



CLARIFYING QUESTION 3: ADDRESSING KNOWLEDGE GAPS AND ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT ELECTORAL REFORM IN NEVADA

Project Preview | November 2023

ABOUT THIS STUDY

In November 2022, nearly 53 percent of Nevada voted in favor of Ballot Question 3, a measure that would establish open primaries and ranked-choice voting in statewide elections.¹ Due to the proposed change to the Nevada Constitution, this question will be on the ballot for a second statewide vote in 2024.²

Although the measure passed in the 2022 election cycle, it has been controversial, with opposition across the political spectrum. Supporters of the proposal note that this system may further engage Nevada's growing population of nonpartisan voters, as well as help address issues of hyperpolarization and negative campaigning. Those who oppose the measure have expressed concern with potential limits on party participation, as well as voter confusion, which may lead to uncounted ballots and increased disenfranchisement.³

Although Ballot Question 3 passed with 52.9 percent of the vote in 2022, survey data suggests that many Nevada voters need more awareness or understanding of the proposed reform and its impacts. Before the 2022 general election, a poll by the Nevada Independent and OH Predictive Insights found that 32 percent of respondents "Neither Support nor Oppose" the measure, a disproportionately high percentage compared to polling results on other ballot questions.⁴

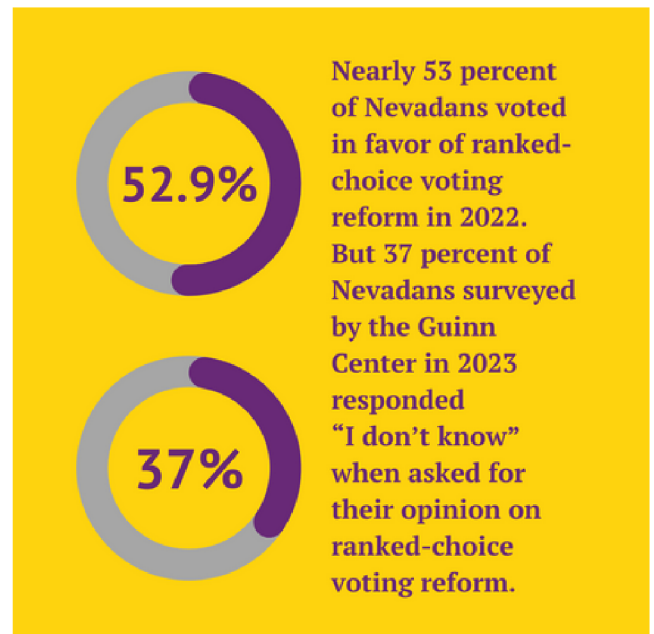
The Guinn Center conducted its own survey in the summer of 2023 (nearly one year after the 2022 survey) to gauge Nevadans' awareness and understanding of the ballot measure. Similar findings emerged. Even after reading the sample ballot explanation of Nevada Question 3, when asked their opinion on the reform, 37 percent of respondents answered, "I don't know."

¹ "Ballot Questions - Nevada Secretary of State 2022 General Election Results," accessed August 10, 2023, <https://silverstateelection.nv.gov/ballot-questions/>.


² "Nevada Question 3, Top-Five Ranked Choice Voting Initiative (2022)," Ballotpedia, accessed August 10, 2023, [https://ballotpedia.org/Nevada_Question_3,_Top-Five_Ranked_Choice_Voting_Initiative_\(2022\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Nevada_Question_3,_Top-Five_Ranked_Choice_Voting_Initiative_(2022)).

³ Nevada Secretary of State, "STATEWIDE BALLOT QUESTIONS 2022," n.d.

⁴ Jacob Solis, "Poll: Nevadans Favor Ranked-Choice Voting, Equal Rights Ballot Questions," *The Nevada Independent*, August 3, 2022, <https://thenevadaindependent.com/article/poll-nevadans-favor-ranked-choice-voting-equal-rights-ballot-questions>.



Although several states and localities have implemented reforms such as open primaries and ranked-choice voting, the implications of electoral reform can vary across different states and regions. For this reason, informational resources that are specific to Nevada's population, taking into account its diverse communities, political landscape, and voter demographics, are recommended.



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PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

This report will contain results from the Guinn Center's 2023 survey and a document that addresses questions and concerns of communities in Nevada regarding Ballot Question 3, which would institute ranked-choice voting and open primaries in statewide elections. We conducted research in two main phases:

1. Gathering Questions from Nevadans - Through the distribution and analysis of a statewide survey, we identified knowledge gaps and common questions and concerns regarding electoral reform in Nevada.
2. Providing Data-Driven, Nonpartisan Insights - Using relevant academic literature, case studies, and interviews with policy experts, we clarified preliminary questions about ranked-choice voting and open primaries.

By involving Nevada's local communities in generating the questions, we aim to create information for voters grounded in the specific needs and interests of the people it may impact. This report will not formulate a stance or position on how Nevadans should vote on Nevada Question 3. Instead, it will help to equip voters with the necessary information to make an informed decision on this ballot question, as well as identify areas for future research based on the results of the survey.

PROJECT TIMELINE

The anticipated completion of the project is Winter 2023.

ABOUT THE GUINN CENTER

The Kenny Guinn Center for Policy Priorities is a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy center addressing key challenges faced by policymakers in Nevada. We are affiliated with the University of Nevada, Reno, with researchers and collaborative partnerships at NSHE institutions across the state.

Founded in 2014 by a group of Nevadans who sought to advance new policy choices based on sound research, sensible and pragmatic thinking, and bold ideas, the Center is named for the late-Governor Kenny Guinn.

Our mission is to advance evidence-based policy solutions for Nevada through research, public engagement, and partnerships.