

Shelby County Election Commission

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For Immediate Release

Ranked Choice Voting Demonstration Scheduled for Tuesday's SCEC Meeting

July 13, 2017 (Memphis, Tenn.) At the July meeting of the Shelby County Election Commission (SCEC), Tuesday, July 18, Linda Phillips, administrator of elections will give a presentation on Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). The meeting will be held at 4 p.m. at the SCEC office located at 980 Nixon Dr.

RCV, required only in the City of Memphis City Council District races, allows voters to list their first, second, and third choice candidates. RCV tabulation cannot be done by the voting machines approved for use in Tennessee and must be counted manually. "The equipment can capture the voter's intent, but cannot do the actual tabulation of votes," Phillips said. Though tedious and time-consuming, she said it's better than the alternative.

"It is much cheaper and less trouble than holding a separate runoff election."

The demonstration is listed at the bottom of the agenda, and will therefore take place after the regular business of the commission meeting has been completed.

As with all monthly SCEC meetings, this demonstration is open to the public, but is not a public forum. "The intent is to educate the public about the RCV process but it is not intended to discuss the merits of Ranked Choice Voting over plurality voting, and questions will be limited to the mechanics of the process," Phillips said. "Questions will need to be submitted in writing on cards available at the meeting."

One of the reasons for holding the demonstration now is that the SCEC Staff will be busy in 2018 with the regularly scheduled elections. "Minneapolis will be holding a RCV election in the fall, so we would like to learn from them," she said.

Phillips also wants voters in Memphis to be familiar with the process, should RCV ballot faces be included in a future local election.

SCEC has begun publishing a quarterly newsletter to recap events at the end of each three-month period. The 2nd edition, distributed in late June, contained an explanation of RCV. A PDF of the newsletter is available on the SCEC website, www.shelbyvote.com.