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ALASKA'S ELECTIONS REFORMS: **Voter Perceptions & Experiences**

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Project Overview

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In 2020, Alaskans approved a voter initiative (“Alaska’s Better Elections Initiative” or “Ballot Measure 2”) establishing nonpartisan primary elections, ranked-choice general elections, and new disclosure requirements for certain political contributions.¹ This report seeks to understand Alaskans’ early experiences and perceptions of the new voting system, and whether and how responses vary by age, gender, race, region, and party identification. Findings are expected to serve as a baseline as Alaskans’ experiences and perceptions of the system evolve over time.

APPROACH

This analysis used data from public opinion surveys of Alaska voters conducted by Patinkin Research Strategies following Alaska’s August 2022 and November 2022 statewide elections. Responses to four survey questions were analyzed:

- ❖ *Did you receive instructions on how to fill out your ballot in the ranked-choice voting election?*
- ❖ *In your opinion, how simple or difficult was it for you to fill out your ranked-choice voting ballot?*
- ❖ *Do you think you had better [worse] or worse [better] candidates to choose from compared to previous years or were things about the same?*
- ❖ *Do you think your vote mattered more [less] or less [more] compared to previous years, or was it about the same?*

KEY FINDINGS

- Survey findings do not validate concerns that Alaska’s new elections system (particularly ranked-choice voting) is too complex and disenfranchises certain voting populations.
- Survey findings lend support for the theory that voters felt they had more choice – i.e., better candidates to choose from – than in previous elections.
- Survey findings lend support for the theory that the new system increased voter-perceived power, as voters felt their vote mattered more than it did in previous elections.

¹ Alaska’s Better Elections Initiative. <https://www.elections.alaska.gov/petitions/19AKBE/19AKBE-TheBill.pdf>

Key Takeaways

THE BIG PICTURE

This analysis aimed to document Alaskans' perceptions of a new elections system in its first year of implementation. These early perceptions can provide a baseline for comparison over time and offer insights to policy makers about voters' understanding and experience of the system.

While many observers and pundits have focused on questions of *who gets elected* under the new system, the question of *how voters feel* about it is also salient. Democracy – government of the people, by the people, for the people – is only as strong as the faith of the people in their democracy. To the extent that Alaskans feel they have better choices and more power as voters, and if those sentiments are sustained, it can be argued the new system is beneficial to the function and health of Alaska's democracy.

CAVEATS AND CAUTIONS

We offer several cautions in interpreting this paper's findings. The public opinion surveys used for this analysis were thoughtfully designed, but like all such surveys, they are imperfect. Some questions may be subject to misinterpretation, and responses required weighting to counterbalance disproportionate representation (for example, younger people are less likely to respond to surveys than older people). Comparisons between August and November surveys have some limitations due to differences in survey sample sizes and changes to the wording of some questions. Nonetheless, taken together and assessed in the context of other studies and empirical observations, the findings offer helpful insights.

INSIGHTS

This analysis does not lend support for concerns that Alaska's new elections system (particularly ranked-choice voting) is too complex or disenfranchises certain populations such as people of color.

- The surveys indicate ranked-choice voting (RCV) education reached 95% and 93% of voters in August and November, respectively; and most voters (85% in August and 79% in November) said it was simple or somewhat simple to vote their RCV ballot.
- Subgroup analysis does not reveal significant variation among racial and ethnic groups in response to question, "How simple or difficult was it for you to fill out your RCV ballot?" In August, Alaska Native respondents were as likely as White respondents to call it simple, and about 5 points less likely in November. Non-Native people of color were as likely in November as White voters to call it simple, and about 5 points less likely in August.

- Older voters (those age 50 and over) were slightly more likely than younger voters (those under 50) to find RCV voting difficult, by 6 points in November and 4 points in August.
- Data did not point to disenfranchisement of rural voters. This finding is caveated: Due to sample size limitations, analyzing rural voters as a subset was not possible. Instead, rural voters were grouped with Southeast Alaska voters.

Survey findings lend support for the theory that voters feel they have more choice - i.e., better candidates to choose from - than in previous elections.

- In the first regular election under the system (November 2022), almost half (47%) of respondents said they had better candidates to choose from compared to previous years, while a quarter (25%) said their choices were about the same and a quarter (24%) said they were worse.
- Voters who typically vote at lower-than-average rates - notably non-White voters and younger voters - were most likely to say their choices were better than in past years. For example, 55% of Alaska Native voters said they had better candidates to choose from compared to previous years. These findings suggest the new voting system has potential to energize previously disenfranchised or disengaged voters.
- Partisan differences were not observed. Nearly half (48%) of self-identified Republicans surveyed said they had better candidates to choose from than in prior years, and only 26% said their choices were worse. These responses were comparable to self-identified Democrats' responses.

Survey findings lend support for the theory that the new system increases voter-perceived power.

- More than half of voters surveyed in November said their vote mattered more than in previous years (including those who said it mattered much more, somewhat more, and "lean" more).
- All subgroups by region, race, gender, and age were more likely to say their vote mattered *more* (as opposed to *less*) than in previous years.
- Among racial/ethnic groups, self-identified Alaska Native/American Indian voters and other voters of color were most likely to say their vote mattered more than in past years. More than half of respondents who identified as Alaska Native/American Indian (54%) and almost half of other people of color (47%) said their vote mattered more than in previous years.
- Partisan differences were observed. Self-identified Republicans were more likely to say their vote mattered *less* (as opposed to *more*) than in previous years: 36% said their vote mattered less, 35% said about the same as prior years, and 28% said it mattered more. Self-identified Democrats showed the opposite pattern.

FURTHER RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The survey did not ask voters questions specific to the open primary, e.g., how simple or difficult was it to vote your primary ballot; do you feel your choices in the primary election were better, worse, or about the same as in past years; and do you feel your primary election vote mattered more than in past years. While the RCV ballot garners the lion's share of attention, the streamlined primary system is an integral and important feature of Alaska's 2020 election reforms. Understanding voters' response to the primary system reforms can help the public and policy makers better understand the elections system as a whole.

Further testing of cross-cutting groups can further illuminate and add precision to findings described in this paper. For example, there is indication that some of the partisan differences observed are driven by age - that is, younger Republicans responded to some questions more like younger Democrats than like older Republicans.

Tracking and analyzing voter participation will be an important piece of evaluating the impact of the new elections system over time. Increased voter turnout will be an indicator of success, as will reduced gaps in voting rates between groups such as White and non-White voters and older and younger voters.

Tracking voter perceptions over time will also be important. The August and November surveys represent early point-in-time samples. Alaskans' perceptions are likely to evolve as candidates and campaigns adjust to changed incentives under the new system, as voters see a range of electoral outcomes, and ultimately as voters do or do not connect those outcomes to changes in government function and responsiveness.

Background: Alaska's Elections Reforms

Alaska's elections system combines a nonpartisan "pick-one" primary with a ranked-choice general election. The top four primary vote-getters, regardless of party affiliation, advance to the general election. Alaska voters adopted the system by ballot initiative in November 2020 with initial implementation set for 2022.²

Rationale

While other jurisdictions have implemented ranked-choice voting (RCV) or primary elections reforms, Alaska is the first jurisdiction to implement its particular combination of primary and general election reforms. The language of the 2020 ballot initiative, which also enacted new campaign finance disclosure rules, included the following statements of findings and intent:

It is in the public interest of Alaska to adopt a primary election system that is open and nonpartisan, which will generate more qualified and competitive candidates for elected office, boost voter turnout, better reflect the will of the electorate, reward competition, and reduce partisanship among elected officials.

It is in the public interest of Alaska to adopt a general election system that reflects the core democratic principle of majority rule. A ranked-choice voting system will help ensure that the values of elected officials more broadly reflect the values of the electorate, mitigate the likelihood that a candidate who is disapproved by a majority of voters will get elected, encourage candidates to appeal to a broader section of the electorate, allow Alaskans to vote for the candidates that most accurately reflect their values without risking the election of those candidates that least accurately reflect their values, encourage greater third-party and independent participation in elections, and provide a stronger mandate for winning candidates.

The initiative was modeled in part on a 2017 paper by Katherine Gehl and Michael Porter published by Harvard Business School.³ Their research applied a business lens to the U.S. political system and posited that the political system - intended to advance the public interest - today is "the major barrier to solving nearly every important challenge our nation needs to address." The authors attributed this failing to insufficient competition in the politics industry.

² Alaska's Better Elections Initiative. <https://www.elections.alaska.gov/petitions/19AKBE/19AKBE-TheBill.pdf>

³ Gehl, K. and Porter, M. Why Competition in the Politics Industry is Failing America. Harvard Business School. September 2017. <https://www.hbs.edu/competitiveness/Documents/why-competition-in-the-politics-industry-is-failing-america.pdf>

One of the key reforms Gehl, a Democrat, and Porter, a Republican, proposed was a system of nonpartisan primaries combined with ranked-choice general elections.⁴

Implementation Timeline

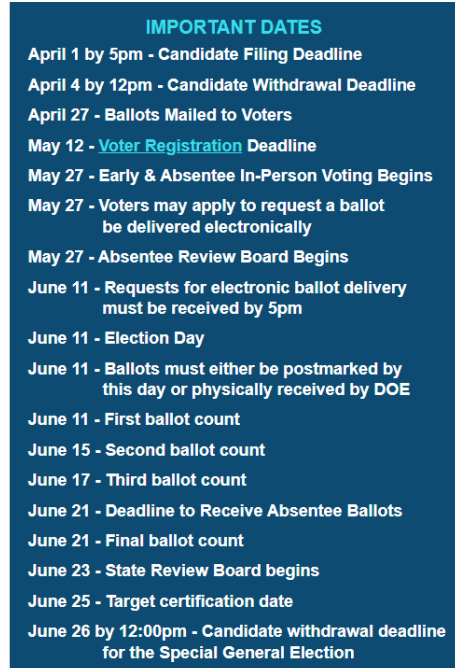
Alaska's new elections system was expected to be implemented for the first time for Alaska's August 2022 primary and November 2022 general election. Though 2022 was not a presidential election year, there would be plenty of high-profile contests on the ballot including US Sen. Lisa Murkowski's seat, Alaska's lone seat in the US House of Representatives, and 59 of 60 state legislative seats due to decennial redistricting.

The 2022 election got more interesting, and the rollout of the new elections system more complex, with the unexpected death of US Rep. Don Young on March 18, 2022. Young had held the seat for 49 years - longer than most Alaskans have been alive - and his death was a seismic event for the state.⁵

Alaska Statute calls for filling congressional vacancies by special election rather than by appointment. Young died less than eight months before he would stand for reelection on November 8, 2022. To fit statutory timelines into a compressed timeframe, the Alaska Division of Elections opted to hold a by-mail special primary election in June (see screenshot of important dates).⁶ The special general election was held on the same day as the regular primary election on August 16. The Division determined that the statute required the new elections system to be implemented for the special election, meaning the system debuted months earlier than anticipated.

The special primary drew an eye-popping 48 candidates. The roster included 16 Republicans, 6 Democrats, 4 registered in other parties (2 Libertarian, 1 Alaska Independence Party, 1 American Independence Party), and 22 candidates registered as undeclared or nonpartisan. The regular primary drew 22 candidates for the congressional seat, 19 candidates for the U.S. Senate seat, and 10 candidates for governor. The regular general election took place on November 8, 2022.

JUNE 11, 2022 - SPECIAL PRIMARY ELECTION



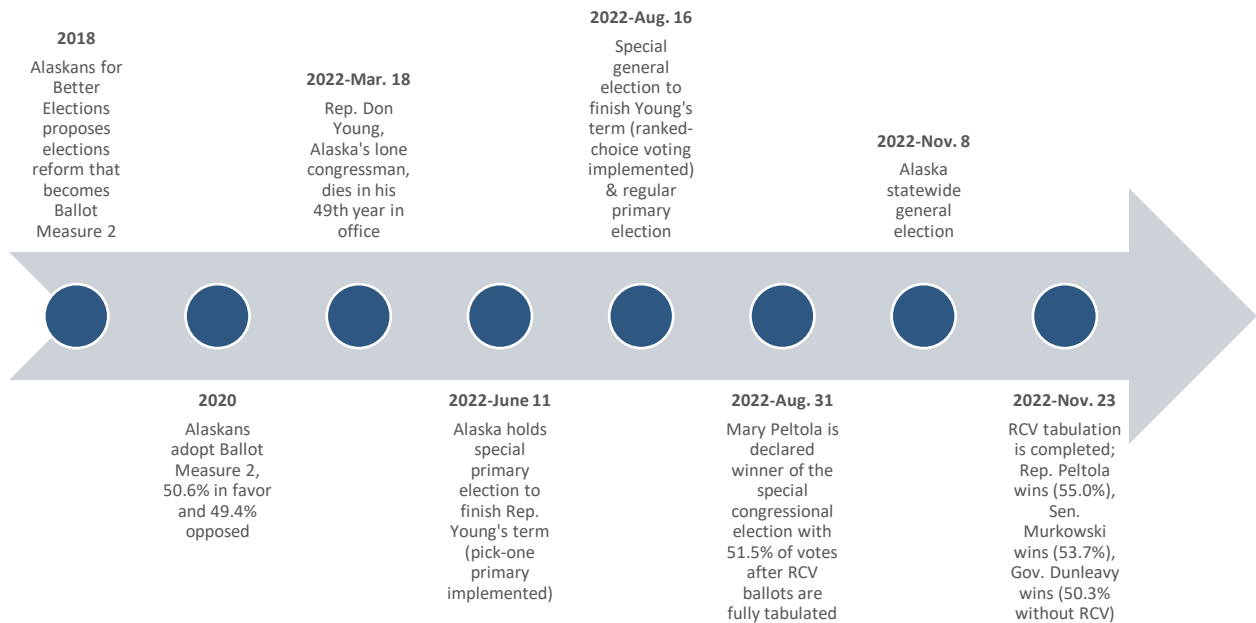
IMPORTANT DATES
April 1 by 5pm - Candidate Filing Deadline
April 4 by 12pm - Candidate Withdrawal Deadline
April 27 - Ballots Mailed to Voters
May 12 - Voter Registration Deadline
May 27 - Early & Absentee In-Person Voting Begins
May 27 - Voters may apply to request a ballot be delivered electronically
May 27 - Absentee Review Board Begins
June 11 - Requests for electronic ballot delivery must be received by 5pm
June 11 - Election Day
June 11 - Ballots must either be postmarked by this day or physically received by DOE
June 11 - First ballot count
June 15 - Second ballot count
June 17 - Third ballot count
June 21 - Deadline to Receive Absentee Ballots
June 21 - Final ballot count
June 23 - State Review Board begins
June 25 - Target certification date
June 26 by 12:00pm - Candidate withdrawal deadline for the Special General Election

Screenshot: Alaska Division of Elections

⁴ Final-Five Voting. <https://political-innovation.org/final-five-voting/>

⁵ Alaska's median age is 34.6 years, according to 2020 U.S. Census data.

⁶ Limited in-person voting was available.



Alaska's Primary Elections History

In addition to the introduction of ranked-choice voting for Alaska's general elections, changes to the primary are integral to the 2020 elections reforms. While RCV represents a break from the state's long-held system of plurality voting, changes to the primary represent a return to a system that was in place for much of Alaska's history.

According to the Alaska Division of Elections' *Alaska's Primary Election History*, Alaskans' preference for a single primary election ballot predates statehood.⁷ In 1947, Alaskans voted by referendum to enact a blanket primary, an election where a voter may choose from among all candidates of all parties listed on a single ballot. With the exception of seven years, the blanket primary prevailed for the next 45 years.

In 1992, under a constitutional challenge to the blanket primary by the Alaska Republican Party, the State of Alaska agreed to implement multiple primary ballots with separate lists of candidates. At each primary election from 1992 through 2020, Alaskans faced 2, 3, or (in 2002) 6 ballots to choose from. Depending on the voter's party, that choice might be restricted.

The "pick-one primary" approved by voters in 2020 effectively returns to the system Alaska voters first chose in 1947 where all candidates appear on a single ballot and all voters use the same ballot.


⁷ Alaska Division of Elections, *Alaska's Primary Election History*. February 26, 2021. <https://www.elections.alaska.gov/doc/forms/H42.pdf>

Sample Ballots

JUNE 2022 SPECIAL PRIMARY ELECTION BALLOT

The Alaska Division of Elections publishes sample ballots for each election. Below is a sample ballot for the June 11, 2022 special primary election, which was conducted by mail. The ballot had only one side.

SAMPLE BALLOT



**State of Alaska
Official Ballot
June 11, 2022
Special Primary Election**

Instructions: To vote, completely fill in the oval to the left of your choice, like this: VOTE FOR ONE

Use a blue or black ink pen to mark your ballot. NO RED INK. If you make a mistake, ask for a new ballot.

48


PLEASE NOTE: A candidate's designated affiliation does not imply that the candidate is nominated or endorsed by the political party or group or that the party or group approves of or associates with that candidate, but only that the candidate is registered as affiliated with the political party or political group.

United States Representative (Vote for one)	
<input type="radio"/> Aguayo, Dennis W. "Denny" - Nonpartisan	<input type="radio"/> Knight, Don - Nonpartisan
<input type="radio"/> Armstrong, Jay R. - Registered Republican	<input type="radio"/> Lowenfels, Jeff B. - Nonpartisan
<input type="radio"/> Beal, Brian T. - Undeclared	<input type="radio"/> Lyons, Robert "Bob" - Registered Republican
<input type="radio"/> Beck, Tim - Undeclared	<input type="radio"/> McCabe, Anne M. - Nonpartisan
<input type="radio"/> Begich, Nick - Registered Republican	<input type="radio"/> Melander, Mikel E. - Registered Republican
<input type="radio"/> Brelsford, Gregg B. - Undeclared	<input type="radio"/> Mettler, Sherry M. - Undeclared
<input type="radio"/> Brown, Robert - Nonpartisan	<input type="radio"/> Milligan, Mike - Registered Democrat
<input type="radio"/> Bye, Chris - Registered Libertarian	<input type="radio"/> Myers, J.R. - Registered Libertarian
<input type="radio"/> Callahan, John T. - Registered Republican	<input type="radio"/> Notti, Emil - Registered Democrat
<input type="radio"/> Carle, Arlene - Nonpartisan	<input type="radio"/> Ornelas, Robert - Registered Am. Indep. Party
<input type="radio"/> Claus, Santa - Undeclared	<input type="radio"/> Palin, Sarah - Registered Republican
<input type="radio"/> Coghill, John B. Jr. - Registered Republican	<input type="radio"/> Pellegrini, Silvio E. - Undeclared
<input type="radio"/> Constant, Christopher S. - Registered Democrat	<input type="radio"/> Peltola, Mary S. - Registered Democrat
<input type="radio"/> Dutchess, Lady Donna - Nonpartisan	<input type="radio"/> Revak, Joshua C. - Registered Republican
<input type="radio"/> Florschutz, Otto H. III - Registered Republican	<input type="radio"/> Sumner, Maxwell - Registered Republican
<input type="radio"/> Foster, Laurel A. - Nonpartisan	<input type="radio"/> Sweeney, Tara M. - Registered Republican
<input type="radio"/> Gibbons, Thomas R. "Tom" - Registered Republican	<input type="radio"/> Thistle, David - Undeclared
<input type="radio"/> Griffin, Karyn - Undeclared	<input type="radio"/> Thomas, Ernest F. - Registered Democrat
<input type="radio"/> Gross, Al - Nonpartisan	<input type="radio"/> Trotter, Richard "Clayton" - Registered Republican
<input type="radio"/> Halcro, Andrew J. - Nonpartisan	<input type="radio"/> Welter, Bradley D. - Registered Republican
<input type="radio"/> Heintz, Ted S. - Nonpartisan	<input type="radio"/> Williams, Jason G. - Undeclared
<input type="radio"/> Hibler, William D. III "Bill" - Nonpartisan	<input type="radio"/> Woodward, Jo - Registered Republican
<input type="radio"/> Howe, John Wayne - Registered AK Indep.	<input type="radio"/> Wool, Adam L. - Registered Democrat
<input type="radio"/> Hughes, David - Undeclared	<input type="radio"/> Wright, Stephen - Registered Republican

AUGUST 2022 PRIMARY ELECTION AND SPECIAL GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT

Below are both sides of a sample ballot for the August 16, 2022 election. The ballot included the special ranked-choice general election for U.S. House on one side and the regular primary election on the other. The sample ballot below is for House District 1.⁸

SAMPLE BALLOT



State of Alaska Official Ballot
August 16, 2022
Primary Election

House District 1

500

PLEASE NOTE: A candidate's designated affiliation does not imply that the candidate is nominated or endorsed by the political party or group or that the party or group approves of or associates with that candidate, but only that the candidate is registered as affiliated with the party or group.


Primary Election - Voting Instructions

- To vote, completely fill in the oval to the right of your choice, like this:
- Vote for one candidate only.
- Use a blue or black ink pen to mark your ballot. NO RED INK.
- If you make a mistake, ask for a new ballot.

United States Senator (Vote for one)	United States Representative (Vote for one)	Governor / Lt. Governor (Vote for one)
Blanchford, Edgar <small>(Registered Democrat)</small>	Armstrong, Jay R. <small>(Registered Republican)</small>	Dunleavy, Mike / Dahlstrom, Nancy <small>(Registered Republican)</small>
Cheabro, Patricia R. <small>(Registered Democrat)</small>	Begich, Nick <small>(Registered Republican)</small>	Gara, Les / Cook, Jessica A. <small>(Registered Democrat)</small>
Darden, Dave H. <small>(Unaffiliated)</small>	Brelsford, Gregg B. <small>(Registered Democrat)</small>	Heag, David S. / Coleman, S. Waynette <small>(Registered Republican)</small>
Darden, Dustin F. <small>(Registered Aff. Independence)</small>	Bye, Chris <small>(Registered Libertarian)</small>	Howe, John Wayne / Wyatt, Shellee <small>(Registered Aff. Independence)</small>
Gongwerstin, Shoshana <small>(Nonpartisan)</small>	Duchess, Lady Donna <small>(Nonpartisan)</small>	Kurka, Christopher / Huesper, Paul <small>(Registered Republican)</small>
Hill, Sidney "Sid" <small>(Nonpartisan)</small>	Heintz, Ted <small>(Nonpartisan)</small>	Myers, J.K. <small>(Registered Libertarian)</small>
Keller, Jeremy <small>(Nonpartisan)</small>	Hughes, David <small>(Unaffiliated)</small>	Ornelas, Robert <small>(Registered Aff. Independence)</small>
Kelley, Buzz A. <small>(Unaffiliated)</small>	LeBlanc, Davis L. Jr. <small>(Unaffiliated)</small>	Pierce, Charlie / Grunwald, Edie <small>(Registered Republican)</small>
Lee, Hulmie <small>(Unaffiliated)</small>	Lynne, Robert "Bob" <small>(Registered Republican)</small>	Pellegrini, Silvio E. <small>(Unaffiliated)</small>
Marrill, Samuel A. "Al" <small>(Registered Republican)</small>	Mettler, Sherry M. <small>(Unaffiliated)</small>	Pelto, Mary S. <small>(Registered Democrat)</small>
Murkowski, Lisa <small>(Registered Republican)</small>	Myers, J.K. <small>(Registered Libertarian)</small>	Phelps, Andrew H. <small>(Nonpartisan)</small>
Nolin, Pat L. <small>(Registered Republican)</small>	Ornelas, Robert <small>(Registered Aff. Independence)</small>	Purham, Randy <small>(Registered Republican)</small>
Schless, John <small>(Registered Republican)</small>	Palin, Sarah <small>(Registered Republican)</small>	Snowden, Brad <small>(Unaffiliated)</small>
Shorky, Kendall L. <small>(Registered Republican)</small>	Pellegrini, Silvio E. <small>(Unaffiliated)</small>	Srinivas, Sherry A. <small>(Unaffiliated)</small>
Spingalis, Karl W. <small>(Registered Republican)</small>	Pelto, Mary S. <small>(Registered Democrat)</small>	Sweeney, Lara M. <small>(Registered Republican)</small>
Stephens, Joe T. <small>(Registered Aff. Independence)</small>	Phelps, Andrew H. <small>(Nonpartisan)</small>	Williams, Denise A. <small>(Registered Republican)</small>
Taylor, Ivan R. <small>(Registered Democrat)</small>	Purham, Randy <small>(Registered Republican)</small>	Wilson, Tremayne <small>(Nonpartisan)</small>
Thome, Sean M. <small>(Registered Libertarian)</small>	Snowden, Brad <small>(Unaffiliated)</small>	
Tshibaka, Kelly C. <small>(Registered Republican)</small>	Srinivas, Sherry A. <small>(Unaffiliated)</small>	
	Sweeney, Lara M. <small>(Registered Republican)</small>	
	Williams, Denise A. <small>(Registered Republican)</small>	
	Wilson, Tremayne <small>(Nonpartisan)</small>	
		State Senator District A (Vote for one)
		Sheldon, Mike <small>(Registered Republican)</small>
		Stedman, Bert K. <small>(Registered Republican)</small>
		State Representative District 1 (Vote for one)
		Meggitt, Shevaun A. <small>(Nonpartisan)</small>
		Bynum, Jeremy F. <small>(Registered Republican)</small>
		Ortiz, Daniel H. "Dan" <small>(Nonpartisan)</small>

Continue Voting on Next Side

SAMPLE BALLOT



State of Alaska Official Ballot
August 16, 2022
Special General Election

House District 1

500

PLEASE NOTE: A candidate's designated affiliation does not imply that the candidate is nominated or endorsed by the political party or group or that the party or group approves of or associates with that candidate, but only that the candidate is registered as affiliated with the party or group.

SPECIAL GENERAL ELECTION - RANKED CHOICE VOTING INSTRUCTIONS

- Rank as many or as few candidates as you like.
- Completely fill in no more than one oval for each candidate or column.
- For your 1st choice, fill in the oval in the 1st choice column.
- For your 2nd choice, fill in the oval in the 2nd choice column.
- For your 3rd choice, fill in the oval in the 3rd choice column, and so on.
- If you make a mistake, you can ask for a new ballot.

United States Representative	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice
Begich, Nick <small>(Registered Republican)</small>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Palin, Sarah <small>(Registered Republican)</small>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pelto, Mary S. <small>(Registered Democrat)</small>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write-in:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>


Continue Voting on Next Side

⁸ The Alaska Division of Elections printed unique ballots for each of Alaska's 40 House Districts. The August 16, 2022 ballots were identical except for State Senator and State Representative candidates on the primary election side.

NOVEMBER 2022 GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT

Below are both sides of a sample ballot for the November 8, 2022 general election. One side is the ranked-choice general election ballot, and the other includes a ballot measure and judicial retention questions.⁹ The sample ballot below is for House District 1.

SAMPLE BALLOT



State of Alaska Official Ballot
November 8, 2022
General Election


House District 1
Judicial District 1

700

PLEASE NOTE: A candidate's designated affiliation does not imply that the candidate is nominated or endorsed by the political party or group or that the party or group approves of or associates with that candidate, but only that the candidate is registered as affiliated with the party or group.

Instructions:

- Do not use red ink or a pencil to mark your ballot.
- Rank as many or as few candidates as you like.
- Completely fill in no more than one oval for each candidate or column.
- For your 1st choice, fill in the oval in the 1st choice column.
- For your 2nd choice, fill in the oval in the 2nd choice column.
- For your 3rd choice, fill in the oval in the 3rd choice column, and so on.
- If you make a mistake, you can ask for a new ballot.



United States Senator					
	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice
Chesbro, Patricia R. (Registered Democrat)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kelley, Buzz A. (Registered Republican)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Murkowski, Lisa (Registered Republican)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tahibaka, Kelly C. (Registered Republican)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write-in:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

United States Representative					
	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice
Begich, Nick (Registered Republican)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bye, Chris (Registered Libertarian)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Palin, Sarah (Registered Republican)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Peltoia, Mary S. (Registered Democrat)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write-in:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Governor / Lieutenant Governor					
	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice
Dunleavy, Mike / Dahlstrom, Nancy (Registered Republican)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gara, Les / Cook, Jessica A. (Registered Democrat)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pierce, Charlie / Grunwald, Edie (Registered Republican)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Walker, Bill / Drygas, Heidi (Nonpartisan)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write-in:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

State Senator District A		
	1st Choice	2nd Choice
Sheldon, Mike (Registered Republican)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stedman, Bert K. (Registered Republican)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write-in:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

State Representative District 1		
	1st Choice	2nd Choice
Ortiz, Daniel H. "Dan" (Nonpartisan)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bynum, Jeremy T. (Registered Republican)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write-in:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Continue Voting on Next Side

SAMPLE BALLOT

Instructions: To vote, completely fill in the oval to the right of your choice, like this:

Ballot Measure No. 1 Constitutional Convention Question	
Shall there be a constitutional convention?	YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/>

Court of Appeals	
Judge Harbison	
Shall Bethany S. Harbison be retained as judge of the court of appeals for eight years?	YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/>

First Judicial District Superior Court	
Judge Mead	
Shall Amy G. Mead be retained as judge of the superior court for six years?	YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/>

Judge Pate	
Shall Michael J. "Jude" Pate be retained as judge of the superior court for six years?	YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/>

Judge Schally	
Shall Daniel Schally be retained as judge of the superior court for six years?	YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/>

First Judicial District District Court	
Judge Swanson	
Shall Kirsten L. Swanson be retained as judge of the district court for four years?	YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/>

Continue Voting on Next Side

⁹ Alaska's constitution calls for placing the following question on the general election ballot every ten years: "Shall there be a constitutional convention?" The state constitution also calls for sitting judges to stand for periodic "retention" votes.

Methodology

This analysis seeks to understand Alaska voters' experience and perceptions of the state's new voting system, which combines an open primary and a ranked-choice general election. The analysis compares responses by different subgroups to better understand similarities and differences among groups, and what drives perceptions and experiences of the new voting system.

The analysis uses data from public opinion surveys of Alaska voters conducted by Patinkin Research Strategies in the days following the August and November 2022 elections. McKinley Research Group was consulted in the design of the survey.

This analysis focuses on four survey questions:

- ❖ *Did you receive instructions on how to fill out your ballot in the ranked-choice voting election?*
- ❖ *In your opinion, how simple or difficult was it for you to fill out your Ranked-Choice Voting ballot?*
- ❖ *Do you think you had better [worse] candidates to choose from, were your choices worse [better], or about the same compared to previous years?*
- ❖ *Thinking about all elections for state and federal offices in Alaska this year, do you think your vote mattered more or less compared to previous years, or was it about the same?*

The analysis evaluated total responses and responses broken down by five demographic groupings: age, race, gender, region, and party identification. The analysis was conducted separately for the August and November surveys. The November analysis is reported in greater detail with summary comparisons to August responses.

VOTER SURVEYS

Patinkin Research Strategies surveyed registered voters in Alaska after the August 16, 2022 combined special and primary election and again after the November 8, 2022 general election. The August survey of 1,200 voters reached 664 voters via live phone (56% cell phones) and 536 via text-to-web from August 18-24, 2022. The November survey of 800 voters reached 555 by live phone (72% cell phones) and 245 via text-to-web from November 9-13, 2022.

For each survey, samples were randomly selected from a list of registered active voters in the state of Alaska. Voters who said they did not participate in the election in question were screened out. Results were weighted based on race, borough, education level, age, gender, voting method, and other factors. The theoretical margin of error is 3% for the August survey and 3.5% for the November survey. The margin of error for subgroup analysis is greater because

sample sizes are smaller. Unless otherwise noted, figures in this document omit “don’t know” responses. Some responses therefore do not sum to 100%.

SUBGROUP DESCRIPTIONS

Subgroup descriptions that are not self-evident are described below.

Party Identification: For purposes of this paper, party identification (Party ID) refers to how voters identified themselves, which may not match an individual’s voter registration. Respondents were asked, “Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?” Those who identified as independents were asked, “Would you say that you lean more towards the Republican party or more towards the Democratic party?”

- Democrat: Those who responded Democrat or Independent-lean Democrat.
- Republican: Those who responded Republican or Independent-lean Republican.
- Independent & Other: Those who responded Independent-no partisan lean, don’t know, no party, or other.

Race/Ethnicity: Respondents were asked, “What is your race or ethnicity?” For purposes of this analysis, the following definitions apply:

- Alaska Native/American Indian: Those who identified as Alaska Native/American Indian.
- White: Those who identified as White/Caucasian.
- Non-Native People of Color (Non-Native POC): Those who identified as Hispanic/Latino, Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Black/African-American, or two or more races.

Those who declined to say their race were omitted from the race/ethnicity analysis. They are included in totals elsewhere.

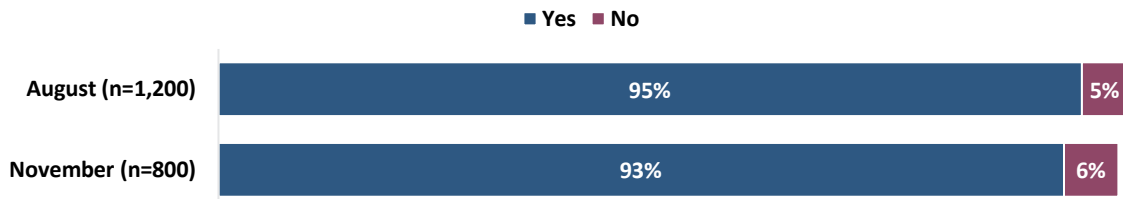
Survey Findings

Reach of Ranked-Choice Voting Instructions

Did you receive instructions on how to fill out your ballot in the ranked choice voting election?

The vast majority of respondents said yes to this question in August (95%) and November (93%). These findings suggest voter education efforts largely succeeded in reaching Alaska voters. Subgroup findings presented on the following pages provide further insight into the reach of voter education efforts.

Figure 1. Received Instructions on Filling Out RCV Ballot

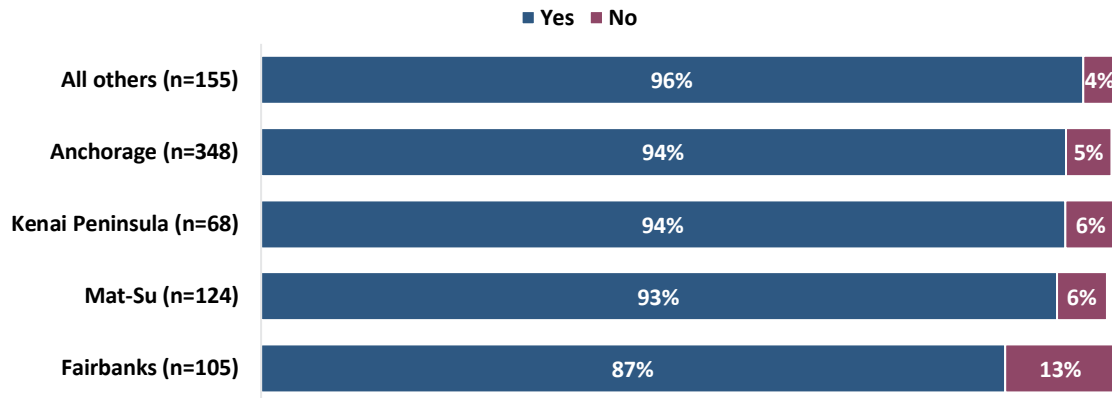


Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because 'don't know' responses have been omitted.

RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS BY REGION

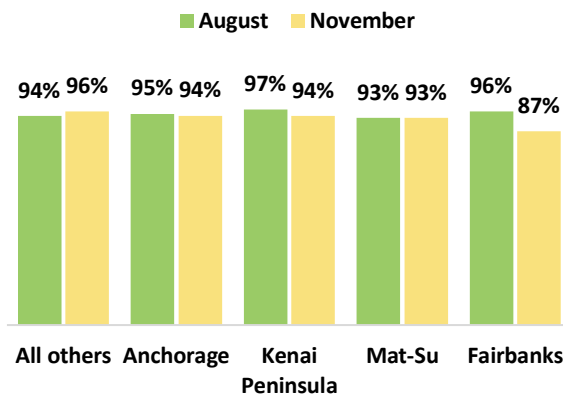
Across all regions analyzed, at least 87% of respondents said they received instructions on filling out their ranked-choice voting ballot. Fairbanks respondents were most likely to say they did *not* receive instructions (13%), while those in Southeast and rural Alaska (“All others”) were least likely to say they did not (4%). In all regions except Fairbanks, at least 93% of respondents said they received instructions on filling out their RCV ballot.

Figure 2. Received Instructions for RCV Ballot, by Region (November)



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because ‘don’t know’ responses have been omitted.

Figure 3. Received Instructions, by Region (November & August)

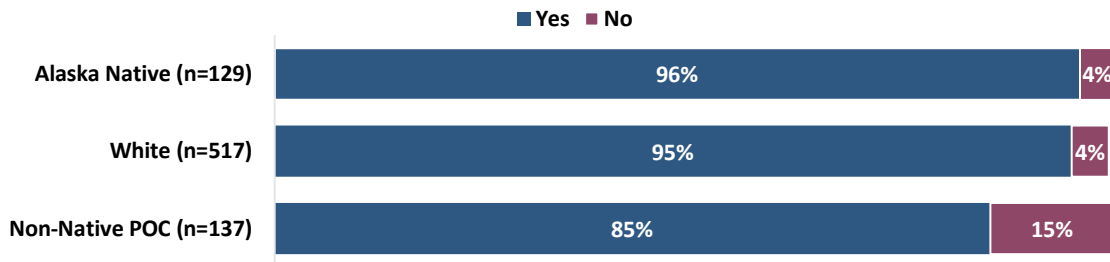


From August to November, only one region changed by more than 3 points in the share of respondents who said they received instructions on voting their RCV ballot. In Fairbanks, respondents were 9 points less likely to say they received instructions on voting their RCV ballot in November than in August.

RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS BY RACE/ETHNICITY

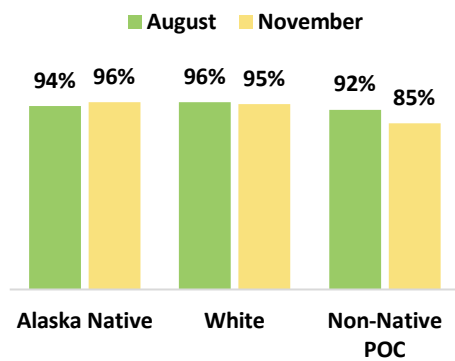
Alaska Native and White respondents were most likely to say they received instructions on filling out their RCV ballot, at 96% and 95%, respectively. Non-Native people of color were about 10 points less likely to say they received instructions, at 85%.

Figure 4. Received Instructions for RCV Ballot, by Race/Ethnicity (November)



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because 'don't know' responses have been omitted.

Figure 5. Received Instructions, by Race/Ethnicity (November & August)

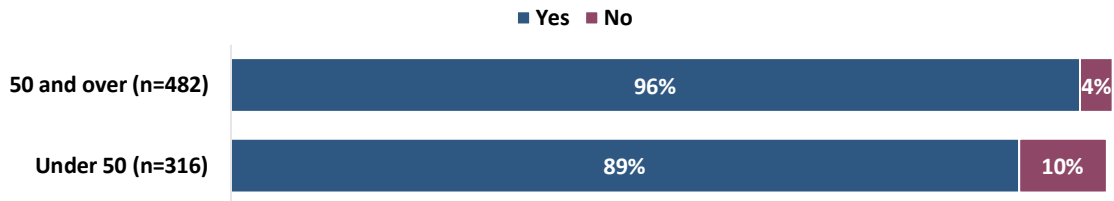


The only group by race/ethnicity to show significant change from August to November was Non-Native people of color. Among respondents in this cohort, 92% said they received instructions on voting their RCV ballot in August, while 85% said the same in November.

RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS BY AGE

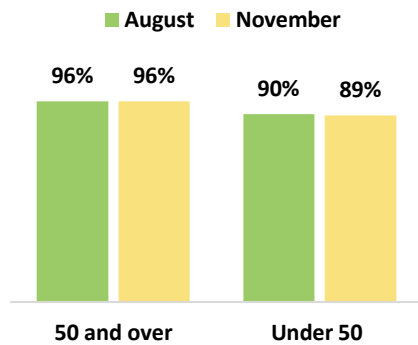
Respondents age 50 and over were slightly more likely than those under 50 to say they received instructions on filling out their RCV ballot, at 96% and 10%, respectively.

Figure 6. Received Instructions for RCV Ballot, by Age (November)



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because 'don't know' responses have been omitted.

Figure 7. Received Instructions, by Age (November & August)

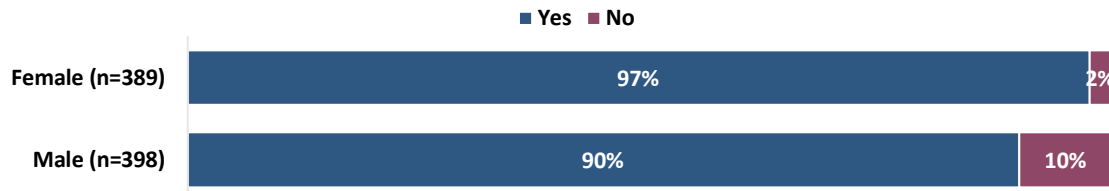


Responses by age were virtually unchanged from August to November; in both surveys, older voters were more likely than younger voters to say they received instructions on filling out their RCV ballot.

RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS BY GENDER

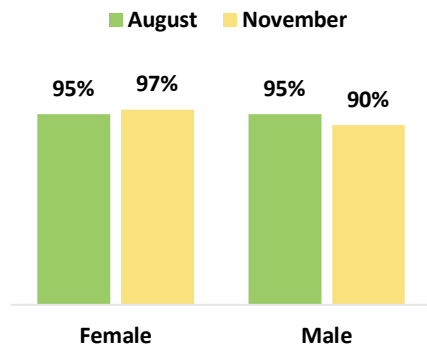
Women were more likely than men to say they received instructions on filling out their RCV ballot, at 97% and 90%, respectively.

Figure 8. Received Instructions for RCV Ballot, by Gender (November)



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because 'don't know' responses have been omitted.

Figure 9. Received Instructions, by Gender (November & August)

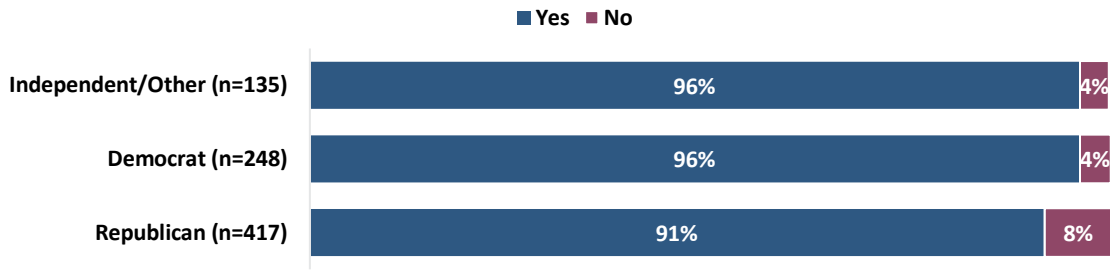


Gender divergence was not observed in August, when women and men said they received instructions at equal rates (95%). Between August and November, women became slightly more likely to say they received instructions on filling out their RCV ballot, while men became slightly less likely to say they received instructions.

RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS BY PARTY IDENTIFICATION

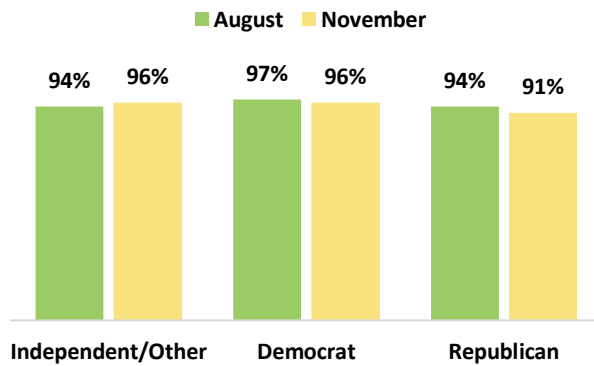
Among respondents of all party identifications, more than 90% said they received instructions on filling out their RCV ballot. Self-identified Republicans and lean-Republicans were slightly less likely (91%) than Independents/others (96%) and self-identified Democrats and lean-Democrats (96%) to say they received instructions.

Figure 10. Received Instructions for RCV Ballot, by Party Identification (November)



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because 'don't know' responses have been omitted.

Figure 11. Received Instructions, by Party Identification (November & August)



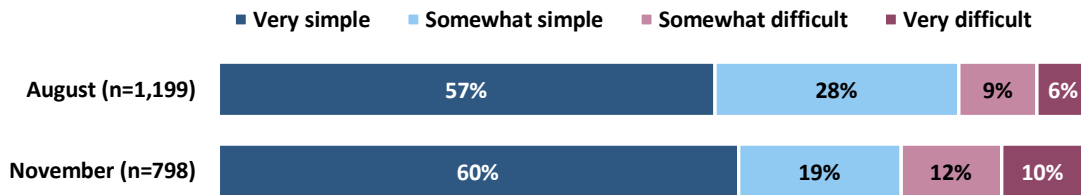
From August to November, changes were negligible in the share of respondents by self-identified party who said they received instructions on filling out their RCV ballot.

Ease of Ranked-Choice Voting

In your opinion, how simple or difficult was it for you to fill out your Ranked-Choice Voting ballot?

A majority of respondents said it was *very simple*: 57% after the August election and 60% after the November election. In August, 85% of voters said RCV was very or somewhat simple, and in November that number declined slightly to 79%. Conversely, 15% said it was very or somewhat difficult in August, compared to 22% in November.

Figure 12. Ease of Filling Out RCV Ball



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because 'don't know' responses have been omitted.

Voter Propensity

Why might survey respondents be less likely to find RCV simple the second time around (November) than the first (August)? Voter propensity data sheds light on one possible factor.

Using publicly available data from the Alaska Division of Elections, Patinkin Research Strategies categorized each survey respondent based on how many of the last 10 elections the respondent voted in. "High-propensity" voters voted in 7 or more of the last 10 elections; medium-propensity voters voted in 4-6 of the last 10 elections; and low-propensity voters voted in 3 or fewer of the last 10 elections.

August respondents were more likely to be high-propensity or frequent voters than November respondents (by 17 points). Conversely, November respondents were more likely to be low-propensity voter than August respondents (by 12 points) Frequent voters may be more familiar and comfortable with voting in general and may be less likely to find RCV ballots daunting than low-propensity or infrequent voters.

Table 1. Survey Respondents' Voting Propensity

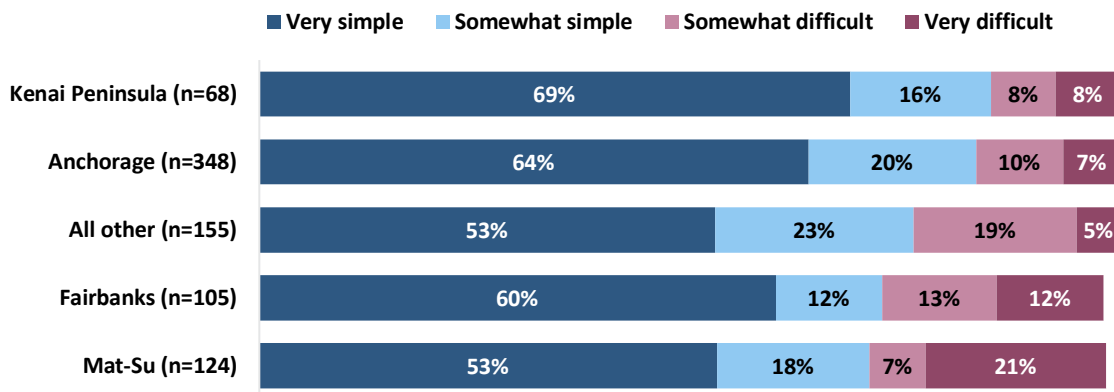
	August	November	Difference
High	60%	43%	-17%
Medium	28%	33%	+5%
Low	12%	24%	+12%
Total	100%	100%	0

Source: Patinkin Research Strategies

EASE OF RCV VOTING BY REGION

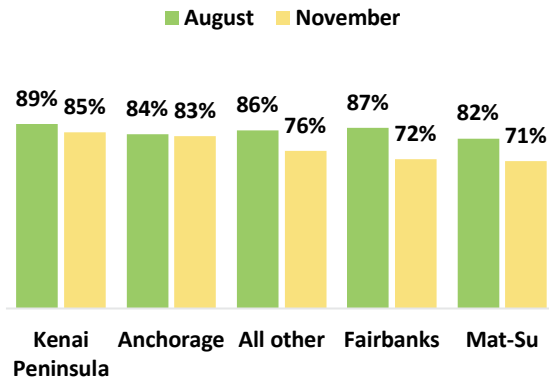
Among regions, Kenai Peninsula voters were most likely to say filling out their RCV ballot was very or somewhat simple (85%), followed by Anchorage voters (84%). In Mat-Su, where voters were most likely to say it was difficult, 71% of voters still said filling out their RCV ballot was somewhat or very simple. Voters in Fairbanks and elsewhere - including Juneau and small communities across the state - fell in the middle in their assessment of the ease of RCV voting. In all regions, a majority of voters said filling out their RCV ballot was very simple.

Figure 13. Ease of Filling Out RCV Ballot by Region (November)



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because 'don't know' responses have been omitted.

Figure 14. 'Simple' Responses, RCV Ballot by Region, August & November

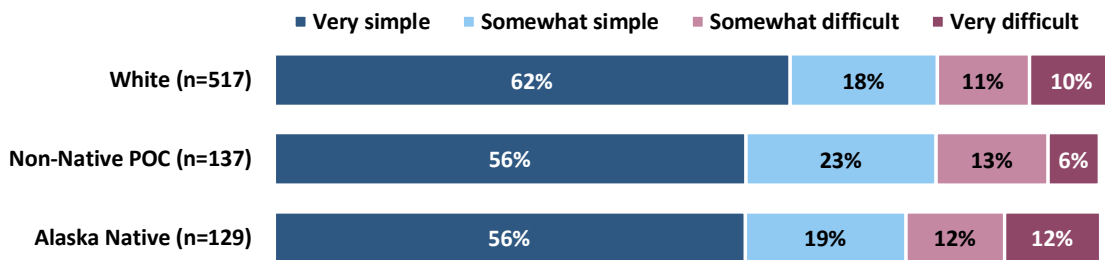


The chart at left shows combined "very simple" and "somewhat simple" responses in August and November, by region. Across regions, voters were more likely in August than in November to say filling out their RCV ballot was very or somewhat simple. The drop was negligible in Anchorage, and biggest in Fairbanks. Results should be interpreted with caution as sample sizes are small.

EASE OF RCV VOTING BY RACE/ETHNICITY

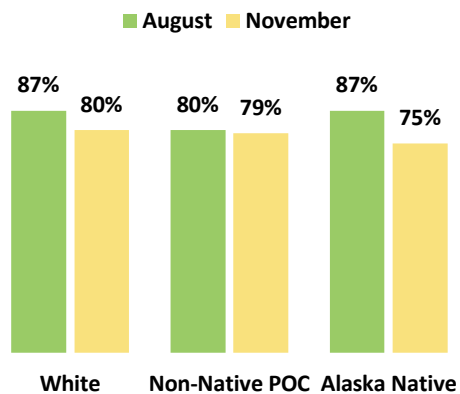
Very little variation was seen among racial and ethnic groups in response to question, “How simple or difficult was it for you to fill out your RCV ballot?” Non-Native people of color and White respondents were most likely to say filling out their RCV ballot was very or somewhat simple (79% and 80%, respectively), compared to 75% of Alaska Native respondents.

Figure 15. Ease of Filling Out RCV Ballot, by Race/Ethnicity (November)



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because ‘don’t know’ responses have been omitted.

Figure 16. ‘Simple’ Responses, RCV Ballot by Race/Ethnicity, August & November

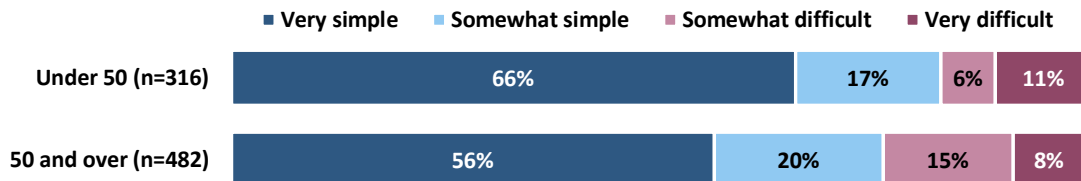


The chart at left shows combined “very simple” and “somewhat simple” responses in August and November, by race. Alaska Native voters were more likely in August than in November to say filling out their RCV ballot was very or somewhat simple, by 12 percentage points. The drop among White respondents was 7 percentage points, and negligible among non-Native people of color.

EASE OF RCV VOTING BY AGE

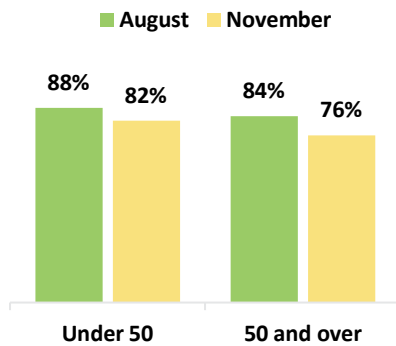
Survey respondents under age 50 were more likely to say RCV was very or somewhat simple (83%) compared to respondents ages 50 and over (76%). Conversely, those ages 50 and over were more likely to say RCV voting was somewhat or very difficult (23%) than those under age 50 (17%).

Figure 17. Ease of Filling Out RCV Ballot, by Age (November)



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because 'don't know' responses have been omitted.

Figure 18. 'Simple' Responses, RCV Ballot by Age, August & November

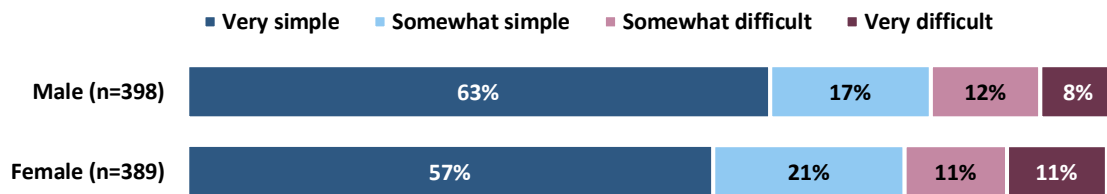


The chart at left shows combined "very simple" and "somewhat simple" responses in August and November, by age. Like the survey population as a whole, voters over and under 50 were more likely to say voting their RCV ballot was easy after the August election than after the November election. Voter propensity is a likely factor in this trend.

EASE OF RCV VOTING BY GENDER

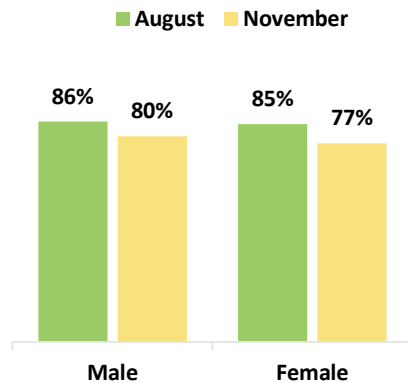
Male respondents were slightly more likely to say RCV was very simple (63%) than women (57%). Male and female respondents were roughly equally likely to say it was somewhat or very simple, at 80% and 78%, respectively.

Figure 19. Ease of Filling Out RCV Ballot, by Gender (November)



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because 'don't know' responses have been omitted.

Figure 20. 'Simple' Responses, RCV Ballot by Gender, August & November

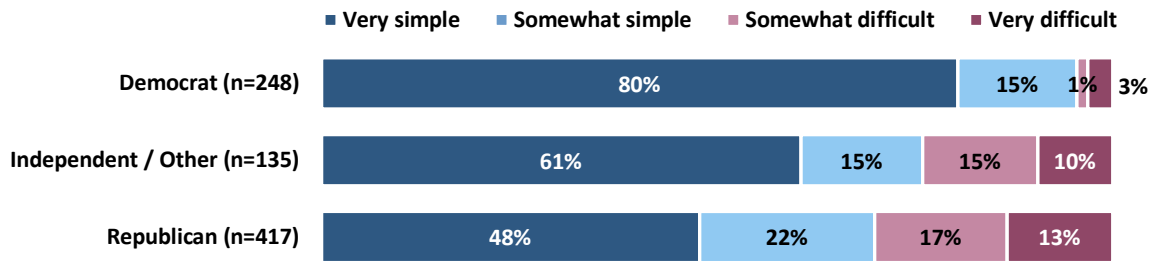


The chart at left shows combined "very simple" and "somewhat simple" responses in August and November, by gender. Both male and female respondents reported that RCV was less easy in November than in August. Male respondents were 6 percentage points less likely to say RCV was very or somewhat simple in November, and female respondents were 8 points less likely.

EASE OF RCV VOTING BY PARTY IDENTIFICATION

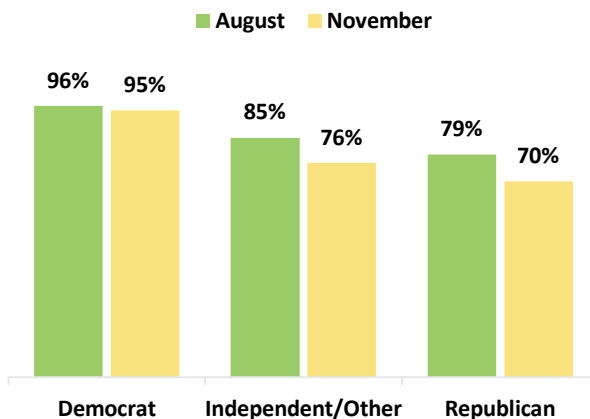
Self-identified Democrats and those who said they lean Democrat were most likely to say it was easy to vote their RCV ballot, with almost 80% calling it very simple and only 3% calling it very difficult. Those who identified as Republican or lean-Republican were least likely to say it was simple, but a majority still called it very or somewhat simple. Independent and third-party responses fell in the middle.

Figure 21. Ease of Filling Out RCV Ballot by Party Identification (November)



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because 'don't know' responses have been omitted.

Figure 22. 'Simple' Responses, RCV Ballot by Party Identification, August & November



The chart at left shows combined "very simple" and "somewhat simple" responses in August and November, by party identification. Between August and November, the partisan split grew, as Republicans were 9 percentage points less likely to call RCV voting simple in November than in August, while Democrats continued to say RCV was simple at high rates (96% and 95% in August and November, respectively).

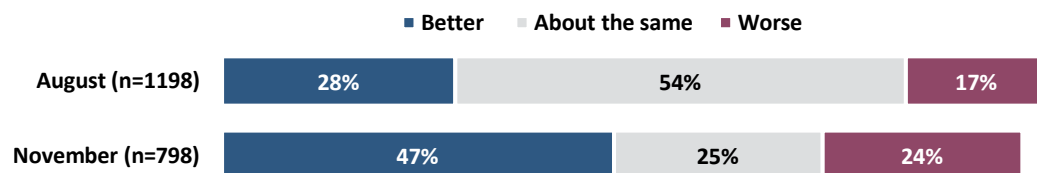
Quality of Candidates

Do you think you had better or worse candidates to choose from compared to previous years or were things about the same? [Half the time, the question was worded with “worse” before “better.”]

Respondents in both August and November were more likely to say their candidate choices were better than to say their choices were worse compared to previous years. In the November survey, almost half (47%) of respondents said they had better candidates to choose from compared to previous years, while 24% said their choices were worse and 25% said their choices were about the same. In August, a majority of respondents (54%) said their choices were about the same as prior years, while 28% said their choices were better and 17% said they were worse. Note that the August question was worded differently: *Thinking about elections for all state and federal offices in Alaska this year, do you think you had better candidates to choose from, were your choices worse, or about the same compared to previous years?*

Notably, the August election featured only one statewide general election race, while the November ballot included three statewide general election contests as well as state legislative races. See sample ballots for reference.

Figure 23. Candidate Quality Compared to Past Years



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because ‘don’t know’ responses have been omitted.

Alaska Candidate Pools and Competitiveness

Two other recent analyses may be relevant to the discussion of candidate quality. Sightline Institute analyzed Alaska primary elections candidate pools in statewide races from 2010 through 2022, and found the 2022 statewide candidate cohorts differed from previous candidate pools in the following ways:

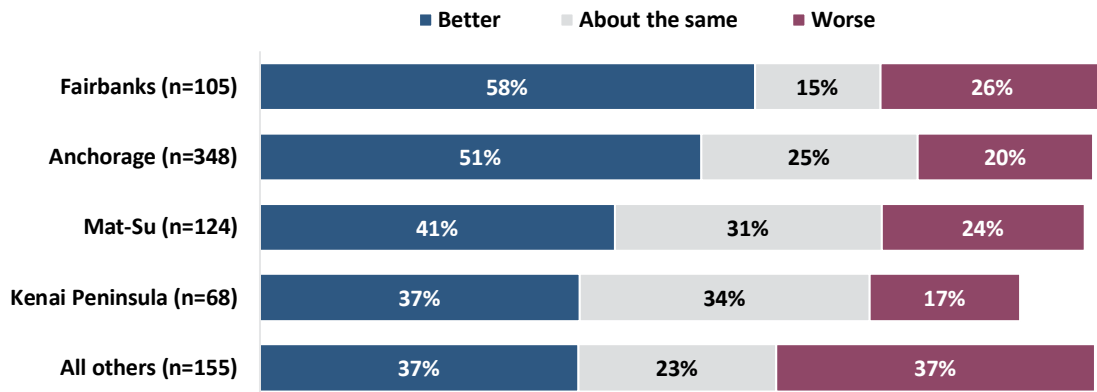
- More candidates identified as Independent and third-party.
- More Alaskans ran for statewide office overall.
- More elections were competitive, as no statewide primaries had just one candidate.
- More women ran for office.

R Street analyzed the percentage of unopposed state legislative races in Alaska from 2012 through 2022 and found that the percentage of uncontested races in 2022 (12%) was the lowest in the decade analyzed, and about half the decade average of 24.5%.

CANDIDATE QUALITY BY REGION

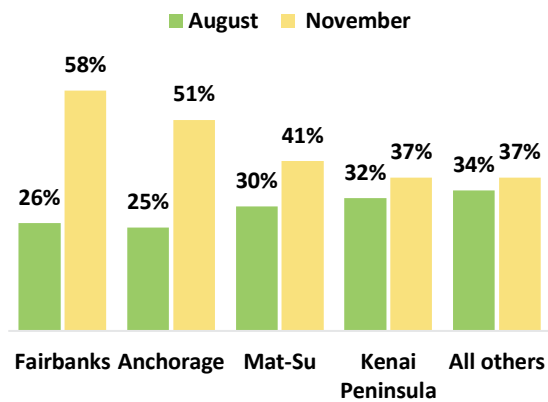
Among regions, Fairbanks voters were the most likely to say their candidate choices were better than in previous years, and least likely to say their choices were worse. In Fairbanks and Anchorage, more than half of voters (58% and 51%, respectively) said their choices were better than in previous years. Note that Kenai Peninsula voters had a relatively high rate of “don’t know” responses (12%), which are excluded from analysis. In all regions except “other” (which includes Juneau, other small cities, and rural Alaska), respondents were more likely to say their candidate choices were better than worse compared to prior years.

Figure 24. Candidate Quality Compared to Past Years, by Region (November)



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because ‘don’t know’ responses have been omitted.

Figure 25. Candidate Quality ‘Better’, by Region (August & November)

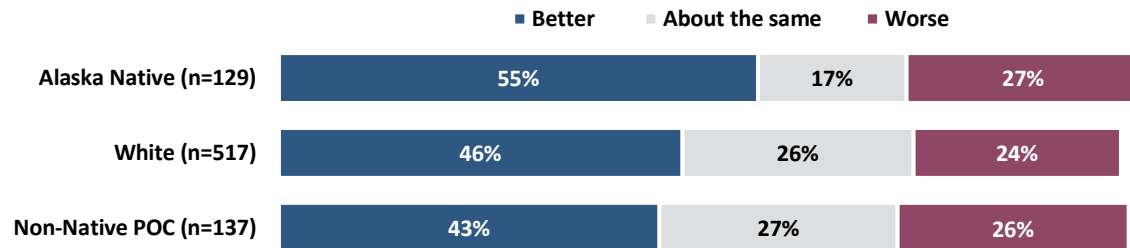


Respondents in all regions were more likely in November than August to say their candidate choices were better than in previous years. Change was most marked in Fairbanks and Anchorage, where people were more than twice as likely in November than August to say they had better candidates to choose from than in past elections.

CANDIDATE QUALITY BY RACE/ETHNICITY

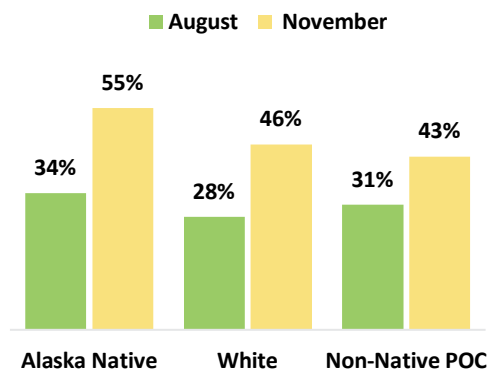
Voters who identified as Alaska Native were most likely to say their choices were better than in past years (55%). White voters and other people of color were also more likely to say their choices were better than previous years than to say they were worse. Those who declined to state their race are excluded from analysis.

Figure 26. Candidate Quality Compared to Past Years, by Race (November)



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because 'don't know' responses have been omitted.

Figure 27. Candidate Quality 'Better,' by Race (August & November)

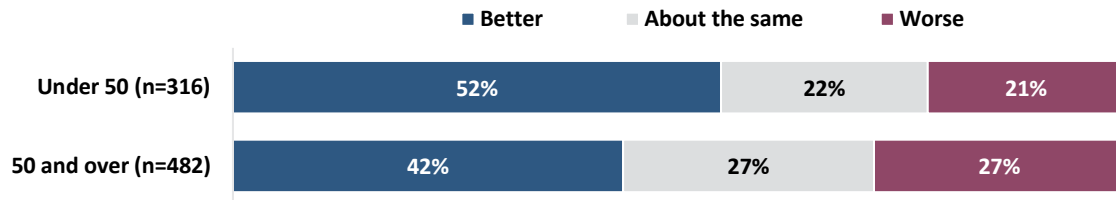


While all three groups were more likely in November than in August to say they had better candidates to choose from, the most significant increase was among Alaska Native respondents (an increase of 21 points). Respondents who identified as White also showed significant change, with an increase of 18 points from August to November among those saying their candidate choices were better than in past years.

CANDIDATE QUALITY BY AGE

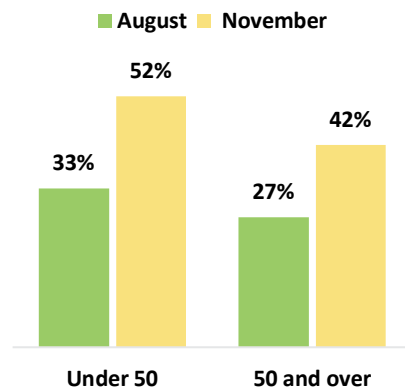
Younger voters were more likely than older voters to say their choices were better than in previous years, and less likely to say their choices were about the same or worse compared to previous years. More than half of voters under age 50 (52%) said their candidates choices were better than in the past, compared to 42% of voters ages 50 and over. Among other voters, 27% said their choices were worse than in prior years, compared to 21% of younger voters.

Figure 28. Candidate Quality Compared to Past Years, by Age (November)



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because 'don't know' responses have been omitted.

Figure 29. Candidate Quality 'Better,' by Race (August & November)

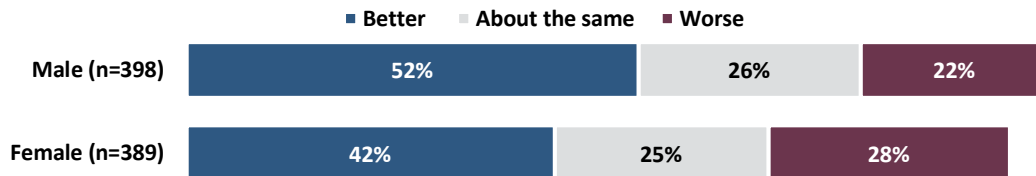


Voters under age 50 and age 50 and over were more likely in November than in August to say their candidate choices were better than in past years. The increase was more marked among younger voters - while one-third of this group thought they had better choices in August, more than half felt this way in November. Among over-50 voters, that increase was 15 points.

CANDIDATE QUALITY BY GENDER

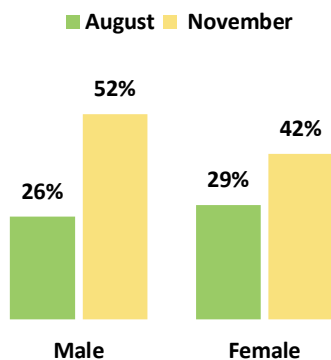
Both men and women were more likely to say their candidate choices were better than in previous years. More than half of men (52%) said their choices were better, compared to 42% of women. Conversely, women were slightly more likely than men to say their choices were worse than in previously years, at 28% and 22%, respectively. About one-quarter of men and women said their choices were about the same as in previous years.

Figure 30. Candidate Quality Compared to Past Years, by Gender (November)



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because 'don't know' responses have been omitted.

Figure 31. Candidate Quality 'Better,' by Gender (August & November)

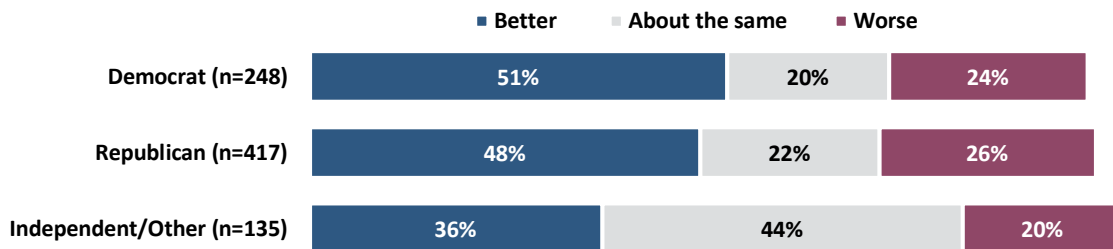


In August, women were slightly more likely than men to say their candidate choices were better than in previous years; this flipped in November. Men were twice as likely in November to say their choices were better than previous years compared to their views in August. The proportion of women saying their candidate choices were better than in prior years increased between August and November by 13 percentage points.

CANDIDATE QUALITY BY PARTY IDENTIFICATION

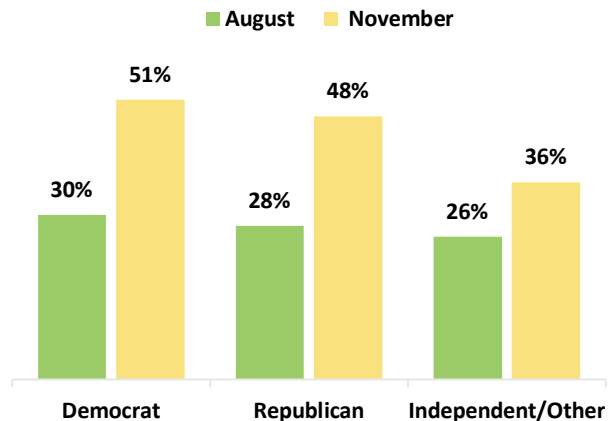
About half of both self-identified Democrats and Republicans (including independents who said they lean one direction or the other) said their candidate choices were better compared to previous years, at 51% and 48%, respectively. Similarly, about one-quarter of Democrats (24%) and Republicans (26%) said their choices were worse. The remainder, about one-fifth of Democrats and Republicans, said their choices were about the same compared to previous years. Independents and those identifying with other parties were less likely to say their choices were better (36%), but also less likely to say their choices were worse (20%) - and most likely to say their choices were about the same as in previous years (44%).

Figure 32. Candidate Quality Compared to Past Years, by Party Identification (November)



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because 'don't know' responses have been omitted.

Figure 33. Candidate Quality 'Better,' by Party Identification (August & November)



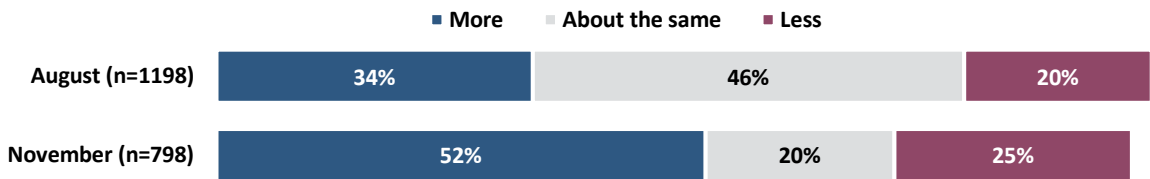
The chart at left shows "better" responses in August and November, by party self-identification. All three groups were more likely in November than in August to say their candidate choices were better than in prior years, but Democrats and Republicans showed increases of about 20 points compared to increases of 10 points among Independents and those identifying with other parties.

Voter Power

Do you think your vote mattered more [less] or less [more] compared to previous years, or was it about the same?

In August, one-third (34%) said their vote mattered more, while 20% said it mattered less, and 47% said “about the same.” After the November election, more than half (52%) said their vote mattered more, 25% said it mattered less, and 20% said “about the same.”

Figure 34. Voter Power Compared to Past Years

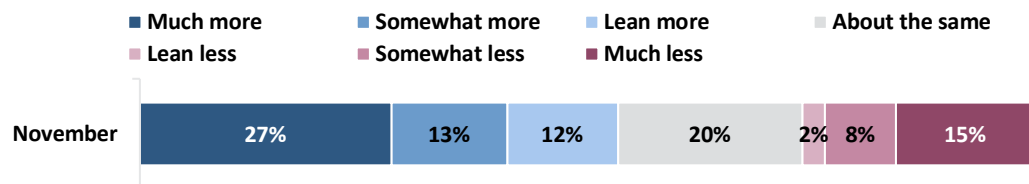


Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because ‘don’t know’ responses have been omitted.

An important caveat in comparing August and November results is that the question was asked differently in the two surveys. The question in August was phrased: “Thinking about all elections for state and federal offices this year, do you think your vote will matter more, less, or about the same?” The question in the November survey was phrased: “Do you think your vote mattered more or less compared to previous years, or was it about the same? ... If [more/less] is that much more or only somewhat [more/less]? If about the same, which way would you lean?”

Possible answers for the November question were *matters much more*, *matters somewhat more*, *“lean” matters more*, *about the same*, *“lean” matters less*, *matters somewhat less*, *matters much less*, and *don’t know*. For the purposes of comparing August and November results, “much,” “somewhat,” and “lean” responses are grouped in their respective categories (*more* or *less*). The figure below shows the full breakdown of November responses to this question.

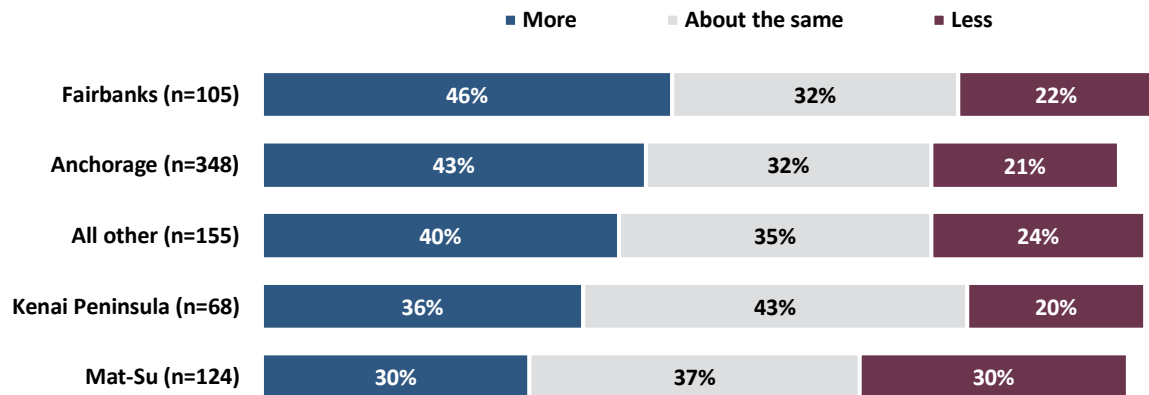
Figure 35. Voter Power Compared to Past Years – November Breakdown



VOTER POWER BY REGION

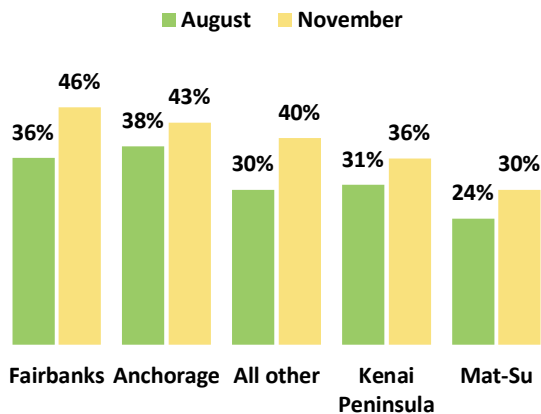
Looking at regional variation, voters in Fairbanks and Anchorage were most likely to say their vote mattered more than in previous years. Mat-Su respondents were the only group by region to offer an overall neutral response – with a plurality (37%) saying their vote mattered about the same as in prior years, and equal numbers (30%) assessing their power as higher or lower than in prior years. All other regions offered net positive assessments of the power of their vote compared to previous years – that is, respondents were more likely to say their vote mattered *more* compared to previous years than they were to say their vote mattered *less*.

Figure 36. Voter Power Compared to Past Years, by Region (November)



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because 'don't know' responses have been omitted.

Figure 37. 'More' Voter Power Than Past Years, by Region (August & November)

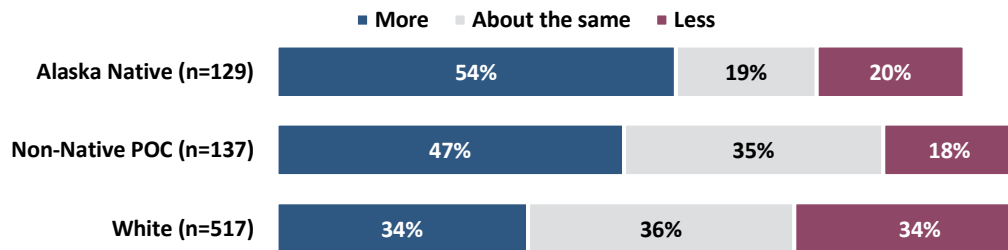


Respondents in all regions were more likely in November than in August to say their vote mattered more; the increases ranged from 5 points (Anchorage and Kenai) to 10 points (Fairbanks and "all other" regions).

VOTER POWER BY RACE/ETHNICITY

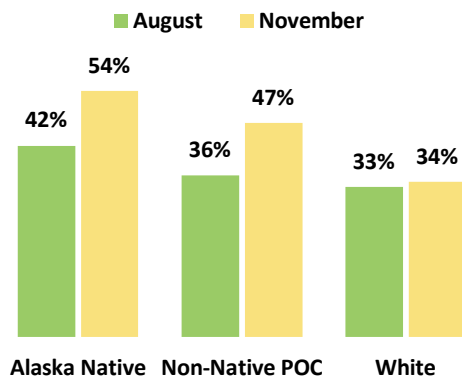
Self-identified Alaska Native voters and other voters of color were most likely to say their vote mattered more than in past years. More than half (54%) of respondents who identified as Alaska Native/American Indian said their vote mattered more, while only 20% who said it mattered less and 19% said “about the same” compared to prior years. Among other people of color, almost half (47%) said their vote mattered more, 18% said it mattered less, and 35% said “about the same” compared to previous years. Respondents who identified as White were about equally split among those who said it mattered more (34%), less (34%), and about the same (36%).

Figure 38. Voter Power Compared to Past Years, by Race/Ethnicity (November)



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because ‘don’t know’ responses have been omitted.

Figure 39. ‘More’ Voter Power Than Past Years, by Race/Ethnicity (August & November)

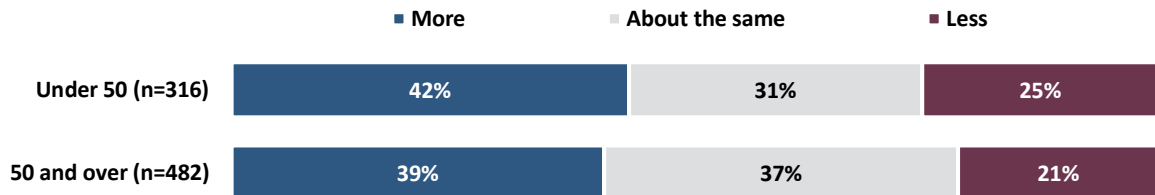


Alaska Native respondents and other people of color were significantly more likely (12 and 11 points, respectively) in November than in August to say their vote mattered more than in previous years. The proportion of White voters who said their vote mattered more than in prior years was about one-third in both August and November.

VOTER POWER BY AGE

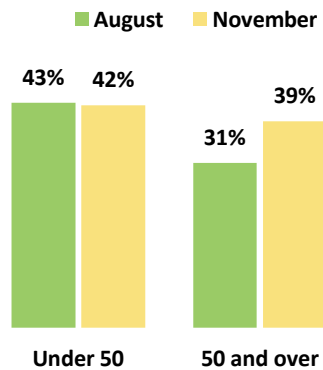
Younger voters - those under age 50 - were slightly more likely than voters 50 and over to say their vote mattered more than in previous years. Older voters were slightly more likely than younger voters to say their vote mattered less, and more likely to say "about the same." Both groups were significantly more likely to say their vote mattered more compared to previous years than less.

Figure 40. Voter Power Compared to Past Years, by Age (November)



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because 'don't know' responses have been omitted.

Figure 41. 'More' Voter Power Than Past Years, by Age (August & November)

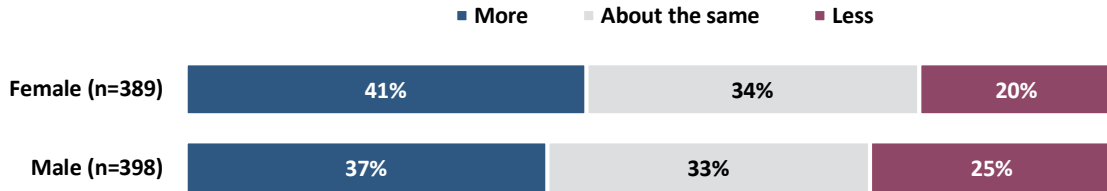


In terms of age, the increase between August and November among those saying their vote mattered more than in prior years was driven by older voters. Voters under age 50 said their vote mattered more at equal rates in August and November. Voters age 50 and over narrowed a 12-point gap in August to 3 points in November with under-50s in saying their vote mattered more than in previous years.

VOTER POWER BY GENDER

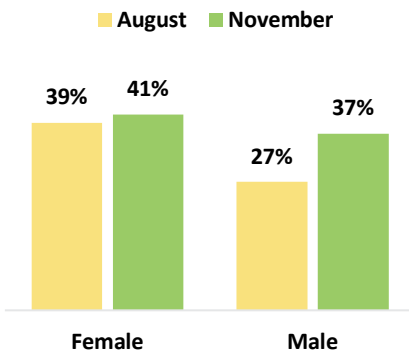
Women were slightly more likely than men to say their vote mattered more than in previous years, at 41% and 37%, respectively. Women were also slightly less likely to say their vote mattered less. About one-third of both male and female voters said their vote mattered “about the same” as in previous years.

Figure 42. Voter Power Compared to Past Years, by Gender (November)



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because ‘don’t know’ responses have been omitted.

Figure 43. ‘More’ Voter Power Than Past Years, by Gender (August & November)

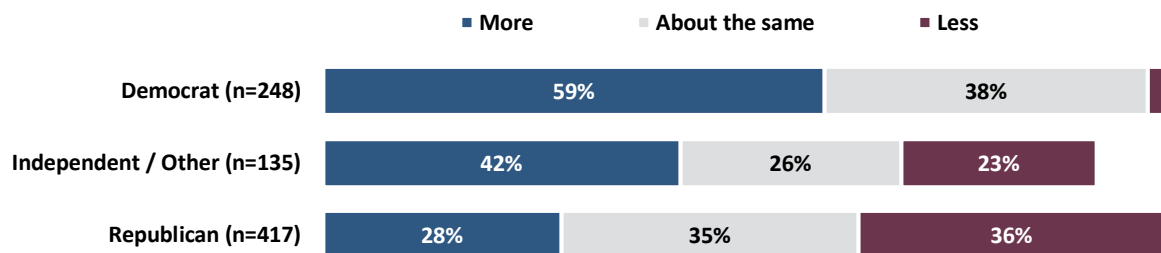


Men were 10 points more likely in November than in August to say their vote mattered more than in previous years. The increase among women was 2 points between August and November.

VOTER POWER BY PARTY IDENTIFICATION

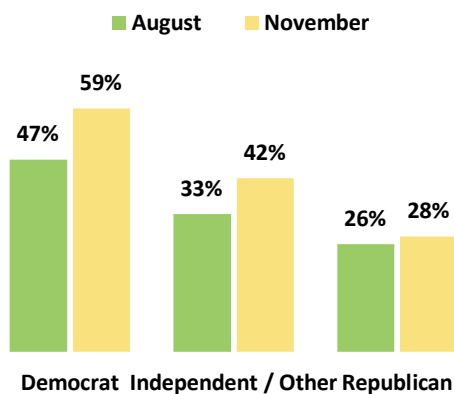
Party identification showed a strong correlation with perceptions of voter power compared to prior years. More than half (59%) of those who identified as Democrats or lean-Democratic said their vote mattered more than in previous years, compared to about 28% of those who identified as Republicans or lean-Republican. Those who identified as Independent or “other” party fell in between with 42% saying their vote mattered more than in the past. Conversely, 36% of Republicans said their vote mattered less than in prior years, compared to 23% of Independents/ Others, and only 3% of Democrats. Republicans and Democrats agreed in comparable numbers (35% and 38%, respectively) that their vote mattered “about the same” as in previous years.

Figure 44. Voter Power Compared to Past Years by Party Identification (November)



Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% because ‘don’t know’ responses have been omitted.

Figure 45. ‘More’ Voter Power Than Past Years, by Party ID (August & November)



Among partisan identities, differences in perceptions of voter power compared to prior years were accentuated between August and November. While Republicans showed a 2-point increase from August to November among those saying their vote mattered more, that increase was 12 points among Democrats, and 9 points among Independents and other partisans.

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