Appendix

The Super Tuesday 2020 voting experiments reported in this study were conducted in late February and early March of 2020. The research design for these experiments received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval in early February of 2020.

Our coding rules for the ballot-image data obtained from our experiment, with respect to which ballots are considered countable and which void, generally followed standard practice for Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) jurisdictions in the USA. One aspect of this process, however, has produced variation in counting rules which is worth noting. Our coding rule for duplicate rankings (when more than one candidate receives the same ranking from a voter) was to count all singular rankings of any one candidate but to stop counting when the first duplicate ranking was reached. Under this rule, a ballot with one first-choice ranking for one candidate and two second-choice rankings for two other candidates would be considered valid, whereas a ballot with two first-choice rankings for two different candidates would be considered void. Most American jurisdictions that use RCV employ a similar rule, but RCV cities in Minnesota follow a different counting rule (Fair Vote 2020). Under Minnesota rules, a ballot with duplicate first-choice rankings is counted as a first-choice vote for the next-highest ranking that appears for only one candidate, rather than as a totally invalidated ballot. The Minnesota rule therefore results in a lower rate of void votes. In the Super Tuesday 2020 experiments reported here, using the Minnesota rule to code void votes would have lowered the number of void votes by 0.5 percent. Given that the assignment of the Rank ballot type failed to induce more void votes than the control (Check), contrary to expectations, it seems unlikely that our choice of coding rule made a difference in the statistical results.

References

Fair Vote. 2020. “RCV Tabulation Rules, 2020.” Unpublished data file.