November.

Despite these trends, Amendment 7 seeks to ban ranked choice voting in Missouri. Why? Certain deceptive political insiders don’t want more voters to have a meaningful vote, because those voters are unlikely to agree with the insiders’ policies. Insiders don’t want to have to get a majority to win, because that would require them to broaden their policies to appeal to a wider range of the electorate.

Insiders see themselves as superior to the unprincipled masses. Their opposition is even more baffling when you consider that ranked choice would actually help parties identify majority consensus winners in their primaries — nominees who have better chances in a general election.

Our greatness comes from the competition of finding and implementing winning ideas based on majority rule. What Amendment 7 reveals is that insiders believe if their governing ideas had to compete on a level playing field with a large cross section of Missouri voters, those ideas would lose.

Proponents of Amendment 7 will deny this. They’ll say ranking candidates is too complicated and voters don’t like it. Nonsense. Exit surveys clearly, without exception, show voters overwhelmingly like ranked choice voting and think it is easy to understand and use.

Insiders cry “foul” over Alaska’s 2022 use of ranked choice voting. But that’s just because they’re sore losers who couldn’t get the majorities needed to win. Ranked choice opponents wanted to keep U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski off the ballot as punishment for some of her votes. Theirs was a minority opinion, and ranked choice kept them from forcing it on the majority. Murkowski won with 54% of the vote.

Don’t be gullible. Vote no on Missouri Amendment 7. Also, vote only for candidates who will work to adopt ranked choice voting in the state. You’ll be amazed by the progress you’ll see from the responsive government that ranked choice voting can enable the majority of the people to put in place.

Larry R. Bradley is a native Missourian and retired U.S. Army Infantry Officer. He is a leader in the efforts to bring election reform to the U.S.