

Ft. Bragg Election Options – Executive Summary

Winning in court is extremely unlikely. If Ft. Bragg loses in court, changing a voting system ordered by a judge could be very difficult.

If the threatened suit doesn't go away, and if Ft. Bragg wants to continue allowing all voters to have a say about all council members, there are alternatives. These alternate voting systems require a city charter which can be as short as one page. CfER can help with specific language. I checked with 2 legal experts who say that while attorneys will likely respect a switch to a proportional-representation voting system, only district elections provide total protection from further California Voting Rights Act suits.

Ranked Choice Voting comes closer than other systems to my ideal voting system: fair representation for all, building consensus, encouraging people to vote their hopes and not their fears by reducing strategic dilemmas, unintended consequences, and vote-splitting issues. If Ft. Bragg has different priorities, they may prefer something else.

The county might not support alternate voting systems. Ft. Bragg may need to do hand counts. Hand counts are feasible given the population of Ft. Bragg and using a suitable version of RCV. The Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center <https://www.rankedchoicevoting.org/> may be able to assist with running RCV elections.

Californians for Electoral Reform would welcome an invitation to participate in further discussions, and to assist the people of Ft. Bragg as they evaluate options.

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