



The Honorable Takis P. Karantonis
Chair, Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Ranked Choice Voting

The NAACP Arlington Branch is concerned with continuing the use of ranked choice voting for the general election. As the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization, protecting the voting rights of Black and other community members of color is foundational to our history and to our on-going work. How we elect County Board leaders is a critical issue for voter engagement. While ranked choice voting has been praised for many reasons, the fact remains that it deviates significantly from the traditional system that community members are used to. Making such an important change to our County's voting system should not be done without a high degree of public confidence and support.

So far, the County Board has failed to demonstrate that community members have fully bought-in to ranked choice voting. Since this system was first piloted in 2023, the Board has administered two surveys to gauge public sentiment on the system:

- The first survey administered after the 2023 primary elections had nearly 2,500 respondents. This represents just 1 percent of registered voters in Arlington. Of these respondents, 89 percent were White, 54 percent were 60 years or older, and 83 percent were homeowners.¹
- The second survey administered after the 2024 general election had nearly 1,400 respondents. This represents less than 1 percent of registered voters in Arlington. Of these respondents, 73 percent were White, 43 percent were 60 years or older, and 73 percent were homeowners.²

¹ https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&event_id=1852&meta_id=220072

² https://meetings.arlingtonva.us/CountyBoard/Documents/DownloadFileBytes/_3%20-%20Item%20Attachment%20-%202024%20RCV%20GENERAL%20ELECTION%20FEEDBACK%20FORM%20RESULTS%20-%20202.pdf?documentType=1&meetingId=2590&itemId=54940&publishId=59973&isSection=False&isAttachment=True

For comparison, 63 percent of the County's population is White, 16 percent are 60 years and older,³ and 41 percent of households in the County are owner-occupied.⁴ The absence of the voices of community members of color, younger residents, and renters in these surveys is glaring.

The County Board still has a lot of work to do to get a true understanding of where our community stands on ranked choice voting. Pushing out an online survey is not enough. Should the Board continue to move forward with ranked choice voting, we urge you to actively and equitably engage our community on this issue. Targeted community conversations or town halls could be promising engagement actions to pursue. The NAACP is happy to partner with the Board on these initiatives.

Thank you for your service to our community and your prompt attention on this matters.

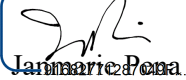
Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:



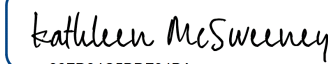
Rev. Delishia A. Davis
Branch President

DocuSigned by:



Jannarie Pona
Chair, Political Action Committee

Signed by:



Kathleen McSweeney
Branch Secretary

cc: Arlington County Board Members
Arlington County NAACP Executive Committee and Membership

³ <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2023.DP05?g=050XX00US51013&d=ACS%205-Year%20Estimates%20Data%20Profiles>

⁴ <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2023.DP04?g=050XX00US51013&d=ACS%205-Year%20Estimates%20Data%20Profiles>