

Factual Correction: Final Five Voting (FFV) and Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV) are *Not* the Same

Final Five Voting (FFV) is the *combination* of two voting innovations:

1. **Top-Five Primary:** Single-ballot primary where the top-five candidates advance to the general election, regardless of party affiliation; **and**
2. **Instant-Runoff General Election:** A grid-style, ranked ballot, where voters pick their favorite candidate. If they want to, they can also pick their 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and last place candidates. The votes are tabulated using an instant runoff—the last-place candidate is eliminated and voters who had chosen that candidate (who is now out of the race) have their single vote transferred to their next-choice. The votes are tallied again. This narrows the five candidates to the final two candidates, at which point the candidate with a majority wins. It is exactly like a series of runoffs, but instead of going back to the polls for another election, you cast all your votes at once using a ranked ballot.

**Note that Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV) is often used as a synonym for an Instant Runoff because an Instant Runoff election is enabled by a ranked-choice ballot. However, Ranked-Choice Voting is an umbrella term that can mean different things. Instant Runoff is more precise, and Instant Runoff General Election, not RCV, correctly describes what we propose in WI as the Part 2 of FFV.*

Common Mistakes

Some coverage has misidentified FFV as synonymous with RCV.

- RCV and FFV have somewhat different aims: RCV is a system to make elections more fair and more democratic and allow voters to express their preferences by ranking candidates and to open competition (though less so than FFV does). FFV does far more than RCV on its own. FFV is a system uniquely designed to address the electoral incentives that lead to partisan gridlock, by opening competition, eliminating the “eye of the needle that is the party primary” and making the general election the most important election.
- RCV and FFV have each been adopted in different states:
 - Maine adopted RCV for both primary and general elections in 2016.
 - Alaska adopted Final Four Voting which is identical to Final Five Voting except that it uses a top-four primary.
- Wisconsin is the first state legislature to introduce a bill for Final Five Voting (FFV) for federal elections.

In Summary

When referring to Wisconsin’s legislation, it is not correct to call it RCV. The following are correct:

- Final Five Voting
- Final Five Voting: the combination of a top-five primary and instant runoff general election
- FFV

Key Points About Final-Five Voting

- The key distinction between FFV and many other electoral system reforms is the nonpartisan and systemic objective: creating accountability for *results* in Congress. Katherine Gehl describes it this way: “FFV is not designed primarily or necessarily to change who gets elected. It’s designed to change what the winners are incented to accomplish and have the freedom to accomplish in Congress. This change in incentives is created, in part, by the power of shifting electoral competition from the primary to the general election. (i.e., Currently [appx. 86% of House elections](#) are decided in party primaries because they are in districts “safe” for one party or the other. Therefore in 86% of races, the low-turnout primary, dominated by more ideological voters is the only race that matters. FFV flips this unhelpful dynamic: With FFV, the winner will come from the general election, not the primary. And FFV opens the general election to more competitors leading to healthy competition to serve the public interest.)”
- The design of FFV was originated by Wisconsin business leader Katherine Gehl, co-founder of Democracy Found and co-author of [The Politics Industry](#).
- FFV requires both the change to the primary (top-five primary) and the change to the general election (instant runoff general election). It is the *combination* that creates the incentive change.

To Learn More About Final Five Voting

[Watch this short video overview](#)

Watch Katherine Gehl’s

[17 Min TEDTalk](#)

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