Best Democracy

Bringing Democracy to Boulder County

Best Democracy

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Dr. King's 5 Step Protocol

Dr. Martin Luther King's proven method for overcoming 100 years of Jim Crow.

1) Observation

2) Understanding

3) Remedies

4) Attention

5) Action

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Step 1: Observation

- Stepping into the puddle in stocking feet.

- Acknowledging a problem exists.

- Deciding to address the problem.

- Identifying the problem correctly.

- Correct diagnosis is critical to the correct solution.

I'm a very inexperienced plumber. I misdiagnosed the source of the leak as the hose, which was wet. I spent two hours, 10 miles driving and $7.87 USD draining the toilet tank, buying a new hose, replacing the hose, only to discover I had made the leak worse.

I didn't stop at the apparent, first, dysfunctional solution. It was a poor diagnosis and a poor outcome. I asked my friend Steve for help.

Steve correctly identified a loose nut connecting the tank to the base causing a drip-drip-drip onto the hose below. Steve quickly tightened the nut for $0. I owe a payback favor to Steve for helping me out.

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Acknowledging the problem exists

Rank	Country	Score	Electoral process and pluralism	Functioning of government	Political participation	Political culture	Civil liberties	Regime type
1	Norway	9.87	10.00	9.64	10.00	10.00	9.71	Full democracy
2	Iceland	9.58	10.00	9.29	8.89	10.00	9.71	Full democracy
3	Sweden	9.39	9.58	9.64	8.33	10.00	9.41	Full democracy
4	New Zealand	9.26	10.00	9.29	8.89	8.13	10.00	Full democracy
5	Denmark	9.22	10.00	9.29	8.33	9.38	9.12	Full democracy
6	Ireland	9.15	9.58	7.86	8.33	10.00	10.00	Full democracy
6	Canada	9.15	9.58	9.64	7.78	8.75	10.00	Full democracy
8	Finland	9.14	10.00	8.93	8.33	8.75	9.71	Full democracy
9	Australia	9.09	10.00	8.93	7.78	8.75	10.00	Full democracy
10	Switzerland	9.03	9.58	9.29	7.78	9.38	9.12	Full democracy
11	Netherlands	8.89	9.58	9.29	8.33	8.13	9.12	Full democracy
12	Luxembourg	8.81	10.00	8.93	6.67	8.75	9.71	Full democracy
13	Germany	8.68	9.58	8.57	8.33	7.50	9.41	Full democracy
14	United Kingdom	8.53	9.58	7.50	8.33	8.13	9.12	Full democracy
15	Uruguay	8.38	10.00	8.57	6.11	7.50	9.71	Full democracy
16	Austria	8.29	9.58	7.86	8.33	6.88	8.82	Full democracy
17	Mauritius	8.22	9.17	8.21	5.56	8.75	9.41	Full democracy
18	Malta	8.21	9.17	8.21	6.11	8.75	8.82	Full democracy
19	Spain	8.08	9.17	7.14	7.78	7.50	8.82	Full democracy
20	Costa Rica	8.07	9.58	7.50	6.67	7.50	9.12	Full democracy
21	South Korea	8.00	9.17	7.86	7.22	7.50	8.24	Flawed democracy[a]
22	Japan	7.99	8.75	8.21	6.67	7.50	8.82	Flawed democracy
=23	Chile	7.97	9.58	8.57	4.44	8.13	9.12	Flawed democracy
=23	Estonia	7.97	9.58	8.21	6.67	6.88	8.53	Flawed democracy
25	United States	7.96	9.17	7.14	7.78	7.50	8.24	Flawed democracy
26	Cape Verde	7.88	9.17	7.86	6.67	6.88	8.82	Flawed democracy
27	Portugal	7.84	9.58	7.50	6.11	6.88	9.12	Flawed democracy
28	Botswana	7.81	9.17	7.14	6.11	7.50	9.12	Flawed democracy
29	France	7.80	9.58	7.50	7.78	5.63	8.53	Flawed democracy
30	Israel	7.79	9.17	7.50	8.89	7.50	5.88	Flawed democracy

The United States is a Flawed Democracy and getting worse.

The US is down from #21 to #25 EIU Democracy Index since 2016.

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The Founders had different views on Representation

John Adams

Second President

In 1776 John Adams wrote an influential pamphlet "Thoughts on Government".

"It should be in miniature, an exact portrait of the people at large. It should think, feel, reason, and act like them."

Elbridge Gerry

Father of Gerrymandering
on property justifying greater representation, at the 1787 Constitutional Convention.

"The idea of property ought not to be the rule of representation. Blacks are property, and are used to the southward as horses and cattle to the northward: and why should their representation be increased to the southward on account of the number of slaves, than horses or oxen to the north?"

John Jay

First Chief Justice of the Supreme Court
Second Governor of New York
Owner of 8 slaves.

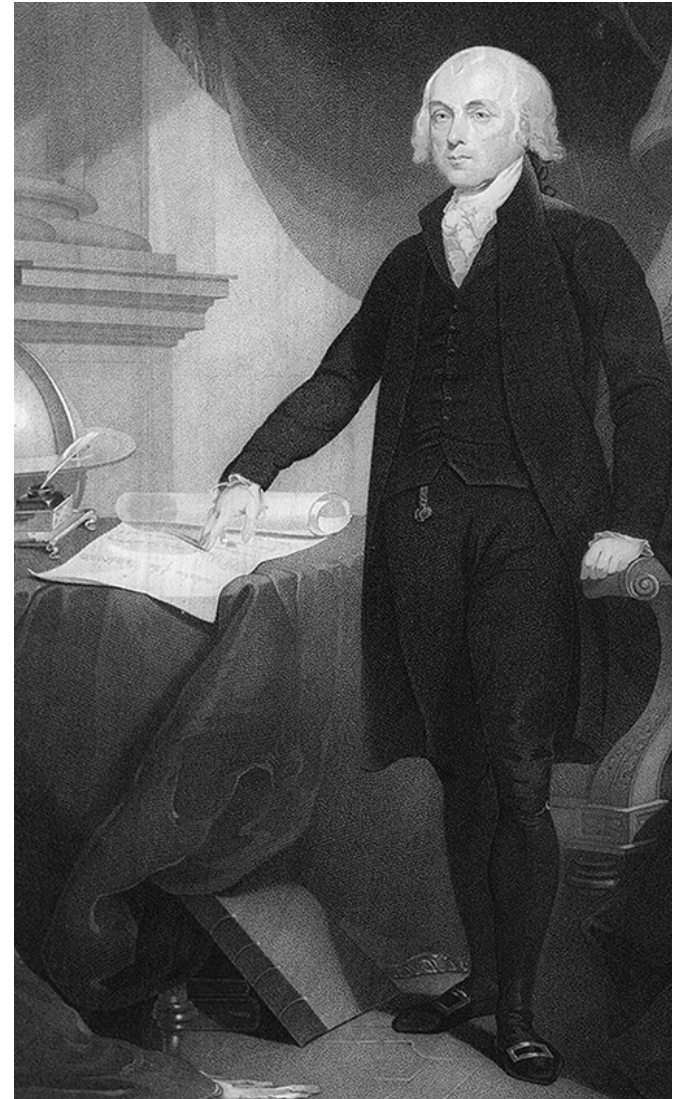## "The people who own the country ought to govern it."

James Madison

Father of the Constitution
Fourth US President
Third Virginia Slaver President
Third generation slaver
Owner of 121 slaves

"In England, at this day, if elections were open to all classes of people, the property of landed proprietors would be insecure. An agrarian law would soon take place. ... our government ought to secure the permanent interests of the country against innovation (Article V in the Constitution). Landholders ought to have a share in the government, ...ought to be so constituted as to protect the minority of the opulent against the majority."

Founding Fathers

55 white male delegates to the Constitutional Convention, all property owners over the age of 25, got the last word on US government and election system design, which they accomplished in three months. 17 left before the vote on passage. James Madison came prepared with an outline "The Virginia Plan", which formed the basis for the "United States Constitution".

The voting majority of delegates at the end owned slaves. They accomplished their objective, protected their "property" for 93 years after slavery was abolished in England (1772). They were *not* an exact portrait of the people at large. They represented a slim minority, 6% of the US population.

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Step 1: Observation - Identifying the issues

- From inception, electoral systems in the US have been designed to predetermine elections.

- Most electoral systems are still designed to exclude large blocks of the electorate from representation.

- Voter Intent isn't accurately reflected in outcomes.

- Government is the only industry which writes its own rules. It has resulted in a Cartel that concentrates power and excludes competition.

- Voting for representatives has been conflated with decision making.

Election Issues

1) Voter Suppression. Predetermine outcomes by preselecting the voter pool.

2) Candidate Suppression: Take choice off the election menu before the meal.

3) Exclusion of all Minority Votes: Single Member Districts.

4) Vote Counting methods that skew results, First Past the Post, Electoral College.

5) Design government institutions to concentrate power and exclude people.

6) Distort distribution of power to protect property rights, not human rights.

7) Obstruct Change; preserve unfair systems.

8) Control the flow of information; exclude minorities from debates.

9) Pack the Supreme Court and appeals courts to favor reactionaries.

10) Manage campaign finance rules to favor wealthy elites.

11) Make Direct Democracy only a tool for initiative backers with big bucks.

12) Voting Integrity is vulnerable and under attack.

More details at Best Democracy Issues.

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Election Issues

Most district elections are predetermined

Gerrymandering = Safe Districts = Unaccountable elected officials

- Over 87% of Congressional seats nationally are in "safe", predetermined districts.

- 98% of incumbents running for reelection in US House and Senate races won in 2016.

- 82% of Colorado counties are One Party Dominant counties.

- 83% of Georgia state House districts were uncontested in 2016.

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Single Member Districts exclude people by design

- Lead to Gerrymandering.

- One individual supposedly represents all points of view in his/her district.

- Only two ideologies allegedly represent everyone in the state and country.

- Lead to a restrictive one or two party systems, shutting out minority viewpoints.

- Discourage minority (ethnic, ideology, race, religion, social class) from participation.

- Create barriers to entry for candidates, limiting voter choice.

- As used in combination with First Past the Post (FPTP), create a "Spoiler Effect".

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At Large Winner Take All systems

At Large elections are designed to diminish or exclude minority representation, whatever that minority might be.

At Large elections, aka "Block Voting" appear to be Multi Member Districts, but they behave like Single Member "Winner Take All" districts. At Large has been repeatedly found in violation of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 for discrimination against minorities.

• Dillard v. Crenshaw County 1987, forced 183 jurisdictions throughout Alabama to abandon their discriminatory At Large method of elections.

• Brown v. Board of Commissioners 1989, At Large was described as a tool of white supremacists in Chattanooga, TN.

• Charleston County v. United States 2004 the US Supreme Court decided At Large violates the Voting Rights Act.

• Jones County, NC was forced to drop At Large in 2017 by a lawsuit over the same racist violation as Charleston County.

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Few Debates Impair our Decision Making
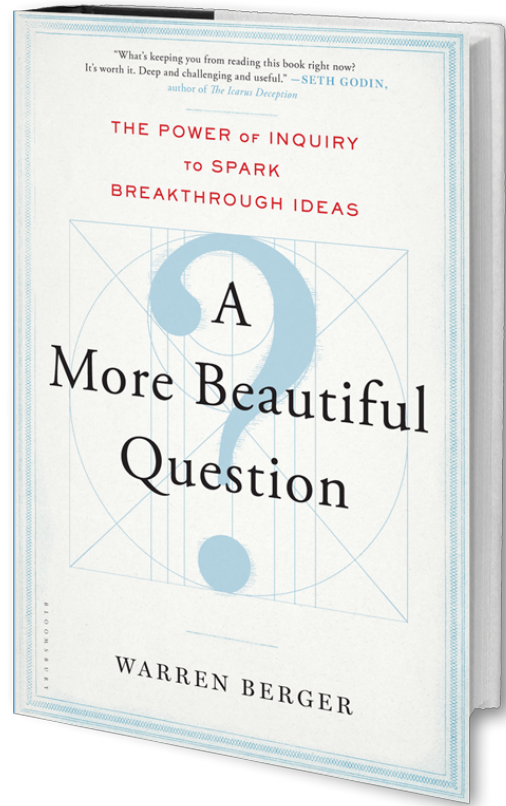
The Truth shall emerge from a free debate.
- John Stuart Mill

- Democrats and Republicans frequently collude to exclude minor party participation at debates.

- Exclusion further marginalizes minority parties.

- Without debates, how do voters decide whose priorities we agree with most? Which candidate is the best qualified? Who has the best solutions?

Low voter turnout

A large block of the American public is disengaged.

- Only 54.5% of the electorate voted in the 2016 Presidential election.

- Compared to 87.1% voter turnout in the 2018 Swedish General Election, 59% higher participation than the US.

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A More Beautiful Question

"What's keeping you from reading this book right now? It's worth it. Deep and challenging and useful." —SETH GODIN, author of *The Icarus Deception*

THE POWER OF INQUIRY TO SPARK BREAKTHROUGH IDEAS

A More Beautiful Question?

WARREN BERGER

An ambitious, actionable question can serve as a catalyst for change.

What's the Matter with Boulder?

The Boulder County Democratic Party has won every Boulder County office, every election since 1994.

Is an electoral district where only one party consistently wins every office for decades, really a democracy?

48.5 80 100

In the 2017 Boulder City Council election
with 48.5% of the total votes,

PLAN Boulder backed candidates
won 80% of the open city council seats,

which gave them 100% of the power.

51.5% of the votes were "wasted" votes.

PLAN-Boulder County with about 300 members (1/3rd of 1% of Boulder) uses the same At Large elections used by white supremacists, in combination with voter suppression, off year elections when fewer people vote, to control every Boulder City Council since 1975, 44 years in a row.

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Step 2: **Understanding**

How are Elections Predetermined?

Variables Design

Control who votes: voter suppression, gerrymandered districts, off-year and non-November elections.

Control who voters can vote for: candidate suppression.

Control how voters vote: one vote per district, Single Member Districts, At Large "Block" voting.

Control how votes are counted: First Past the Post (FPTP, aka plurality), Electoral College.

Step 3: Remedies

What better models exist?
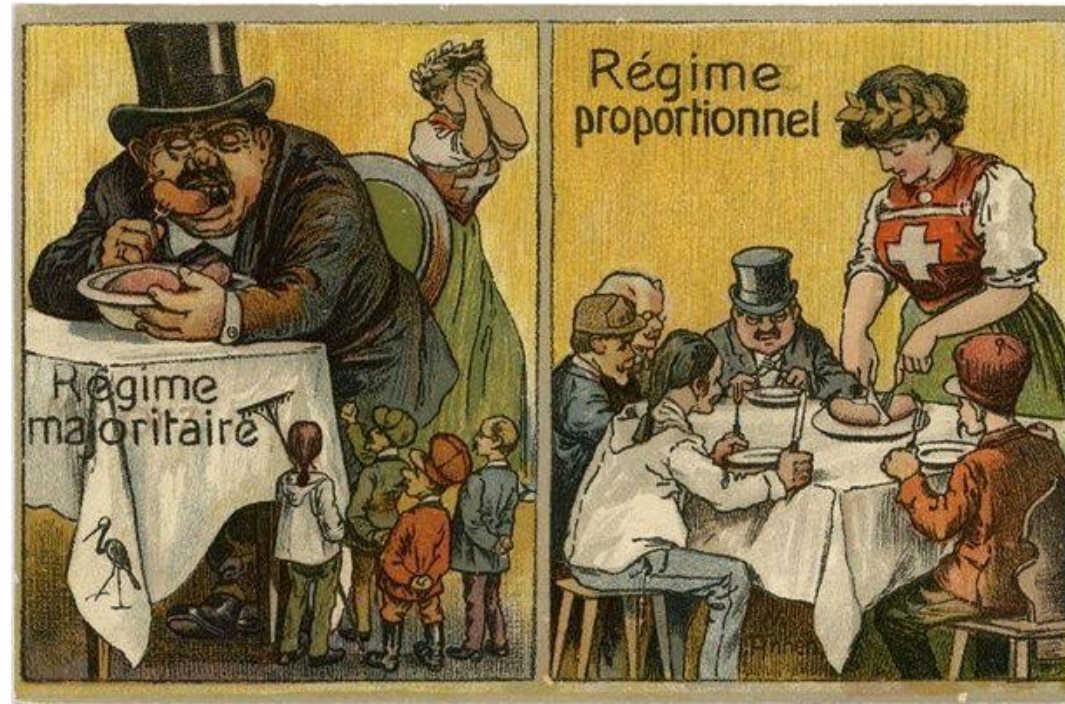
How do they work?

Why adopt the remedies?

What better models exist?

Which election system worldwide, results in the most equitable representation of the electorate, greatest level of accountability, easiest ballot access for candidates and greatest voter choice?

Proportional Representation

Everyone gets a seat at the table.
Everyone's interests are represented.

Why not Ranked Choice Voting?

If there's something old, moldy and stinky in your fridge, do you keep it and try to make it into a new dish, or do you move it into the compost pail?

As promoted in the US, RCV is a misnomer. It's actually Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) in Single Member Districts. Without Multi Member Districts, IRV/RCV isn't proportional.

When a problem has been misidentified, poor solutions result. The big problem is Single Member Districts, not the Spoiler Effect. Single Member Districts exclude large blocks of voters from representation.

Why not Ranked Choice Voting?

- There is no history of IRV/RCV becoming a steppingstone to full proportionality.
- IRV/RCV prolongs the delusion that Single Member Districts are a real democracy.
- IRV/RCV solves only one issue: the Spoiler Effect.
- IRV/RCV doesn't solve all the issues solved by all Pro Rep systems.
- Any Single Member District system like IRV leads to a restrictive two party system.
- Nearly half the votes in IRV/RCV systems can be "wasted" votes.
- Any Single Member District offers opportunities to Gerrymander map drawing.
- Maintains concentration of power, shutting out minority viewpoints.
- Discourages minority (race, ethnic, religion, party, social class) participation.
- Maintains many of the barriers to entry for candidates, limiting voter choice.

Multi Member Districts

Multi Member Districts solve most major issues,

offer the best solutions on the "Inclusiveness v. Exclusiveness" test.

- Pro Rep systems represent nearly everyone.

- Completely disrupt any possibility of gerrymandering.

- Eliminate the "Spoiler Effect".

- Very few "wasted" votes.

- Offer the greatest amount of candidate ballot access and voter choice.

- Make parties and candidates far more accountable.

All Proportional Representation systems are designed to disperse power and include nearly everyone.

- Faithfully translate votes cast into seats won.
- Encourage or require the formation of political parties or groups of like-minded candidates to put forward lists.
- When thresholds are low, almost all votes cast elect a candidate of choice, faithfully preserving voter intent.
- Facilitate minority parties' access to representation.

All Proportional Representation systems are designed to disperse power and include nearly everyone. *(2)*

- Encourage parties to campaign beyond the districts in which they are strong or where the results are expected to be close.
- Restrict the growth of 'regional fiefdoms'.
- Lead to greater continuity and stability of policy.
- Eliminate any need for primaries and runoff elections, saving taxpayer money, shortening election campaigns.
- Make power-sharing between parties and interest groups more transparent.

Remedy: How does Pro Rep compare to FPTP?

- Pro Rep by design is inclusive of the full spectrum of diversity of the electorate. FPTP by design excludes nearly every minority, including minorities with the majority party.

- Pro Rep reflects voter intent. FPTP distorts voter intent.

- Pro Rep wastes very few votes. FPTP can waste more than 50% of the votes.

- Countries with Pro Rep have far higher voter turnout and engagement than countries with FPTP.

- Pro Rep fosters collaboration, coalitions, civility and social cohesion. FPTP encourages competition, divisiveness and partisanship.

- Pro Rep with dispersed power is less subject to corruption. FPTP with concentrated power is more susceptible to corruption and manipulation.

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Competition is Good!

Which do you prefer?
Two clunky old phones that don't have today's features?

Or, unlimited sizes, vendors, colors, price points, with up to date functionality?

How do Pro Rep systems work?

3 variations of Proportional Representation
All require Multi Member Districts

Party List (Closed Lists)

Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) (Open Lists)

Single Transferable Vote (STV)

Party List Proportional Representation

- Party centric; the voter has 1 vote for a party. Parties usually determine the list order, not voters.

- Most popular system, 85 of the world's 94 countries that use Pro Rep, use Party List.

- Party bosses can maintain discipline, control within party ranks.

- Depending on the threshold, usually results in 7 - 10 parties.

- Greatest amount of party accountability.

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Party List Proportional Representation

Used by 4 of the top 5 democracies in the world
as defined by the "EIU Democracy Index".

Norway (4% threshold, 169 members, 8 parties)

Iceland (3% threshold, 63 members, 7 parties)

Sweden (4% threshold, 349 members, 8 parties)

*New Zealand (5% threshold, 120 members, 6 parties)

Denmark (2% threshold, 179 members, 10 parties)

*New Zealand uses Mixed Member Proportional

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Mixed Member Proportional
(MMP) with "Open Lists"

- Balanced, 2 votes: 1 for the party, 1 for candidates.

- Enables the greatest level of party *and* candidate accountability.

- Offers the easiest candidate ballot access and most voter choice.

- The only system that allows voters the choice of voting for a party, a candidate, both candidate and party, or voting for a candidate different from the party vote.

- Voters can reorder open party lists, support candidates they like, withhold support from candidates they dislike.

- With "Additional Members" or "Adjustment Seats", MMP is the most fully proportional and accurate representation of voter intent.

Mixed Member Proportional
(MMP) with "Open Lists"

Bolivia: since 1994 (3% threshold).

Germany: Bundestag and most state parliaments (5% threshold).

New Zealand: Parliament since 1996 (5% threshold). Now the #4 EIU Democracy in the world. 56% voted for retention of MMP in 2011.

South Africa: All local elections.

United Kingdom:

    London: London Assembly.

    Scotland: National Assembly.

    Wales: National Assembly.

It's possible to adopt MMP in Boulder County; first we need to achieve "Home Rule".

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Single Transferable Vote (STV)

- Candidate centric.

- Based on a system developed by British lawyer Thomas Hare in 1857.

- First used in the Tasmanian House of Assembly 1896 (called Hare-Clark).

- Renamed by H.G. Wells as "Proportional Representation by Single Transferable Vote".

- Used by 20+ US cities in the early to mid 20th C. - Boulder, Cleveland, Cincinnati, New York City.

- STV can be implemented where state law precludes candidate party affiliation.

- STV ranking and counting techniques can be applied to Party List systems to enable participation of minor parties not able to clear a set minimum threshold.

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Single Transferable Vote (STV)

Australia: (Tasmania since 1896: Adopted since in Senate, state legislatures and local elections, called "Hare-Clark" system.

Ireland (since 1921): Parliament, EU and local elections.

Malta (since 1921): Parliament, EU and local elections.

New Zealand: Most local governments.

UK: Northern Ireland: Parliament, EU and local elections.

Scotland: Parliament, EU and local elections.

United States:

Cambridge, Massachusetts: City Council.

Minneapolis, MN: Municipal Board At Large seats, Park Board.

50+ US universities, student government: Caltech, Harvard, MIT, Stanford, Texas.

Limited use of Proportional Representation in the U.S.

The National Municipal League, an urban reform proponent in the early 20th Century, included Pro Rep in its model city charter in 1914.

Ashtabula, OH was the first US city to adopt Pro Rep in 1915. This sparked a boom. Pro Rep was adopted in about two dozen US cities including Boulder, CO from 1917 to 1947, but it worked too well.

In 1947 the Red Scare caused New York City and Boulder to repeal STV due to the fear communists and minorities would get representation. Repeal followed elsewhere. Cincinnati, OH, repealed Pro Rep in 1957.

Cambridge, MA has used Single Transferable Vote since 1941.

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Fine Grain Proportional Representation

More members of a legislature enable representation from a greater diversity of the electorate.

Helsingborg, Sweden a city of 142,793 has 65 members in their Kommunfullmäktige, from 8 parties.

Colorado's FPTP electoral system is exclusive, Denmark's Party List system is inclusive.

Colorado		Denmark
5,540,545	Population	5,748,769
House & Senate	Legislative Body	Folketing
35 Sen. & 65 House	Districts	12
1	Members per District	13.5 average from 10 districts
0	Leveling Seats	40
100	Elected Representatives	179
First Past the Post	Electoral System	Party List Pro Rep
50%	Threshold	2%
2	Parties Represented	10

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Boulder County's FPTP At Large system is exclusive
Iceland's Party List system is inclusive

Boulder County		Iceland
322,514	Population	357,050
County Commissioners	Legislative Body	Alþingi
3	Districts	6
1	Members per District	9
0	Leveling Seats	9
3	Elected Representatives	63
At Large FPTP	Electoral System	Party List
1	Parties Represented	7

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Remedy: Design electoral systems to meet today's needs.

- Government officials should more accurately reflect the people they represent.

- Mixed Member Proportional is the most accurate system to represent the electorate.

- Single Transferable Vote is legal in districts which preclude party affiliation.

- Both MMP and STV disperse concentrated power.

- MMP and STV make government and government officials much more accountable.

Remedies: Why adopt Proportional Representation?

"...the right of decision belongs to the majority, but the right of representation belongs to all."

- Ernest Naville

- Improved ballot access for candidates.

- Much more voter choice.

- Fairest system of representation: 39% of the vote = 39% of the seats.

- Includes nearly everyone at the table.

- Facilitates government based on coalitions and cooperation.

- Eliminate gerrymandering and safe districts.

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Remedies: Why adopt Proportional Representation? (2)

"...the right of decision belongs to the majority, but the right of representation belongs to all."

- Ernest Naville

- Eliminates the Spoiler Effect

- Eliminate obstructions to change.

- Introduces accountability to our elected officials.

- Increase voter participation by representing all voter blocks.

- More women elected.

- Government policies are closer to median views.

- Already endorsed by minority parties in the US and Canada.

Remedies: Boulder County MMP

Best Democracy Boulder County Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) Districts

County Commission 4 Districts	Est. Population	District Population	Projected Members	Directly Represent
Mountains & Unincorporated County		47,948	4	11,987
Jamestown	273			
Lyons	2,148			
Nederland	1,534			
Unincorporated	43,837			
Ward	156			
Boulder		108,090	9	12,010
SE County: Erie, Lafayette, Louisville & Superior		73,618	6	12,270
Erie (Boulder County portion est.)	11,401			
Lafayette	28,261			
Louisville	20,801			
Superior	13,155			
Longmont		92,858	8	11,607
Population data are estimates from Wikipedia. Cities of Erie, Longmont & Superior overlap multiple counties.	322,514			
Average District Size, Total District Seats & average number of District Seats		80,629	27	6.75
20% Adjustment Seats, selected from runners up in each party in district races, by their score.			6	
Boulder County with Proportional Representation. projected 6 - 7 parties		322,514	33	9,773
Current At Large, First Past the Post elections. One Party Dominant system since 1994 = no democracy		322,514	3	107,505
References:			Combined	
Colorado combined Assembly & Senate seats (2017)		5,607,154	100	56,072
Connecticut		3,588,184	187	19,188
New Hampshire		1,342,795	400	3,357
New Mexico		2,088,070	112	18,643
Utah		3,101,833	104	29,825
Wyoming		579,315	90	6,437
Iceland Alpingi, 7 districts, 3% (effective) threshold, 7 parties		350,710	63	5,567
Denmark Folketing: 12 districts, 2% threshold, 9 parties		5,785,864	179	32,323
Norway Storting: 19 districts, 4% threshold, 8 parties		5,302,778	169	31,377
Created by Jesse Kumin www.bestdemocracy.org v1c, 27 March 2019				

- **2 votes per elector, candidate and party**
- **3% party threshold**
- **Adds a full spectrum of diversity in every district**
- **Very few wasted votes**
- **Input matches outcomes accurately**
- **5 - 7 parties elected**
- **Easier candidate ballot access**
- **Most voter choice**
- **Would make Boulder County the #1 democracy in the state**
- **Introduce Pro Rep to the rest of the US**
- **Makes gerrymandering and spoilers impossible**

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Step 4 Attention: **Target Audience - Excluded Minorities**

- **Unaffiliated voters (36% of Coloradans).**

- **Unrepresented and disenchanted Republicans.**

- **Unrepresented and disenchanted Democrats.**

- **Minor party members: Libertarians, Greens.**

- **Think Globally, Act Locally. Start with local governments, 22,000+ Home Rule cities and counties, then states. Start in Colorado.**

- **Spread knowledge of Issues and Pro Rep remedies.**

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Call out the BCDP and PLAN-Boulder for White Supremacy

If it walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck......

Elites don't care about democracy. They only care about control. The Boulder County Democratic Party Ex/Com knows the legal history of At Large elections. The BCDP won't voluntarily give up 100% control through At Large until it becomes an issue. Until then, they're willing to use white supremacist tactics to stay in power.

The same two remedy options are available as applied in Alabama, SC, NC and TN:

- Wait for the BCDP to graciously acknowledge they should share representation on the Boulder County Commission with other parties.

- Take power away from them for At Large's systemic discrimination against minorities, violation of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Sec. 2.

The remedy for the suit would be implementation of Home Rule and MMP.

Step 5: Action, Achieving Social Change

Proportional Representation and Range Voting are great remedies. How do we realize them into working electoral systems?

- Management by Objective; step by step.

- Marketing 101: innovators and early adopters first.

- Local governments, 22,000+ Home Rule cities and counties, then states.

- Create YouTube videos.

- Ask your local city council to create a "Good Governance" Board to examine election reforms and political accountability.

- Identify the low hanging fruit. Which local governments need change most?

- Write Charter Amendment templates. Clear legal tests.

- Introduce change incrementally by conducting winning campaigns, 50%+1, in the low hanging fruit local governments, giving voters tangible Pro Rep examples to examine.

Best Democracy

Best Democracy was started in Colorado on Facebook in September, 2015. As of March/2019 we have 355 FB members from 23 states, Washington D.C., and 11 foreign countries.

- ## Join Best Democracy on Facebook.

- Go to the www.bestdemocracy.org website to learn more about election issues and remedies.

- Contact your elected representatives. Ask them what they're doing to make elections more fair and politicians more accountable. Ask them if they know about Proportional Representation. Host a "Town Hall" on election reform.

- Contact jesse@bestdemocracy.org; volunteer to work on charter campaigns, the web site and to organize events.

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BEST DEMOCRACY

Bringing Democracy to Boulder County v1 Credits

Writing, research, photography in the US & Europe, and presentation design.

- Jesse Kumin

Photos of me, Colorado Columbines, Chautauqua Park, Helsingborg Kommunfullmäktige, Colorado State Capitol, Danish Folketing, Boulder County Courthouse, and Reykjavik © 2019 Jesse Kumin, All Rights Reserved.

Dr. Martin Luther King Memorial photo - © 2016 Robert R. Gerlits, All Rights Reserved.

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Patience, feedback, excellent nourishment and understanding.

- Margaret Look Kumin

More info, candidate resources at www.bestdemocracy.org