



NAACP Memphis

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA STATEMENT ON INSTANT RUNOFF VOTING (IRV)

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(December 5, 2017 – Memphis, TENN) The NAACP Memphis Branch Executive Committee and General Membership have voted not to support Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) at this time. After reviewing information and listening to presentations from supporters and those against IRV, we have determined it is not in the best interest of a city, which is majority people of color, to implement this new voting concept. All the cities that were given as examples for IRV did not have majority African-American populations. The closest example given was Oakland, CA, which is only 25 percent African American.

We also have concerns about the lack of voter education in this market on IRV. Since the referendum in 2008, no voter education has occurred to prepare voters for this proposed change in voting, which could be confusing due to a lack of education on the voting process. The NAACP Memphis Branch also has concerns about how voters could be further disenfranchised if their votes are thrown out as a part of the IRV process.

Costs and voter drop-off have been given as reasons to support Instant Runoff Voting. Supporters of IRV state that it costs \$250,000 for runoff elections, but will cost at least 4-5 times more to have a basic public education campaign. In terms of voters not coming back out to vote in runoff elections, supporters suggest that IRV will make it easier for voters to select their choices in one election. The Memphis Branch NAACP believes that voters should vote in runoff elections and exercise their one-man-one vote.

IRV is slated to be implemented in the Memphis City Council District races in 2019. The Council is asking the citizens to vote on repealing IRV in Memphis' seven district races. This could be on the ballot in 2018. **The NAACP Memphis Branch supports giving voters a right to vote on this issue again and hopefully repeal this voting concept until we've seen how it works in majority African-American cities and education is provided to voters.**

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