

SF spent over \$770,000 dollars on RCV education in 2004, and greatly reduced it afterwards. This impacted the disenfranchisement of voters significantly, particularly less educated, lower income groups, and many english as a second language voters.

In addition, African Americans were considerably less likely to know than any other racial or ethnic group to be educated about RCV and use that opportunity.

From the Public Research Institute's Report on An Assessment of Ranked Choice Voting in the San Francisco 2005 Election:

***Prior Knowledge of Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV)***

- A narrow majority of voters surveyed (54%) knew before voting that they would be asked to rank candidates for City Treasurer and Assessor in the 2005 election.
- The proportion of voters who had prior knowledge of RCV was lower in 2005 (54%) than in the 2004 election for the Board of Supervisors (67%).
- Those with lower rates of prior knowledge tended to be those who were less educated, reported having lower incomes, and spoke a primary language other than Spanish.
- African Americans were considerably less likely than other racial and ethnic groups (41.9%) to know they would be ranking their choices for these offices.
- Voters residing in districts that used RCV for the 2004 election for the Board of Supervisors were more likely to know that they would be ranking their choices in 2005 (57%) than those from districts using RCV for the first time (49%).

Understanding of RCV varied. Only 51.6% understood it perfectly well. Combiner with 35.6% who self reported understanding it “fairly well”, that leaves an unconscionable 12.9% not understanding this new voting scheme. This should not something to be proud of.

**Table 9. Overall Understanding of RCV  
(N = 1633)**

Understood it perfectly well	51.6%
Understood it fairly well	35.6%
Did not understand it entirely	9.9%
Did not understand it at all	3.0%

## Overall Understanding of RCV

- The wide majority of voters said that they understood Ranked-Choice Voting either “fairly well” or “perfectly well” (87%).
- The proportion of voters indicating they understood RCV in 2005 (87%) is about the same as those saying they understood RCV in the 2004 Board of Supervisors election (86%).
- Self-reported levels of understanding were lowest among voters with low levels of education and those for whom Chinese was their first language.

**Table 12. Understanding of RCV by Education**  
(Chi-square = 9.69,  $p < .05$ ,  $N = 1409$ )

	Did not understand entirely or did not understand at all
Less than HS	23.8%
HS grad	15.3%
Some college	13.9%
College grad	13.3%
Post-grad study	10.0%

One’s understanding of RCV was also related to one’s first language. A higher proportion of voters who learned Chinese as their first language said they did not understand RCV (22%) than did voters who first learned Spanish (9%) or English (12%).

**Table 13. Understanding of RCV by First Language**  
(Chi-square = 10.08,  $p < .02$ ,  $N = 1610$ )

	Did not understand entirely or did not understand at all
English	12.1%
Chinese	21.9%
Spanish	9.0%
Other	13.9%

For both native and non-native English speakers, lack of understanding was substantially higher among voters who had been unaware that they would be asked to rank their choices for Assessor and Treasurer. Still, statistically significant differences remained between those whose first language is English and those whose first language is another language among those aware that RCV would be used in this election.

Voter confusion and participation breaks along racial line, education lines, and income lines. This is the definition of disparate treatment. When 2 to 1 on a race and 2 to 1 on a language someone fails to understand how to mark their ballot, that is a backward step in the pursuit of participatory democracy.