



A Message from FairVote Board Chair Krist Novoselic & Executive Director Rob Richie

December 2012

Greetings to our supporters!

As FairVote enters its third decade, our optimism for realizing FairVote's reform vision has never been greater. The times simply demand it, punctuated by the breakdown of winner-take-all elections as an effective democratic instrument – too much partisan maneuvering instead of policymaking, too little representation of our nation's diversity of thought and people, and too many states locked into decades-long dominance by one party. Reform becomes inevitable when the need for it is inescapable. We are at that point.

As we review FairVote's achievements in 2012 and our plans to pave the way for national reform in 2013, we ask that you continue your support for FairVote with a tax-deductible donation. Although there are many good causes to support, democracy cannot wait.

Memories are still fresh of the thousands of voters waiting in lines for hours to cast a ballot in the presidential election. Those long lines represent the tip of an iceberg of antiquated policies that undercut voting rights, limit voter choice and deny fair representation. Here's what we're doing to stand with voters and make real our 2020 vision of democracy.

By 2020, we will have a national popular vote for president in which every voter is equal and the candidate with the most votes wins. Already halfway to enactment, the National Popular Vote bill should soon add to its nine state victories. FairVote is deeply involved in its advocacy, including producing regular reports and analyses that – as featured in a lead article in the Sunday *New York Times* – make it clear that never before have so many Americans in so many states been denied a meaningful vote for president.

By 2020, we will have new national protection of voting rights and a vibrant state and local movement to increase voter turnout. This year's battles over suffrage underscore the need for a right to vote in the Constitution. We've launched our *PromoteOurVote.org* campaign to enlist local leaders in efforts to protect, encourage and expand suffrage. Our policy guide provides resources for legislators to enact a full range of our ideas, including automatic voter registration and democracy curricula in our schools.

By 2020, at least three states will elect their governors with instant runoff voting (IRV), the ranked choice voting method that upholds the principles of voter choice and majority rule. Four California cities successfully held IRV elections this year, and states like Maine and Minnesota have exciting energy for advancing IRV in the wake of "spoiler" controversies and use of IRV for their largest cities. Our writing on IRV this year ran in newspapers in more than a dozen states, and we backed legislation that led to a promising new Rhode Island task force. We helped IRV succeed in the Bay Area by contributing to an excellent new *Sacramento Business Journal* editorial calling for IRV's expansion to all county elections in California.

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By 2020, we will replace winner-take-all elections with fair voting forms of proportional representation in states and cities across the country. As argued by Norm Ornstein and Thomas Mann in *It's Even Worse Than It Looks*, winner-take-all elections are simply dysfunctional in today's climate of partisan polarization. They produce too many unrepresentative legislatures and unaccountable incumbents. As FairVote's resources on congressional elections show (particularly our must-see interactive *FairVoting.US* map with proportional voting plans for every state), change is increasingly imperative – and can be enacted in eminently practical ways that are fully consistent with our history and Constitution.

FairVote did a lot to advance this discussion in 2012. We featured Ornstein and Mann talking about fair voting in a major event in July. We made our reform case in op-eds in the *Chicago Tribune* and *Washington Post*, and we had three letters in the *New York Times* (the first leading to a high-profile “invitation to dialogue”). Rachel Maddow and Thom Hartmann talked with Krist about fair voting on their television shows, while Krist, Rob and John Anderson featured fair voting in their four C-SPAN appearances. Our soon-to-be published law review article lays out the case for fair voting as a remedy in voting rights cases, and toward that goal we helped Port Chester (NY) implement fair voting and developed legal strategies to expand its adoption.

By 2020, we can transform our expectations of our elected officials so that they put upholding democracy ahead of partisan calculation. We have the *Pledge to Stand with Voters* campaign –in which we ask all Americans, including our elected officials, to commit to evaluating voting laws and proposed reforms through the lens of whether they uphold representative democracy for all before making crass calculations about partisan advantage. Once we convince legislators to put voters first, our reforms will follow.

This month we'll unveil other resources, such as a detailed **policy guide** for elected officials, our **Representation 2020** campaign focused on celebrating the women's suffrage centennial with a call for gender parity in representation and **FairVote Action** (www.fairvoteaction.org) to make it easier to get involved in reform efforts in your community.

Given our lean budget, we depend on a terrific team of young staffers who work with Rob, Cynthia Terrell and our Board of Directors. Please visit FairVote.org to hear each of them explain their work in our Who We Are section and read their regular blog contributions. If you like social media, be sure to follow us on Twitter, like us on Facebook.

FairVote's 2020 vision of democracy in America is within our reach. But it takes your support. With all due modesty, we think FairVote's impact on electoral reform and voting rights in the United States is, dollar for dollar, unmatched by any other organization.

Thank you for reading and, we trust, your year-end donation.

Sincerely yours,



Rob Richie
Executive Director



Krist Novoselic
Board Chair