

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***Better Ballot Arizona* to launch initiative
to Bring More Choice, More Voice, and Better Outcomes to Arizonans**

Better Ballot Arizona, a values-driven, non-partisan, nonprofit organization, will launch a citizen's initiative that will bring comprehensive election reform to the State of Arizona.

The reform will incorporate equalization of signature requirements for all candidates; a true open primary in which all qualified candidates can compete and all qualified voters can participate; and a top-five general election which gives voters the ability to rank their choices using Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) - eliminating the unintended consequence of vote-splitting and sparing voters the all-too-often scenario of having to select from the "lesser of two evils." The Better Ballot initiative contains explicit mechanisms to enact top-five and RCV in the general election, and does not leave those elements subject to decisions made by the state legislature.

"We believe the future of elections in Arizona belongs in the hands of the voters, not the politicians," said Blake Sacha, President of Voter Choice Arizona. He explains that he got involved because, as a young engineer, he learned that "Bad systems beat good people." Better Ballot offers a significant improvement to the way we elect our leaders.

"Our current system incentivizes the wrong things," he said. "Specifically, candidates must only appeal to a small minority of highly partisan voters who participate in a closed primary, and then in the general, two polarized candidates try to destroy each other with negative campaigning. The system disincentivizes working together to solve important problems and provides no reason for elected officials to appeal to a majority of constituents."

The volunteer-driven organization has been inspired by successful reform efforts in Maine, Alaska, and Nevada and in cities such as Salt Lake City, Santa Fe and Minneapolis, where polls indicate that people understand RCV and they like it. "Election reform is trending because people see that the status quo isn't working," said board member Kathy Knecht. "Campaigns keep getting uglier, our communities are getting more polarized, and our governments aren't getting the important work done. I'm excited about reform that gives people more genuine choices and makes candidates compete based on their skills and character."

The organization will have to gather more than 500,000 signatures by July 3, 2024. And while the challenge is significant, Better Ballot Arizona representatives report enthusiasm and support from the vast majority of those who have learned about RCV and how it works. “Polling from some of the more than 50 jurisdictions in the US that currently use RCV consistently shows that people understand and like voting this way,” said Executive Director, Kazz Fernandes. “People rank choices all the time in their day-to-day lives. Just because a concept is new to Arizona doesn't make it hard. We're confident that Arizonans, like the more than 15 million voters in the US who already use RCV, can also count to five.”

The grass-roots organization has hubs in Phoenix, Tucson and Flagstaff and has done outreach in Yuma, Prescott and in the Navajo Nation. “We want to energize and empower voters all over the state,” said Fernandes. “We know it will be a lot of work, but important things are never easy.”

More information about education and outreach where people can request a speaker, sign up to volunteer, and attend an event can be found at VoterChoiceArizona.org.

More information and ways to help the initiative effort can be found at BetterBallotAZ.org.

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