Are you ready for ranked-choice voting?

The Nov. 6, 2018 General Election for the offices of U.S. Senate and U.S. Congress will be conducted using a method of ranked-choice voting. Ranked-choice voting, sometimes called "instant run-off voting," allows voters to choose their candidates in order of preference, by marking candidates as their first, second, third and subsequent choices.

The votes are tabulated in rounds, with the lowest-ranked candidates eliminated in each round until there are only two candidates remaining in the final round and the candidate with the most votes is declared the winner. It is different from our previous method of voting, in which voters choose only one candidate for each office and the winner is determined by plurality (whoever gets the most votes).

Ranked-choice voting is only applied when there are three or more candidates running for the same office. Thus, for the Nov. 6 General Election, you will receive a ranked-choice ballot for:

- The U.S. Senate race: Eric Brakey (R), Angus King (I), Zak Ringelstein (D) *and either:*
- The U.S. Congressional District 1 race: Martin Grohman (I), Mark Holbrook (R), Chellie Pingree (D) *or:*
- The U.S. Congressional District 2 race: Tiffany Bond (I), Jared Golden (D), William Hoar (I), Bruce Poliquin (R)

To mark the ballot for your first-choice candidate – the person who you would most like to see win the office – simply fill in the oval next to their name in the "1st Choice" column. If you wish to rank some or all of the remaining candidates in order of your preference, you may do so, or you can choose to vote for only your first choice. To mark a candidate as your second choice, fill in the oval next to their name in the "2nd Choice" column, and so on.

In the ballot example at right, the voter is choosing candidates in a mock election for Congress. This person chose to rank all the candidates, with Smokey Bear marked as their first-choice candidate and Mickey Mouse as their third-choice candidate.

Rep. To Congress District X	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice
Bear, Smokey Municipality Party	●	○	○	○	○
Duck, Donald Municipality Party	○	○	○	●	○
Mouse, Mickey Municipality Party	○	○	●	○	○
Woman, Wonder Municipality Party	○	●	○	○	○
Write-in	○	○	○	○	○

You can find additional resources and details about ranked-choice voting on the Department of the Secretary of State website RCV Resources page, http://maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/upcoming/rcv.html You can vote at the polls on Election Day, Nov. 6, or request an absentee ballot from your town clerk by Nov. 1, 2018, in person, by phone, in writing, or online at http://maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/voter-info/absent.html

– Maine Department of the Secretary of State, October 2018