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Subject: [EXTERNAL] - Boston pushes forward on ranked-choice voting

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New from Commonwealth Beacon

WHERE THE HEART IS : New polling conducted by the MassINC Polling Group for Abundant Housing Massachusetts – which is pushing two bills this legislative session to spur development – finds that [majorities of voters](#) feel that the state and their own communities are not doing enough to address the housing crunch. Jennifer Smith dives into the details.

OPINION : While Gov. Healey is right that Massachusetts can't make up the \$16 billion in federal funds the state receives annually from the federal government, Massachusetts Teachers Association president Max Page writes, we [have to be prepared](#) to protect our people from the worst of the harm coming from Trump.

Boston pushes forward on ranked-choice voting

May 15, 2025

By **JENNIFER SMITH**

The Boston City Council voted 8-4 to implement ranked-choice voting for city elections on Wednesday, tapping on what many consider the first domino in the latest round of ranked-choice voting pushes.

The system asks voters to select their candidates in order of preference. In general terms, candidates with the fewest numbers of first choice votes are eliminated over multiple rounds of vote counting, until a candidate emerges with the largest amount of consensus support. In effect, it selects for the candidate most acceptable to most voters.

“This is about making sure that we are building a better democracy by electing candidates who are able to build a broad majority of support,” City Council President Ruthzee Louijeune said before the vote on Wednesday. Louijeune [worked as an election lawyer](#) in Maine during the country’s first ranked-choice voting congressional election in 2018.

Proponents cheer the process as a way to avoid the so-called “spoiler effect” where candidates with less popular support carve off votes from candidates with similar political appeal, leaving the path clear for candidates who may not reflect the interests of most voters but secure the largest vote share in a “winner takes all” election. Spoiler candidates are often discouraged from running and expanding the field, advocates say, for fear that they would harm ideological allies’ chances.

Critics decry ranked-choice voting as too complicated for people to understand, arguing that it undermines the intuitive principle that a person would like to vote for a single favored candidate. If a voter only feels strongly about one candidate, but that candidate gets the fewest number of first choice votes, opponents say the voter’s choice is essentially thrown away after the first round of counts.

The current system is “simple, clear, [and] makes sure every vote counts,” said City Councilor At-Large Erin Murphy at the council meeting, adding that ranked-choice voting could be confusing to voters who do not speak English as a first language.

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MORE CONTEXT:

- [Round two for ranked-choice voting in Boston](#)
- [Hits and misses on ballot questions targeting elections](#)
- [Maine experiments with ranked-choice voting](#)

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More from Commonwealth Beacon

ENERGY AFFORDABILITY : Gov. Maura Healey unveiled [new energy affordability legislation](#) with reforms to Mass Save financing, protections against predatory third-party electric suppliers, and a look towards nuclear but environmentalists say that it doesn't go far enough. Bhaamati Borkhetaria has the story.

CLIMATE PACT : In the face of federal funding cuts, the leaders of 17 municipalities in the Greater Boston area came together on Monday. They [recommitted](#) to working on meeting regional climate goals for the next decade, Bhaamati Borkhetaria reports.

OPINION : If the Massachusetts Legislature is going to consider a generational ban on nicotine, they [might as well](#) ban other enjoyable but dangerous activities, from drinking alcohol to skiing, Boston-based freelance writer Tom Keane says, with tongue in cheek to make his point about government overreach. "Brookline – and perhaps soon Massachusetts – is leading the way in telling adults, 'No, no, no! It's not your decision! We will tell you what you can and cannot do,'" he writes.

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The Codcast: How race and immigration status limit health care access



John McDonough of the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health and Paul Hattis of the Lown Institute are joined by **TIFFANY JOSEPH**, assistant professor of sociology and international affairs at Northeastern University, to discuss her new book, 'Not All In: Race, Immigration, and Healthcare Exclusion in the Age of Obamacare.'

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What We're Reading

COURTS : A justice from Massachusetts' highest court has appointed a special master to [investigate claims](#) that a New Bedford judge carried on a romance with a prosecutor while ruling on her cases. (The Public's Radio)

EDUCATION : Roughly 100 members of the New Bedford teachers union and their supporters attended a School Committee meeting this week to advocate for their ongoing contract negotiations, in which teachers are [asking for](#) salary increases and paid family leave. (The New Bedford Light)

IMMIGRATION : US Attorney for Massachusetts Leah Foley said that her office [will investigate](#) what she called "interference" with US Immigration and Customs Enforcement operations in the state, including possible charges for criminally obstructing ICE operations. (Worcester Telegram— paywall)

POLITICS : Native leaders gathered in the State House to roll out a legislative agenda for this year's session. Their [goals include](#) bills that ban Native mascots, replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day, boost education around native cultures and history, and create a permanent state commission "relative to the education of American Indian and Alaska native residents of the Commonwealth." (MassLive)

ELECTIONS : Mansfield voters in Tuesday's annual town election [decided against](#) a \$2.7 million budget tax hike request that was geared toward saving town and school positions and programs. (The Sun Chronicle)



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