**“Glen’s Parallax Perspectives”** is a series of TV programs offering fresh ways for people to see issues such as foreign policy, social and economic justice, governmental functioning, the environment, and so forth. We provide voices and viewpoints that are rarely heard in mainstream media.

**Mainstream media, politicians, and culture see the world in conventional ways. In order to solve problems, we need to see things differently.** Glen Anderson created this TV series to help people see things differently so we can solve problems at all levels from the local to the global.

This series title refers to “***parallax***“ – the view you get by looking from a different perspective. For example, put one finger in front of your nose and another finger farther away. Close one eye. Then open that eye and close the other. Your fingers will seem to move. This is called a “parallax” view. **This TV series invites you to look at issues from fresh perspectives.**

Each program airs three times a week (currently every Monday at 1:30 pm, every Wednesday at 5:00 pm, and every Thursday at 9:00 pm) for the entire month on Thurston Community Television (TCTV), channel 22 for cable TV subscribers in Thurston County, Washington. TCTV is part of Thurston County Media. You can see their schedule at [**www.tcmedia.org**](http://www.tcmedia.org)

**You can also watch the program described below through your computer** at [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org). All episodes of “Glen’s Parallax Perspectives” are posted on this blog’s “TV Programs” part and also in one or more of the categories listed in the right side of the computer screen. Also, see much information at the issue category headings at [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org).

🡪 Please invite other people to watch this video and/or read this thorough summary at the “TV Programs” part of [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org).

🡪 The end of this document offers more information about this TV program’s topic.

**Here is the May 2019 program:**

**Ranked-Choice Voting Strengthens Democracy.**

by Glen Anderson, the TV series’ producer and host
(360) 491-9093
**glenanderson@integra.net** [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org)

**NOTE:** We conducted this interview on Thursday April 11, 2019. The Washington State Legislative session was still underway but the legislation promoting Ranked-Choice Voting did not proceed far enough during the session to remain viable for 2019. Look for progress to resume in 2020.

**Introduction to this interview:**

Everybody knows that our nation’s electoral system is broken in many ways. This prevents us from having an honest, vibrant democracy. But a number of remedies do exist.

The May 2019 interview on “Glen’s Parallax Perspectives” shows how one exciting, practical remedy – Ranked-Choice Voting –strengthens democracy in several ways.

Nationwide, more people – and more local and state governments – are reforming their elections in this way.

To help build the movement for Ranked-Choice Voting, two guests explained clearly how it works and how it can strengthen democracy:

* **Lisa Ayrault** is a very active volunteer with FairVote Washington. Currently she is the organization’s chair who performs the duties of an Executive Director.
* **Michael Martin** is FairVote Washington’s Legislative Director. He works with the State Legislature to bring Ranked Choice Voting to Washington State.

Also, Michael is a leader in the Clark County chapter of FairVote Washington– one of a growing number of county-level chapters.

**BRIEF OVERVIEW: Problems with current (plurality) voting**

There is an old saying that says, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” But everybody knows that our electoral system is broken in several ways, and we need to replace the dysfunctional parts with reforms that will work better.

Glen said that nowadays some people are elected with perhaps only 40% of the vote. People need to see when a system is broken. And they need to know how to fix it.

Lisa summarized a few of the problems that our current voting method causes.

She began by telling about an example that occurred in Fall River, Massachusetts, less than one month ago. The mayor was caught embezzling the city’s funds, so a recall election occurred, and approximately 70% of the voters voted to recall the mayor. The city also held an election to choose who the new mayor would be. Four good candidates ran for the mayor’s position, but the crooked mayor also ran to replace himself. The four good candidates split about 70% of the vote approximately evenly among them, but the crooked mayor received about 30% of the vote, which was slightly more than his nearest challenger, so the crooked mayor – who had been voted out of office for embezzling the city’s money – was put back into office.

Lisa said this problem occurs with the common voting method of electing whoever gets the most votes. The people who wanted an honest mayor lost because of “vote-splitting” among the four honest candidates. Ranked-choice voting would have solved this problem because approximately 70% of the voters most likely would have ranked the embezzler last. Ranked-choice voting (RCV) would have allowed one of the honest candidates to have emerged with a majority. We explained RCV throughout the rest of this interview.

Lisa said that Washington State conducts primary elections with the “top two” vote-getters proceeding to the general election in November. Although we don’t see the “vote-splitting” problem clearly enough, it still does occur at the primary level when the “top two” are chosen from a larger number of candidates running in the primary.

**BRIEF OVERVIEW: What is RCV? Why does RCV solve those problems?**

Glen said that we would be devoting much of this interview into explaining clear what Ranked-Choice Voting is, how it works, and how it would solve the various kinds of problems that exist in our current system of voting.

Michael summarized what Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV) is – and how it would solve the problems. He explained that RCV is really a simple solution to the problems that exist now. RCV allows you to “vote your values and rank candidates in your preferred order.”

Michael said we do this all the time in our daily lives. He gave the example that he prefers Fuji apples over other varieties of apples. When he goes to the grocery store and finds that the store is out of Fujis or that batch does not look very good, he can choose a Gala apple or some other variety of apple. He said this is what ranked-choice voting is all about. “We get to choose our first preferred choice. And then we have a second or third choice.” He said this is a simple explanation of what Ranked-Choice Voting is.

**We watched the City of Minneapolis’s 2-minute video, which clearly explains Ranked-Choice Voting.**

Glen said that some people might think Ranked-Choice Voting is experimental and unproven. But actually it has been used in many places over a long period of time, as we will explain in just a moment.

Also, some people think Ranked-Choice Voting is complicated. But actually it is very easy to understand – and easy to use. We’ll explain that later during this interview.

Glen invited the TV viewers to watch a two-minute video produced by the City of Minneapolis, which uses Ranked-Choice Voting: We showed the video at this time during the interview. Also, people can watch it through the home page at [**www.FairVoteWA.org**](http://www.FairVoteWA.org) or watch the link directly at [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53z9feUiqdg**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53z9feUiqdg)

Glen said he found the video clear and easy to understand. Indeed, Ranked-Choice Voting really is clear and easy to understand.

**Ranked-Choice Voting is not too complicated. It is easy to understand.**

Glen said that sometimes when a person first hears about Ranked-Choice Voting, the person might think it is too complicated. The video we watched a moment ago illustrated how simple Ranked-Choice Voting really is.

Michael debunked the assumption that it is too complicated. He said that his analogy of buying apples and the short video we watched just now showed how Ranked-Choice Voting is a simple way of ranking our preferences. We do that in our daily lives. He gave another example of choosing from a restaurant’s dessert menu. If they’re out of your first choice, you choose something else on the menu. RCV lets people vote for their values – their first-choice candidate – and not be punished for it. [We explained this later in the interview.]

Glen said that over many years he has produced and hosted many TV interviews about reforming elections to strengthen democracy. He said his guests have talked about various ways to do that – including getting big money out of politics, stopping gerrymandering, and protecting every person’s right to vote. He said that when guests on those previous TV interviews had talked about today’s topic they referred to it as “Instant Runoff Voting.” It is also known as “Preference Voting.” Nowadays the synonym “Ranked-Choice Voting” seems to have emerged as the preferred name for this. Glen invited Lisa to clarify the terminology. Lisa said “Ranked-Choice Voting” is the same as “Instant Runoff Voting,” but “Ranked-Choice” has emerged as the much-preferred term. She said in Australia they call this “Preferential Voting.”

Glen said we should not let this terminology confuse us any more than we should let the process confuse us.

Lisa said she likes the term “Ranked-Choice” because it focuses directly on what the voter gets to do: you got to rank your choices 1st and 2nd and 3rd and so forth. For this reason the term is more clear than the “Instant Runoff” term.

**Vote what you really want! Stop “vote-splitting” or “wasting your vote” or choosing “lesser of two evils” or settling for merely “who is electable.”**

Glen said that our current voting method frustrates many people who would like to vote for the candidate they **really want**, but they are afraid of “wasting their vote” or “splitting their vote” between some good candidates, so a really bad candidate who received than half of the vote emerges as the winner – as actually happened less than a month ago in Lisa’s example from Fall River, Massachusetts.

He said people feel frustrated when they are afraid to vote for the candidate they really want and feel forced to vote for a less desirable candidate who was “electable.” People feel frustrated when they feel compelled to vote for “the lesser of two evils.”

Lisa explained how Ranked-Choice Voting would solve these problems. She said it is very easy for the voter. “With a Ranked-Choice ballot, I can vote honestly for who I actually want best and first without worrying that my vote will be wasted or thrown away.” “If my first choice doesn’t have enough support to win, I know that my vote will automatically transfer to my second choice.” She said this solves the problem of someone who really wants to vote for one candidate but fears that that candidate won’t win so feels forced to vote instead for another more “electable” candidate.

Glen said RCV would take away the pressure to vote for a candidate who is somewhat crappy in order to prevent an extremely crappy candidate from winning.

RCV eliminates the cynical and strategic manipulations that frustrate voters and interfere with honest, vibrant democracy. RCV really empowers voters.

**Glen mentioned that much information exists, including resources on the internet:**

Lisa and Michael work with a new non-profit organization called FairVote Washington. Their new website [**www.FairVoteWA.org**](http://www.FairVoteWA.org) provides a link from the home page to **“Why Ranked Choice Voting in Washington State?”** That link provides good information, including a set of links for three compelling reasons:

* **“More Choices**” – Ranked-Choice Voting means more candidates with more viewpoints.
* **“Civil Campaigns”** -- Candidates are incentivized to seek common ground to win your 2nd choice support.
* **“Vote Your Values”** -- Choose the candidate who represents you best without fear of wasting your vote.

The non-partisan organization “Campaign Legal Center” – [**www.campaignlegal.org**](http://www.campaignlegal.org) –produced an excellent report titled, “The Civic Benefits of Ranked Choice Voting.” The link is: [**https://campaignlegal.org/document/issue-brief-civic-benefits-ranked-choice-voting**](https://campaignlegal.org/document/issue-brief-civic-benefits-ranked-choice-voting)

Glen is providing many additional resources near the end of the document you are reading now – a thorough summary of what we said during the interview.

**RCV empowers voters:**

* **Bigger turnout with more diversity of candidates and voters.**
* **More choices on the ballot are viable.**
* **More diverse candidates can be elected.**

**These improvements produce better representation for the whole population.**

Glen said Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV) empowers voters in several ways.

He said it increases voter turnout numbers and increases the diversity of **voters**. If I’m a voter with a divergent viewpoint I can still vote for who I really want and not feel that I don’t matter, so I will indeed turn out and vote.

Also, he said RCV increases diversity of **candidates** on the ballot and produces better representation for the whole population. A candidate who is out of the mainstream will still have the opportunity to get their message out and attract like-minded voters. Also, they might be other people’s second or third choices, so it will make sense for more diverse candidates to run for office.

He said RCV produces much better electoral diversity for the entire community – more voters, more diverse voters, and more diverse candidates.

Lisa affirmed that Ranked-Choice Voting provides many benefits. She said the resource that Glen had mentioned a moment ago ([**www.campaignlegal.org/document/issue-brief-civic-benefits-ranked-choice-votin**](http://www.campaignlegal.org/document/issue-brief-civic-benefits-ranked-choice-votin)**g**) offers **eight ways** in which RCV can improve voting and elections.

Among RCV’s eight benefits, she said reducing negative campaigning is one that people especially resonate with.

She said jurisdictions that use RCV have discovered that negative campaigning only backfires. Candidates choose better ways to campaign.

If you are campaigning in a jurisdiction that uses RCV, you’ll figure that knocking on people’s doors would really appeal to voters. Also, you won’t want to bad-mouth the other candidates because you will want their supporters to choose you as their second or third choice. So this makes it practical to knock on doors even where yard signs are supporting other candidates. “I see that you are supporting \_\_\_\_\_\_ as your first-choice candidate. Would you consider supporting me as your second choice? Your first choice candidate and I share some common ideas in our platforms.”

Likewise – and for the same reason – your advertising will emphasize your issue positions instead of bad-mouthing other candidates.

RCV also improves the diversity of who gets elected (women, minorities, different economic classes, etc.).

Michael said that Minneapolis adopted RCV in 2009. From 2009 to the present time their city council has become much more diverse. He said that in the San Francisco Bay Area, the cities that use RCV have much more diverse city councils than those that do not use it. He said that in those cities more women and more people of color are choosing to run – and they are winning. These cities are electing much more diverse people now than the other nearby cities that do not use RCV.

Glen agreed. “If you’re going to have a democracy, the elected officials need to somewhat match the population in demographics, political values, and so forth.” RCV “helps us move toward a more vibrant and more real democracy.”

**RCV would sharply reduce negative campaigning, so candidates could focus on issues instead of fundraising for expensive negative campaign ads.**

A few minutes before we said RCV would reduce negative campaigning. Glen said that everybody hates negative campaigning – except TV stations and printers who make a lot of money from producing negative campaign materials.

Much of the negative campaigning is conducted through expensive TV ads and expensive colorful postcards that are printed and mailed out. These methods are very expensive, so negative campaigning escalates the costs of political campaigns and increases the power of “Big Money” donors.

When candidates must spend time persuading rich people and PACs to donate “big money” to fund their expensive negative campaigns, they have less time for discussing issues or meeting with voters.

RCV would reduce the role of “Big Money” in our elections. RCV elections would be cheaper and less corrupt.

Lisa said our current way of voting – “plurality” voting – produces a strong correlation between how much money a candidate spends and that candidate’s likelihood of winning. Experience now is showing that Ranked-Choice Voting is allowing victories by candidates who are less well financed.

Glen said that when voters are not barraged by a whole slew of negative campaigning, voters are more free to consider the issues.

RCV seems to reduce the cost of elections and therefore reduce the corrupting influence of money on the electoral results.

Michael added that cycle after cycle of negative campaigning causes people to get turned off and lose interest. He said he lives in Clark County, which ranked 37th of Washington State’s 39 counties in voter turnout in 2017’s local election. He said his county should do everything possible to increase voter turnout. Adopting Ranked Choice Voting would reduce negative campaigning and would increase voter turnout.

**Ranked-Choice Voting is better than Washington State’s “top two” primary.**

Glen said that traditionally each of the two big political parties holds a primary election and advances one candidate from each party into the November general election. But now Washington State and some other states use a “top-two” system in which the two candidates who get the most votes in the primary – regardless of political party – advance to November’s general election.

Lisa explained why is Ranked-Choice Voting is better than Washington State’s “top two” primary. She said RCV gives voters more choices. The voters who show up at the general election in November have only two candidates from which to choose. More candidates might have run in the primary election, which occurred in August, but primary elections inspire only a very low turnout. Many of those candidates are weeded out, so only two remain for November’s general election.

In contrast, Ranked-Choice voting in November’s general election would replace the August primary and make all candidates available for the larger number of voters who vote in November’s election. RCV creates the opportunity for voters to have the largest number of choices.

Because of the “vote-splitting” problems we discussed a few minutes before, Lisa said now that fewer candidates will choose to run in a primary because of the problem of “vote-splitting.” But RCV eliminates that problem, so more candidates would be more likely to run if the primary is replaced by a November general election using RCV.

She said that in Washington we sometimes have only two candidates in the primary, and we see the same two in the general election. Sometimes people run unopposed. RCV would induce more people to run for office, so voters would be able to enjoy a wider range of choices. She said that jurisdictions that use RCV are inspiring more persons to run for office and are giving voters more choices.

Glen said RCV would empower voters. Our current system disappoints voters when only one person is running unopposed and we don’t want to be a mere rubber-stamp for the unopposed candidate. Also, voters are less inspired when we have only two candidates – often, two candidates who have run before without other competition. Voters want fresh viewpoints from which we can choose.

Michael added that our whole society benefits when a wider variety of candidates talk about the issues.

**Taxpayers save money by eliminating the primary election altogether.**

Glen said taxpayers like to save money. He said we could save money by offering many more choices in the November general election using Ranked-Choice Voting. This would let us eliminate the primary election altogether and accomplish its function with a more robust general election in November using RCV.

Lisa said, “Ranked-Choice Voting really works best when we can have a single high-turnout general election. Let the voters rank their choices.” Then we won’t need a primary.

She said in extremely rare cases when many, many candidates are running (as when more than two dozen persons ran in an August primary for U.S. Senator), we might need to have “a winnowing primary” for those extremely rare cases. “But in the vast majority of situations, a single high-turnout general election using Ranked-Choice Voting can boost turnout and give voters more choices,” she said.

**Ranked-Choice Voting would work well for multi-position offices (city council, etc.) It can lead to Proportional Representation.**

Glen said that thus far our conversation has been in the context of an election that will produce **one** winner such as a mayor or a governor. He said Ranked-Choice Voting also can be used for **multi-position** offices, such as electing a city council. It can lead to another electoral reform called **“proportional representation.”**

He asked Lisa to explain how Ranked-Choice Voting could be used for multi-position elections with multiple winners – such as electing several persons at once to serve on a city council.

She gave the example of a city that needs to fill three seats on its city council, and five candidates are running for those three seats.

Typically, our elections are organized on a seat-by-seat basis. She said for this example of five candidates running to fill three positions, suppose two candidates are running for Position #1, two candidates running for Position #2, and one candidate is running unopposed for Position #3.

She said that some voters might find that their two favorite candidates are the ones running against each other for Position #1. Some voters might oppose both of the candidates running for Position #2. And many voters will feel frustrated that they have no alternative to merely rubber-stamping the unopposed candidate for Position #3.

She said this is “not a very sensible way to pick the best three candidates for the city council.

Instead, RCV would put all five candidates on a single Ranked-Choice ballot, and voters could rank all five candidates to choose which three of them to serve on city council.

She said this is called “multi-winner” Ranked-Choice Voting. Use one ranked-choice ballot to choose multiple winners.

This would produce results that the voters would find much more satisfying. She said this would better represent the various portions of the voting public.

Glen said that in a larger body – such as a state legislature – we could use RCV on a party-by-party basis. So if 5% of the voters vote for the Green Party, 5% of the legislators would come from the Green Party, and if 3% of the voters vote for the Libertarian Party, 3% of the legislators would come from the Libertarian Party. And so forth. This would empower diverse viewpoints and produce a state legislature that much better represents the diversity of the voting public.

Lisa said that in Washington State we do not have any elections that produce multi-winner races as she had described. This would be a good reform to accomplish.

**Although not widespread in U.S., it has been used elsewhere for a long time.**

Glen said that some people might worry that Ranked-Choice Voting is a risky new experiment. Actually, it has been used in other nations and in parts of the U.S. for a hundred years and even longer.

He said most Americans are not familiar with Ranked-Choice Voting, but it has a very long history of success in Australia, Ireland, Malta, New Zealand, Scotland, and other places. It also has several years of success in some American cities, including Minneapolis, San Francisco, and Oakland.

And now the big news is that the voters in the state of Maine have chosen to use Ranked-Choice Voting for all elections throughout the state, starting last November 2018. This is the first time an entire state within the U.S. has chosen to use RCV.

Michael discussed the increasing use of Ranked-Choice Voting. He said Australia has been using it for about a hundred years, and about approximately 4½ million voters in twelve cities in the U.S. are using it now. He said that Maine has used it for a congressional election as well as its other elections.

He said that after Maine’s voters decided to use RCV, that decision was challenged in court, but a judge affirmed that the Constitution did indeed allow the voters the authority to do that. Michael said the federal judge who affirmed RCV’s legality had been appointed by Trump.

Michael said that in 2013 a number of candidates running in one RCV election discovered the value of campaigning in more civil ways instead of using negative campaigning. He said they “literally had “a Kumbaya moment” at the end of their public debate. The candidates actually linked their arms and sang “Kumbaya.” He said society benefits when candidates stop attacking each other and start addressing the issues.

Glen agreed that RCV allows a whole different mind-set instead of the nastiness that we often see. Negative campaigning is mean-spirited, turns the voters off, depresses voter turnout, and can result in crappy candidates getting elected.

Lisa pointed out that Maine’s most recent congressional campaign did get nasty, even with RCV, but the quality will improve with experience.

She said Minneapolis has already achieved a much higher quality of campaigning after a decade of using RCV. Minneapolis’s candidates achieved their “Kumbaya moment” at the end of an actual debate, when they recognized the value of discussing issues with civility.

Glen said it’s reasonable to expect “a learning curve” in this, as with anything else. Lisa agreed.

Glen said that in addition to governments using RCV, other organizations have been using this for their internal decision-making, including internal elections. For example, RCV is used for choosing which of the Oscar nominees will actually win the Oscars. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences currently has 7,902 members who are eligible to vote for the Oscars. They use ranked-choice voting for each category of Oscar.

Lisa said that Robert’s Rules of Order recommends Ranked-Choice Voting for any election with more than two candidates.

**We can do better now than what Pierce County did.**

Glen said some people are worried about RCV because of an experience several years ago in the next county north of here, Pierce County. He asked Lisa how she answers people who are concerned about Pierce County’s experience.

She said Pierce County decided in 2008 to use RCV. They were one of the first jurisdictions in the U.S. to use it.

Back then, the election hardware and software were not as well developed as they are now. Implementing RCV was a heroic effort. The election officials had “a heavy lift” to implement it by figuring out how to manage equipment, devise a variety of rules and procedures, write computer code, and do much other work. They did a good job and ran an election with great integrity. But problems occurred anyway, and the implementation was expensive, so Pierce County’s voters decided to back away and rescind RCV.

Other local jurisdictions throughout the U.S. learned from Pierce County’s experience and moved forward with implementing RCV in their own jurisdictions. These jurisdictions have not experienced the problems that Pierce County experienced. Solutions do exist now, so we are making progress.

Glen thanked Lisa and said he does not want Pierce County to be a barrier or disincentive for other jurisdictions to proceed. Since then, no jurisdiction has stopped its RCV.

**Washington State legislation in 2019 and beyond**

Glen said that one indication of growing interest is that now we have the new statewide organization, FairVote WA ([**www.fairvotewa.org**](http://www.fairvotewa.org)), which both Michael and Lisa are vigorously supporting.

He said another indication of growing interest is that Washington State’s 2019 legislative session considered legislation that would allow local governments to adopt RCV promptly without waiting for it to be adopted statewide. Even though we want RCV to be adopted statewide, that’s a larger struggle, so local jurisdictions could start doing it at their own local levels as first steps toward statewide usage.

Glen said that in Washington State’s 2019 Legislative session, the Local Options bills are [**HB 1722**](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1722&Chamber=House&Year=2019) and [**SB 5708**](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=5708&Chamber=Senate&Year=2019). The House bill received a committee hearing, but the Senate bill did not. The progress is stuck now for 2019, but we are glad for the progress we did make, and we hope the 2020 legislative session will make more progress.

Michael lobbied the Legislature for the Local Options bill. He said that a Local Options bill had been introduced also in 2018, but it was more broad about allowing other kinds of voting methods. FairVote WA used the feedback they received from various elected officials and narrowed the scope for 2019’s bill to allow Ranked-Choice Voting but not other kinds of alternatives.

2019’s bill is permissive in allowing counties, cities and special purpose districts to use RCV starting in 2022.

Michael said that during the legislative session they held a “work session” in which legislators heard from Minneapolis’s City Clerk and an expert from the Ranked Choice Resource Center (see link at end of this document). These two experts explained to legislators what RCV is and how it benefits the jurisdictions that use it. Michael said that a number of legislators told him how useful it was for these two experts to be able to explain it to them.

He said HB 1722 made it through the House State Government Committee but got stuck in the House Appropriations Committee.

Glen said that usually a new bill needs a few years to get traction in the Legislature. Also, even though RCV has a long history and is used in other places, it is not well known yet in Washington State, so it’s understandable that some people have “a fear of the unknown” and that a “learning curve” is necessary in order for the public and legislators to understand RCV and become familiar and supportive.

We did not have time during this interview for Glen to urge us to gear up now to promote RCV now for the shorter legislative session that will occur in 2020. Legislators are more accessible during the rest of the year. They’re inundated and distracted during the session, so talk with them the rest of the year.

**It would be more efficient to adopt Ranked-Choice Voting statewide than if only some local jurisdictions use it.**

Glen said he met Lisa recently when she came to Olympia for a meeting of RCV’s supporters living in Thurston County – the Thurston County chapter of FairVote WA.

Another guest at that meeting was our county auditor. She said there are practical reasons why adopting RCV for an entire state would be more efficient than if only various local jurisdictions were to adopt it. She said the vote-counting hardware and software could handle it smoothly if Ranked-Choice Voting were used uniformly instead of needing to use different rules and different procedures for different counties, cities, school districts and other jurisdictions. This would be easier for voters as well as for county auditors.

Glen said that while a “Local Option” is a starting point, statewide RCV would be much better.

Lisa said that the City of Portland, Maine, had started using RCV and used it successfully before the entire state started using it. That city’s people saw how good RCV is, and this experience helped the statewide population decide to use it.

She said that county auditors are willing and able to implement whatever the state law requires. They say it will be easier and more efficient to use RCV uniformly statewide instead of only in certain jurisdictions.

Glen said the county auditors seem to have a “can-do” attitude rather than bureaucratic opposition. If Washingtonians decide to use RCV, the county auditors are willing to implement it without complaint.

Lisa said we respect the huge amount of work that the county auditors are doing and the integrity of their work. She said they are “on board” with whatever the law requires them to do – provided that they have the resources to accomplish what the public wants them to do. Any “unfunded mandates” would cause problems.

**Let’s build a grassroots movement for Ranked-Choice Voting. Let’s work with FairVote Washington and other organizations in strengthening democracy.**

Glen said ordinary people who want a better democracy are organizing at the grassroots to promote a variety of electoral reforms, including getting big money out of politics, ending gerrymandering, promoting a national popular vote to replace the Electoral College, and protecting voting rights for all kinds of people.

He said the grassroots movement for electoral reforms includes organizing to promote Ranked-Choice Voting. People have organized local, statewide and national organizations to help us build the RCV movement.

Glen said that over the years he has interviewed guests from different non-profit organizations for the TV programs he has produced about RCV and other electoral reforms.

Lisa told about the statewide organization FairVote Washington ([**www.FairVoteWA.org**](http://www.FairVoteWA.org)) that she and Michael represent. This organization is building a rapidly growing statewide movement throughout Washington State. In September 2018 they filed their paperwork to be a non-profit organization, and now they have ten local chapters, each organizing within a different county.

She said that she and other volunteers are running the organization, but they did recently hire their first employee to be a Field Director to help with their statewide outreach.

Glen said the e-mail address for the local chapter in Thurston County is **ThurstonChapter@FairVoteWA.org**

He said he attended a local meeting and found that many other people had attended too. Some were people he already knew, but he did not know many of the participants, so this is a positive sign that the RCV movement is growing.

Lisa said the RCV movement is growing rapidly throughout the nation. Nearly every day somebody contacts FairVote Washington and expresses delight that this group is working for RCV in our own state.

FairVote ([**www.FairVote.org**](http://www.FairVote.org)) is a nationwide organization that works on a variety of electoral reforms. They help FairVote Washington, but our statewide group is actually independent, not a chapter of the national group. The state level group focuses specifically on RCV.

Lisa said the organization is working simultaneously on three paths to achieve RCV in Washington State:

(1) **Local Options bill in Legislature** is necessary for a local jurisdiction to try RCV.

(2) Build a grassroots movement. About 2/3 of Washingtonians have never heard of RCV. Those who have heard about it are overwhelmingly supportive. **Outreach & education** are strategically crucial.

(3) With a larger grassroots base of support – and preferably with one or more local governments using RCV – statewide voters could pass an initiative or referendum. At some time a **statewide ballot issue** will be useful.

**There are many sources of good information about Ranked-Choice Voting.**

Michael recommends the **“Ranked Choice Resource Center.”** It is a new non-profit organization that offers a lot of good information. Glen said he visited their website and was impressed with its information and practical tips. See [**www.rankedchoicevoting.org**](http://www.rankedchoicevoting.org)

Michael said that the **“Ranked Choice Resource Center”** did not exist when Pierce County tried using RCV. He said the organization includes former elections administrators who have conducted RCV elections. Now they are a resource for jurisdictions around the U.S. who want to consider or use RCV. They can help in several practical ways.

Lisa said the non-partisan organization “**Campaign Legal Center**” ([**www.campaignlegal.org**](http://www.campaignlegal.org)) produced an excellent report titled, “The Civic Benefits of Ranked Choice Voting.” Anyone can download their report at this link: [**https://campaignlegal.org/document/issue-brief-civic-benefits-ranked-choice-voting**](https://campaignlegal.org/document/issue-brief-civic-benefits-ranked-choice-voting) She said RCV has many more benefits than we have had time to mention during this interview.

A nationwide organization at [**www.Represent.Us**](http://www.Represent.Us) works for RCV among other ways to strengthen democracy.

Glen said his previous TV interviews about reforming elections to strengthen democracy have featured guests from other non-profit, non-partisan organizations, including **“Fix Democracy First,”** which works within Washington State to pursue several strategies, including RCV, getting big money out of politics, and so forth.

Glen said this organization recognizes that we can’t make much progress on the various issues we care about – the environment, the economy, peace, human rights and so forth – until we get big money out of politics and reform our electoral systems in other ways. So **fixing democracy must be our first priority**, along with our other top-priority issues, because big money and other problems prevent solving the other high-priority problems. Glen encouraged people to contact this statewide non-profit organization at [**www.fixdemocracyfirst.org**](http://www.fixdemocracyfirst.org)

Glen’s blog – [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org) – provides information about a wide variety of issues. Visit [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org), scroll down the right side of the page, and click the link for **“Democracy, Electoral Reforms and Voting Rights.”** The direct link is: [**http://parallaxperspectives.org/category/democracy-electoral-reforms-voting-rights**](http://parallaxperspectives.org/category/democracy-electoral-reforms-voting-rights)

Glen said that when he types up a thorough summary of what we said during this interview *(the document you are reading now*) and posts the summary along with the interview video to the “TV Programs” part of his blog, he will include links to a variety of information sources – the ones we have mentioned on the air now – and some other sources, including links to some of my previous TV programs about reforming our election procedures to strengthen democracy. *(YOU ARE READING THIS DOCUMENT NOW.)*

**You can watch some of Glen’s recent TV programs and read their thorough summaries:**

* [**http://parallaxperspectives.org/voter-owned-elections-replace-special-interests-big-money-financing-this-is-necessary-in-order-to-really-solve-our-nations-health-care-crisis**](http://parallaxperspectives.org/voter-owned-elections-replace-special-interests-big-money-financing-this-is-necessary-in-order-to-really-solve-our-nations-health-care-crisis)
* [**http://parallaxperspectives.org/tv-real-democracy-not-corporate-personhood**](http://parallaxperspectives.org/tv-real-democracy-not-corporate-personhood)
* [**http://parallaxperspectives.org/tv-strengthen-democracy-with-a-community-rights-ordinance-cro**](http://parallaxperspectives.org/tv-strengthen-democracy-with-a-community-rights-ordinance-cro)
* [**http://parallaxperspectives.org/tv-reform-elections-restore-democracy**](http://parallaxperspectives.org/tv-reform-elections-restore-democracy)
* [**http://parallaxperspectives.org/tv-better-strategies-about-democracy-fossil-fuels-etc**](http://parallaxperspectives.org/tv-better-strategies-about-democracy-fossil-fuels-etc)

At the **STATE** level, see the organization that this interview’s two guests represent: [**www.FairVoteWA.org**](http://www.FairVoteWA.org)

At the **NATIONAL** level, see an organization that helps our state-level group and works on other electoral reforms: [**www.FairVote.org**](http://www.FairVote.org)

**LOCALLY** in Thurston County, Washington, please e-mail **ThurstonChapter@FairVoteWA.org**

**How could people help?**

Glen asked how people in Washington State or elsewhere could help the efforts to bring Ranked-Choice Voting to their local county or to their whole state.

Lisa urged people to visit [**www.FairVoteWA.org**](http://www.FairVoteWA.org) and sign up with their e-mail addresses. **She said the website has a “Get Involved” tab** that provides several opportunities for people to take practical actions.

Michael said that this interview will appear on TV after the 2019 legislative session has ended, so people should go to the legislators’ follow-up “town hall” meetings and use other opportunities to encourage them to support Ranked-Choice Voting. We can explain to the legislators and the public how RCV will help them (*e.g*., reduce negative campaigning and reduce the influence of big money in elections).

**Glen’s closing encouragement**

Glen thanked **Lisa Ayrault** and **Michael Martin** for sharing their knowledge and insights.

He also thanked the people who watched this interview.

Everybody wants a more vibrant democracy to serve the broad public interest and solve our nation’s problems.

Everybody knows that our nation’s electoral system is broken in many ways. A number of remedies do exist, such as Ranked-Choice Voting.

Ranked-Choice Voting would strengthen democracy in several ways. It is easy to understand and easy to use. Nationwide, more people are recognizing the need to use this smart method, and more local and state governments are reforming their elections.

**It’s a win-win-win all the way around:**

* **Strengthen democracy.**
* **Increase voter turnout.**
* **Elect more diverse officials.**
* **Reduce negative campaigning.**
* **Reduce the power of “big money.”**

Ranked-Choice Voting is a very practical remedy.

You can get information about a wide variety of issues related to peace, social justice and nonviolence through my blog, [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org)or by phoning me at
(360) 491-9093 or e-mailing me at **glenanderson@integra.net**

I end each TV program with this encouragement:

**We're all one human family, and we all share one planet.**

**We can create a better world, but we all have to work at it.**

**The world needs whatever you can do to help!**