

Précis
An Efficient Electoral Method to
Reduce Voter Ignorance

by
David Belcher
University of California, Davis

The phenomenon of voter ignorance in the United States is extremely widespread and problematic. In order for citizens to meaningfully participate in the democratic process, and in order for the Government to take constituent desires into account when making policy decisions, people need to have a basic understanding of what they are voting for.

Previous research into the field of voter ignorance has examined the scope of the problem, but yielded no effective methods of reducing it. I examined whether the ballots used in the cutting-edge Ranked Choice Voting electoral system, which prompt feedback on multiple candidates, incentivize voters to learn more about candidates.

To answer this question, I performed an experiment in which examined two electoral institutions, First Past the Post (FPTP) and Ranked Choice Voting (RCV), and the effect that each system had on voter knowledge in a simulated election. I ran two simulated elections where the only difference between the two elections was the type of electoral system used. In both simulated elections, I provided participants with identical information about three real candidates who ran for California State Assembly in 2012. In one group, participants were told that they would vote for only one candidate (the FPTP group), while participants in the other

group were asked to rank candidates in order of preference (the RCV group). I then quizzed all participants on their knowledge of the candidates' biographies and policy positions, and then had them vote.

I found that participants in the RCV group scored a statistically significant amount higher on quizzes about the candidates' biographies and policy positions than participants in the FPTP group. This result suggests that simply changing the method used to elect candidates can increase voter knowledge, and lead to a more smooth and efficient democratic system.

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Introduction

There is widespread concern in democracies all over the world about how much citizens know about government and governmental institutions. In a Pew Research Center survey, 41% of Americans could not name the vice president of the United States. A study done by the McCormick Tribune Freedom Museum found that 80% of Americans do not know how long senators' terms last, and that 75% do not know how many senators there are. A poll done by National Geographic found that only 1 in 7 Americans could locate Iraq on a map. Due to the high cost of attaining information, many voters are rationally

ignorant, lacking knowledge about the political processes and issues facing their cities, districts, or nation. One of the most concerning aspects of this rational ignorance is that many factors that contribute to a lack of knowledge are difficult to address. Research has shown that demographic factors, such as education level and income, are the main reasons why someone may or may not seek political knowledge (Crampton, 2009).

Electoral institutions may be one way to incentivize voter knowledge. Though elections are the uniform basis for democracies all over the world, there is little uniformity in the way that elections are run. Different countries, states, and even cities use different electoral rules to elect their representatives. These procedural differences can have massive implications for the way that a society is governed. It is well established in political science that the way in which an election is run can change its outcome (Benoit, 2004). It is also well known that variations in electoral systems can affect the strategic behavior of voters, the strategic behavior of political elites, minority representation, voter turnout, and even the number of electoral parties (Norris, 2004; Banducci, 2004; Blais, 1998; Neto, 1997). However, one aspect of electoral systems that is not well understood is the effect that different rules have on the amount of information that voters seek out.

In this paper, I examine two electoral institutions, First Past the Post (FPTP) and Ranked Choice Voting (RCV), and the effect that each system had on voter knowledge in a simulated election. I argue that the

RCV electoral system encourages voters to gather more information because the ballot prompts feedback on multiple candidates. To test this theory, I performed an experiment in which I ran two simulated elections where the only difference between the two elections was the type of electoral system used. In both simulated elections, I provided participants with identical information about three real candidates who ran for California State Assembly in 2012. In one group, participants were told that they would vote for only one candidate (the FPTP group), while participants in the other group were asked to rank candidates in order of preference (the RCV group). I then quizzed all participants on their knowledge of the candidates' biographies and policy positions, and then had them vote. I found that participants in the RCV group scored higher on quizzes about the candidates' biographies and policy positions than participants in the FPTP group.

Electoral Institutions and the Incentives to Seek Information

In order to understand why RCV might increase voter knowledge, it is first important to understand how the processes of FPTP and RCV elections differ, and the effects of each system. FPTP—First Past the Post—is a type of plurality system in which voters have a single, non-transferable vote, and the candidate who receives the most votes wins the election. FPTP is the most commonly used electoral system in the United States, and is also widely used throughout the world (Hoff, 2008). FPTP has several advantages

compared to other systems. Proponents point out that FPTP elections are easy to run, and results are simple and understandable. It also makes it easy for voters to hold their representatives accountable and discourages extreme candidates (Hoff, 2008).

One prominent alternative to FPTP is RCV—Ranked Choice Voting. RCV is a type of transferable vote system in which voters rank candidates in order of preference, rather than just voting for one candidate. After votes are cast, the lowest ranked candidate (typically the one with the fewest first-preference votes) is eliminated, and the votes that were cast for that candidate transfer to each voter's next choice. This electoral system is used in municipal elections in the cities of San Francisco, London, and Minneapolis, and in national elections in Ireland, Australia, and Bosnia (Fairvote, 2014).

There is reason to believe that the RCV system may increase voter knowledge, but there is also reason to believe that it could have the opposite effect. Whether or not this electoral system incentivizes voters to learn more depends on the effect it has on candidates and voters. Regarding RCV's potential effect on candidates, some scholars have argued that RCV increases campaign civility (Donovan, 2014). Because candidates benefit from receiving second-preference votes, RCV incentivizes political opponents to cooperate with each other, or at least weakens the incentive to run attack ads against each other. One effect of increased campaign civility could be a decrease in voter knowledge. If campaigns are civil, and candidates do not

distinguish themselves through attack ads, voters may not learn the policy positions of all the candidates in the race. On the other hand, if candidates make campaigns issue oriented, as opposed to attack oriented, voters may learn more about the different policy positions of the candidates.

The RCV system may also affect knowledge acquisition by directly affecting voters rather than candidates. For example, the RCV ballot might confuse voters. A study performed by David Kimball and Martha Kropf found that RCV ballots are more difficult to understand than FPTP ballots, leading to some ballots being mismarked and therefore not counted (Kimball & Kropf, 2005). Another study analyzing the effects of RCV in San Francisco and Oakland concluded that RCV led to a large number of votes being wasted, that RCV was difficult for many non-native English speakers to understand, and that a significant percentage of voters did not rank candidates (Neely et al., 2005). However, other studies have shown that, although the RCV system can be difficult for some voters to understand at first, the number of wasted votes is reduced over time, as familiarity with the system increases (Jansen, 2004).

RCV ballots could also feasibly incentivize voters to learn more about candidates. Previous research has shown that individuals are good at following instructions when doing so benefits them in some way (Kruglanski et al. 1971). RCV ballots prompt voters to give feedback on multiple candidates through ranking, and knowing about multiple candidates helps voters obtain a favorable outcome in the election.

Thus, the RCV system might incentivize voters to learn about multiple candidates.

There are many factors associated with RCV that could either promote or reduce voter knowledge. Because I could not test all of these factors, I focused on the effect that the RCV ballot had on voter knowledge. The RCV ballot has three potential effects on voter knowledge. One effect could be that RCV ballots confuse voters, causing them to learn less about candidates. Another effect could be that being asked to rank multiple candidates incentivizes voters to learn more about multiple candidates. Finally, RCV ballots could simultaneously incentivize some voters to learn more about candidates, while confusing others.

Research Design

To test whether RCV ballots reduce voter ignorance, I performed an experiment involving a simulated election, which I ran in three political science classes at the University of California, Davis, receiving 169 responses. The simulated election had three candidates—John Jake, Christopher Armenta, and Sebastian Ridley-Thomas—three real Democrats who ran in a special election in California’s 54th Assembly District in 2012. After randomly assigning participants to either the control or treatment group, I provided respondents with a six-page packet of information about the candidates, drawn from the candidates’ campaign websites. The informational packets contained the candidates’ biographies, including education, career path, political history, and experience. The packet also

contained the candidates’ positions on three policy issues. The only difference between the control group and the treatment group was the electoral system that the participants used to cast votes for their chosen candidates. In the control group, the election was run with FPTP rules. In the treatment group, the election was run with RCV rules. The participants received instructions about voting at the same time as they received information about the candidates.

After participants read about the candidates, I took the informational packets from them and administered a quiz. This quiz had two parts. The first part tested participants’ knowledge of the candidates’ biographies and policy positions. The second part tested the participants’ general political knowledge. After the quiz, the participants voted. Participants in the control group were asked to vote for one candidate, and participants in the treatment group were asked to rank the candidates in order of preference.

The dependent variable in this experiment is voter ignorance, which is measured by the participants’ score on the portion of the quiz testing their knowledge of the candidates’ biographies and policy positions.

There are several benefits of this research design. First, because the simulated election uses real candidates—and provides real biographical information and policy positions taken from the candidates’ websites—the information given to participants closely mirrors the information given to real voters in a real election. This gives the experiment more external validity than an experiment using fictional

candidates and fictional information. Second, this design only has one variation between the two groups—the type of electoral system—making it possible to discern the effect of the electoral system on voter ignorance. If there is a statistically significant difference between the treatment (RCV) and control (FPTP) groups, it is likely that the difference arose because of the different electoral systems used in the two groups.

I have several hypotheses about the effect of RCV on voter knowledge. I hypothesize that the RCV system will either prompt voters to learn more, or confuse voters, causing a difference in quiz scores in my control (FPTP) and treatment (RCV) groups. If both effects occur simultaneously, I expect to see no significant difference in scores between my treatment and control groups. My theory is that the ballot in an RCV system reduces voter ignorance. I believe that, because the ballot in an RCV election prompts voters to give their preferences of multiple candidates, voters are incentivized to learn about multiple candidates in order to get their most preferred outcome and to follow instructions.

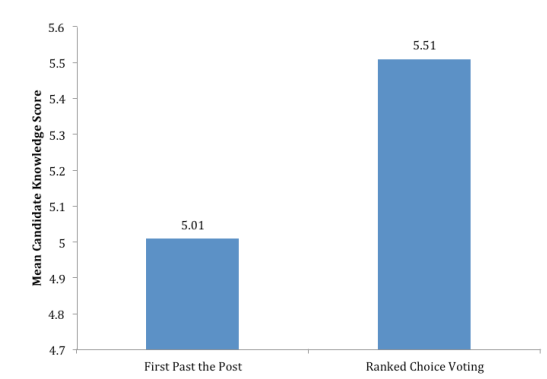
I included the general political knowledge section to the quiz as a control variable. I hypothesize that there will be no correlation between general knowledge scores and candidate knowledge scores. My reasoning is that politically knowledgeable individuals might not necessarily know about three candidates in a special election in Southern California. Nonetheless, it is important to control for alternative

explanations for variation in candidate knowledge quiz scores.

Findings

After gathering my data, I performed a t-test to analyze whether there was a difference in candidate knowledge scores between my treatment and control groups. If my hypothesis were true, I would expect that subjects in the RCV group would have a higher mean candidate knowledge score than the mean score of the FPTP group. The results of this t-test are summarized in the bar chart below:

Figure 1: Average Mean



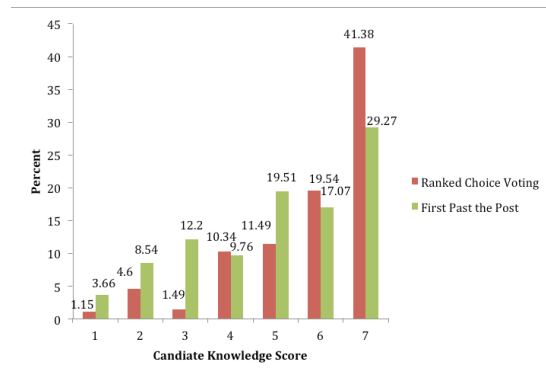
This chart shows that the mean candidate knowledge score in the RCV group was about .5 points higher than the mean candidate score in the FPTP group. This difference was statistically significant at the $P < .05$ level. Though half a point may not seem like a large difference, the quiz only asked seven questions, all of which tested very basic information, such as what policy issues each candidate discussed in their

biographies. The fact that the FPTP participants missed, on average, half a point more than the RCV group in this section demonstrates a lesser degree of basic knowledge of the candidates in the FPTP group. The fact that participants in the RCV group scored higher at a statistically significant level supports my theory that RCV reduces voter ignorance.

It is also important to note that the mean general political knowledge score in each group was almost identical. The mean general political knowledge score for the FPTP group was 3.2. For the RCV group, it was 3.1. This similarity suggests that the difference in candidate knowledge scores is caused by the variation in the electoral system, and not by a difference in the amount of general political knowledge between the two groups.

A larger difference between the RCV and FPTP scores can be seen in the distribution of candidate knowledge scores. A much higher percentage of participants in the RCV group received perfect scores on the candidate knowledge test than participants in the FPTP group. The distribution of scores is shown below in Figure 2:

Figure 2: Distribution of Candidate



Knowledge Scores

The green bars show the distribution of scores in the FPTP group; the red bars show the distribution of scores in the RCV group. In the RCV group, 41% of participants received perfect scores, whereas only 29% of participants in the FPTP group received a perfect score. Subjects in the RCV group were able to correctly answer all of the questions about all of the candidates at a higher rate than subjects in the FPTP group. This difference supports the theory that the ability to rank candidates incentivizes voters to learn more about multiple candidates.

To test my hypothesis that higher general political knowledge scores would not be associated with higher candidate knowledge score, I ran a correlation analysis. I found that there was no meaningful correlation between general political knowledge scores and candidate knowledge scores.

Conclusion

My results indicate that RCV ballots likely promoted voter knowledge in this case. However, there may be questions about how well these results translate to the “real” world, given that the study only used political science students as participants, did not account for candidate behavior, and perhaps provided candidate information to participants too readily. To mitigate these issues and increase external validity, the study used real candidates, and the biographical information about the candidates and their policy positions was taken directly from the candidates’ campaign websites.

My findings fit into a larger narrative about the benefits of RCV. Other research has shown that RCV “upholds the principle of majority rule,” “eliminates ‘wasted’ votes,” “solves the ‘spoiler problem,’” “gives voters more choice,” “increases voter participation,” “opens the political process to new voices,” “promotes more diverse representation,” “reduces negative campaigning and promotes civil, issue oriented campaigns,” “mitigates political polarization,” and “reduces the cost of campaigning” (Fairvote Minnesota, 2014; Donovan, 2014; Towle, 2014). My research suggests that “promoting voter knowledge” may be an addition to that list of the benefits of the RCV electoral system.

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Appendix

In this section I have included the experimental materials provided to participants.

In this experiment, you will be asked to read about three candidates running for state assembly in the 54th district of California. After reading about candidates, you will be asked to vote for one.

John Jake



About:

John Jake is a native Angeleno who graduated from Birmingham High School. After high school, John Jake found himself at a fork in the road; join the Air Force or attend community college – he chose the latter. After attending LA Valley for two years, he received a football scholarship to the University of Idaho.

Once again, John Jake found himself pondering his future; join the NFL as a free agent or finish his education. John Jake graduated from the University of Idaho in 1991 with a Bachelor's Degree in Communications. After a long career in corporate, John found himself a

victim of the economic downturn and was laid off from his Regional Manager's position.

Not allowing his misfortune to deter nor consume him, he decided to forge ahead and utilize his Broker's license forming John Jake & Company a residential and commercial real estate firm.

As an advocate for volunteerism, John Jake has extended his expertise to such political campaigns as that of President Barack Obama, Senator Holly Mitchell, Councilman Herb Wesson and Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas to name a few. In 2008, John Jake decided to follow his own burgeoning aspirations of governance and chose to join the Olympic Park Neighborhood Council. Rising rapidly through the ranks, he was soon elected Vice President in 2010 and in 2012, was elected President. As Vice President and Chairman of Outreach, John was instrumental in providing the support necessary to partner with Council District #10 on several projects and events providing assistance to underprivileged families.

As President and Chairman of Planning and Zoning, John Jake orchestrated National Night Out which is an event designed to interact with the community and is dedicated to implementing and developing various crime prevention programs. John has formed a strong bond with Captain Davis of the Wilshire Division Police Department. He was instrumental in providing funding for the upgrade of the station's audio/visual equipment and underwrote funding for the kid's basketball camp.

John is also responsible for

the Queen Anne Park Recreation Center "Cameras in the Park" initiative, where OPNC will fund half of the cost of the installation of cameras to help protect our kids from violence. He's currently working on the San Vicente Medium Project with the CRA/LA and the Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative to revitalize the area. New trees, plants and pathways will transform the mediums into a vibrant and attractive sight along San Vicente Blvd. from the Midtown Center at Pico to Wilshire Blvd. near Beverly Hills. The total project will break ground before the end of the year.

Issue Positions:

Jobs:

John Jake supports:

- Incentivizing Entertainment Industry Job Growth
- Supporting Small Businesses
- Connecting Unemployed Residents to Apprenticeship Programs

Public Safety

John Jake supports:

- Supporting Local Law Enforcement
- Focusing On Our Youth
- Encouraging Community-Based Policing

Education

John Jake supports:

- Increasing Funding of Community Colleges and State Universities.
- Increasing the salaries of teachers and professors.
- Supporting funding for after-school programs for at-risk youth.

Christopher Armenta



About:

Dear friends,

We are all so lucky to call the 54th Assembly District our home! As residents, we can all take great pride in our schools, parks, and public services. I grew up right here in the 54th district — in Culver City — and feel such a deep connection to this area that I have continued to live, work, and raise my own family here for over 35 years.

The City of Culver City geographically is roughly in the middle of the 54th district, which also includes the beautiful and richly historical neighborhoods of the Crenshaw, Westwood, UCLA, Cheviot Hills, Century City, Beverlywood, Mar Vista, the Fairfax District, Baldwin Hills, Leimert Park, Windsor Hills and Ladera Heights.

As a resident over the past years, I have enjoyed membership in many community organizations such as the Homeowner's Association, Friends of the Library, the Culver City

Historical Society, and Friends of Culver City Animals. While in public office, I continued to serve on a number of city committees and have participated in many programs involving Seniors and the Youth.

The 54th Assembly district means the world to me, and it has been an honor and a privilege to serve the City of Culver City as the Elected City Clerk from 2002 to 2008 and then as City Council Member from 2008 to 2012. I have also represented the city as the Mayor during 2010 to 2011. Since leaving public office in 2012, it is my greatest desire to continue to serve you and this community.

As an elected official, I have spent the past 10 years in City Council Chambers; listening, documenting, evaluating and making difficult decisions on the issues that were important to the city and its residents. As a City Council Member, I was able to use my 25 years of technical accounting and auditing skills to assist the city during the worst national economic crisis since the great depression.

Through great leadership and excellent teamwork, the City of Culver City has been able to weather the storm and has developed a strong reputation as a regional destination place. My service in public office combined with my work experience, provides me with the insight and skills necessary to ensure our state dollars are properly accounted for and spent in a fiscally responsible way. I will protect our valued state services when it comes to the areas of education, the

environment, jobs and the economy, healthcare, and public safety. This is a promise pledge from me to you...

Like you, I only want the best for my loved ones, my local community, the State of California, and myself ~ and I am dedicated to spending my time and energy to preserving the great character of this golden state. I am humbly asking for your support in my bid to represent you as your Assembly Member for the 54th District.

Issue Positions:

Jobs:

Armenta Supports:

- Providing business incentives to encourage manufacturing, expansion, and job creation.
- State contracts that prohibit outsourcing of jobs outside the state.
- Promoting green companies that produce jobs.

Environment:

Armenta Supports:

- Green Energy programs, renewable energy, and reduced greenhouse emissions.
- Sustainability, public mass transit, and alternative fuel sources.
- Strong Fracking Moratorium or Ban.

Healthcare:

Armenta supports:

- Increased preventative health care and educational outreach programs.

- Increased access to quality hospitals, emergency services, and wellness check ups.
- Greater accountability and transparency for medical services and prescription costs.

Sebastian Ridley-Thomas



About:

Sebastian Ridley-Thomas has the experience, drive and dedication to capably serve our community with distinction, intelligence and vigor in the California State Assembly.

As a public policy director, community organizer and advocate for consumers, children and small businesses, Sebastian has rolled up his sleeves to deliver results for the residents of our community. Sebastian's commitment to public service is born from his desire to address problems by working with residents to implement sensible solutions.

Sebastian served as Public Policy Director for State Senator Curren Price. He advised Senator Price on economic development,

transportation, housing, public safety, and local government issues – all of which are of critical importance to constituents in the 54th Assembly District. He also was as a legislative consultant to the Senate Select Committee on Procurement, focusing principally on how to ensure that a fair share of lucrative state contracts were awarded to qualified small business owners in underserved communities that were often overlooked.

Sebastian was a policy researcher, strategic program analyst, coalition builder, and advocate for children during the “Summer of Healthcare” while serving as an intern at the Children’s Defense Fund, our nation’s premiere child advocacy organization. He worked to expand the Children’s Defense Fund’s Freedom Schools summer enrichment program. During this time, Sebastian completed a dual internship with the National Ministries of the American Baptist Churches assisting in the growth of its “Children In Poverty” program.

Over a two-year period, Sebastian served as Political Director for the nine-member California Legislative Black Caucus. He began his Capitol experience as California State Senate Fellow through the Center for California Studies at California State University, Sacramento. Sebastian studied Conflict Resolution at the University of California, Davis and Cross-Cultural Civic Engagement at California State University, Dominguez Hills.

While earning his Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Morehouse College where he held several leadership positions,

Sebastian served as an intern to L.A. County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky.

Issue Positions:

Jobs:

Ridley-Thomas Supports:

- Expanding the abilities of small business owners to take advantage of local and state contracting opportunities.
- Investing in public works projects.
- Incentivizing the expansion of local businesses through tax breaks.

Traffic:

Ridley-Thomas Supports:

- Creating a symposium to address traffic woes.
- Promoting better movement of people and goods through legislation.
- Mitigating gridlock through responsible policy.

Public Safety:

Ridley-Thomas Supports:

- Ensuring that local law enforcement will have the necessary resources to perform the difficult job of keeping the public safe.
- Providing community policing that engages community members and assesses their public safety needs.
- Putting cameras on on-duty officers.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability and then proceed to the ballot.

1. What 3 candidates did you read about?

- A. Christopher Armenta, John Jake, and Sebastian Ridley-Thomas
- B. Christopher Armenta, Jake Johnson, and Sebastian Ridley-Thomas
- C. Christopher Simmons, John Jake, and Steve Thompson
- D. Alex Armenta, Steve Thompson, and Sebastian Ridley-Thomas

2. Which candidate discussed education?

- A. John Jake
- B. Steve Thompson
- C. Alex Armenta
- D. Sebastian Ridley-Thomas

3. Which candidate discussed environmental policies?

- A. Sebastian Ridley-Thomas
- B. Steve Thompson
- C. Christopher Armenta
- D. John Jake

4. Which candidate discussed traffic?

- A. John Jake
- B. Christopher Armenta
- C. Alex Armenta
- D. Sebastian Ridley-Thomas

5. Which candidate was part of President Obama's Campaign?

- A. Jake Johnson
- B. Christopher Armenta
- C. John Jake
- D. Sebastian Ridley-Thomas

6. Which candidate was once the mayor of Culver City?

- A. John Jake
- B. Steve Thompson
- C. Christopher Armenta
- D. Sebastian Ridley-Thomas

7. Which candidate was the policy director for state senator Curren Price?

- A. Sebastian Ridley-Thomas
- B. Steve Thompson
- C. Christopher Armenta
- D. John Jake

8. Who is the Speaker of the House of Representatives?

- A. John Boehner
- B. Harry Reid
- C. Joe Biden
- D. John Roberts

9. Which party currently controls the Senate?

- A. Republicans
- B. Democrats
- C. The Senate is evenly split

10. How long does a term in the House of Representatives last?

- A. 4 years
- B. 6 years
- C. 3 years
- D. 2 years

11. How many electors are there in the Electoral College?

- A. 435
- B. 100
- C. 538
- D. 50

12. Who is the current Prime Minister of the United Kingdom?

- A. Tony Blair
- B. John Roberts
- C. David Cameron
- D. Joseph Banks

To vote for the candidate of your choice, please mark the line to the RIGHT of the candidate's name with an X.

Candidate

John Jake _____

Christopher Armenta _____

Sebastian-Ridley Thomas _____

In this experiment, you will be asked to read about three candidates running for state assembly in the 54th district of California. The 54th assembly district of California elects candidates using Ranked Choice Voting; a method of voting that allows voters to rank multiple candidates in order of preference. After reading about the candidates, you will be asked to vote by ranking the candidates in order of preference. For Example:

Candidate	1 st Choice	2 nd Choice	3 rd Choice
Scooby-Doo		X	
Freddy			X
Velma	X		

John Jake



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We are all so lucky to call the 54th Assembly District our home! As residents, we can all take great pride in our schools, parks, and public services. I grew up right here in the 54th district — in Culver City — and feel such a deep connection to this area that I have continued to live, work, and raise my own family here for over 35 years.

The City of Culver City geographically is roughly in the middle of the 54th district, which also includes the beautiful and richly historical neighborhoods of the Crenshaw, Westwood, UCLA, Cheviot Hills, Century City, Beverlywood, Mar Vista, the Fairfax District, Baldwin Hills, Leimert Park, Windsor Hills and Ladera Heights.

As a resident over the past years, I have enjoyed membership in many community organizations such as the Homeowner's Association, Friends of the Library, the Culver City Historical

Society, and Friends of Culver City Animals. While in public office, I continued to serve on a number of city committees and have participated in many programs involving Seniors and the Youth.

The 54th Assembly district means the world to me, and it has been an honor and a privilege to serve the City of Culver City as the Elected City Clerk from 2002 to 2008 and then as City Council Member from 2008 to 2012. I have also represented the city as the Mayor during 2010 to 2011. Since leaving public office in 2012, it is my greatest desire to continue to serve you and this community.

As an elected official, I have spent the past 10 years in City Council Chambers; listening, documenting, evaluating and making difficult decisions on the issues that were important to the city and its residents. As a City Council Member, I was able to use my 25 years of technical accounting and auditing skills to assist the city during the worst national economic crisis since the great depression.

Through great leadership and excellent teamwork, the City of Culver City has been able to weather the storm and has developed a strong reputation as a regional destination place. My service in public office combined with my work experience, provides me with the insight and skills necessary to ensure our state dollars are properly accounted for and spent in a fiscally responsible way. I will protect our valued state services when it comes to the areas of education, the environment, jobs and the economy,

healthcare, and public safety. This is a promise pledge from me to you... Like you, I only want the best for my loved ones, my local community, the State of California, and myself ~ and I am dedicated to spending my time and energy to preserving the great character of this golden state. I am humbly asking for your support in my bid to represent you as your Assembly Member for the 54th District.

hospitals, emergency services, and wellness check ups.
 - Greater accountability and transparency for medical services and prescription costs.

Issue Positions:

Jobs:

Armenta Supports:

- Providing business incentives to encourage manufacturing, expansion, and job creation.
- State contracts that prohibit outsourcing of jobs outside the state.
- Promoting green companies that produce jobs.

Environment:

Armenta Supports

- Green Energy programs, renewable energy, and reduced greenhouse emissions.
- Sustainability, public mass transit, and alternative fuel sources.
- Strong Fracking Moratorium or Ban.

Healthcare:

Armenta Supports:

- Increased preventative health care and educational outreach programs.
- Increased access to quality

Sebastian Ridley-Thomas



About:

Sebastian Ridley-Thomas has the experience, drive and dedication to capably serve our community with distinction, intelligence and vigor in the California State Assembly.

As a public policy director, community organizer and advocate for consumers, children and small businesses, Sebastian has rolled up his sleeves to deliver results for the residents of our community. Sebastian's commitment to public service is born from his desire to address problems by working with residents to implement sensible solutions.

Sebastian served as Public Policy Director for State Senator Curren Price. He advised Senator Price on economic development, transportation, housing, public safety, and local government issues – all of which are of critical importance to constituents in the 54th Assembly District. He also was as a legislative consultant to the Senate Select Committee on Procurement, focusing

principally on how to ensure that a fair share of lucrative state contracts were awarded to qualified small business owners in underserved communities that were often overlooked.

Sebastian was a policy researcher, strategic program analyst, coalition builder, and advocate for children during the “Summer of Healthcare” while serving as an intern at the Children’s Defense Fund, our nation’s premiere child advocacy organization. He worked to expand the Children’s Defense Fund’s Freedom Schools summer enrichment program. During this time, Sebastian completed a dual internship with the National Ministries of the American Baptist Churches assisting in the growth of its “Children In Poverty” program.

Over a two-year period, Sebastian served as Political Director for the nine-member California Legislative Black Caucus. He began his Capitol experience as California State Senate Fellow through the Center for California Studies at California State University, Sacramento. Sebastian studied Conflict Resolution at the University of California, Davis and Cross-Cultural Civic Engagement at California State University, Dominguez Hills.

While earning his Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Morehouse College where he held several leadership positions, Sebastian served as an intern to L.A. County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky.

Issue Positions:

Jobs:

Ridley-Thomas Supports:

- Expanding the abilities of small business owners to take advantage of local and state contracting opportunities.
- Investing in public works projects.
- Incentivizing the expansion of local businesses through tax breaks.

Traffic:

Ridley-Thomas Supports:

- Creating a symposium to address traffic woes.
- Promoting better movement of people and goods through legislation.
- Mitigating gridlock through responsible policy.

Public Safety:

Ridley-Thomas Supports:

- Ensuring that local law enforcement will have the necessary resources to perform the difficult job of keeping the public safe.
- Providing community policing that engages community members and assesses their public safety needs.
- Putting cameras on on-duty officers.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability and then proceed to the ballot.

1. What 3 candidates did you read about?

- A. Christopher Armenta, John Jake, and Sebastian Ridley-Thomas
- B. Christopher Armenta, Jake Johnson, and Sebastian Ridley-Thomas
- C. Christopher Simmons, John Jake, and Steve Thompson
- D. Alex Armenta, Steve Thompson, and Sebastian Ridley-Thomas

2. Which candidate discussed education?

- A. John Jake
- B. Steve Thompson
- C. Alex Armenta
- D. Sebastian Ridley-Thomas

3. Which candidate discussed environmental policies?

- A. Sebastian Ridley-Thomas
- B. Steve Thompson
- C. Christopher Armenta
- D. John Jake

4. Which candidate discussed traffic?

- A. John Jake
- B. Christopher Armenta
- C. Alex Armenta
- D. Sebastian Ridley-Thomas

5. Which candidate was part of President Obama's Campaign?

- A. Jake Johnson
- B. Christopher Armenta
- C. John Jake
- D. Sebastian Ridley-Thomas

6. Which candidate was once the mayor of Culver City?

- A. John Jake
- B. Steve Thompson
- C. Christopher Armenta
- D. Sebastian Ridley-Thomas

7. Which candidate was the policy director for state senator Curren Price?

- A. Sebastian Ridley-Thomas
- B. Steve Thompson
- C. Christopher Armenta
- D. John Jake

8. Who is the Speaker of the House of Representatives?

- A. John Boehner
- B. Harry Reid
- C. Joe Biden
- D. John Roberts

9. Which party currently controls the Senate?

- A. Republicans
- B. Democrats
- C. The Senate is evenly split

10. How long does a term in the House of Representatives last?

- A. 4 years
- B. 6 years
- C. 3 years
- D. 2 years

11. How many electors are there in the Electoral College?

- A. 435
- B. 100
- C. 538
- D. 50

12. Who is the current Prime Minister of the United Kingdom?

- A. Tony Blair
- B. John Roberts
- C. David Cameron
- D. Joseph Banks

To vote, rank the candidates in order of preference. Only mark one box per column.

Candidate	1 st Choice	2 nd Choice	3 rd choice
John Jake			
Christopher Armenta			
Sebastian Ridley-Thomas			