. What's the Controversy Over Instant Run-Off Elections?

This week a controversy was raised over what most Oakland voters thought was a settled issue. **In 2006 the voters of Oakland passed Measure O by 69%.** Alameda County is using the same system as successfully used in San Francisco for four years and is waiting for approval expected by the end of the year. The League of Women Voters and cities of Oakland, Berkeley, and San Leandro have been working on an educational program for the new system for about two years. So we expect to use this system next year? Well maybe not.

This week ***The East Bay Express*** this week exposed political maneuverings that appear to be an attempt to stop the Instant Run-off Voting (IRV) from taking place next year.

Then the **League of Women** with support from the Alameda Central Labor Council, Chinese American Citizens Alliance, Hispanic Chamber, Wellstone Democratic Club, and other speakers held a press conference on City Hall steps (above) to announce that they have sent a letter to Secretary of State Debra Bowen asking her to grant a waiver to Alameda County as soon as possible so it can proceed with IRV elections in November 2010. "The League of Women Voters and other supporters of IRV consider these tactics an attempt to deny the will of the voting public."

Why Do We Care? I support and have an interest in the voting process taking place as approved by the voters, but the issue is more than any one race or candidate.

- The voters approved Measure O overwhelmingly, 69%.
- The extra June Primary would cost the city about $800,000 more.
- Twice as many people vote in the fall elections, making an IRV election more representative and democratic. This could change the outcome of the election.
- The system seems to have made elections less acrimonious because voters have more than one choice.
- Congresswoman Barbara Lee statement on Measure O: *"Instant runoff voting makes good sense in Oakland: it's fair, it saves money for critical public services and it promotes candidate diversity. It will bring Oakland to the forefront of election reform and focus voter attention on these critical local races."*

What Can You Do?
Let the Secretary of State and the City Council know what you think:

- Secretary of State Debra Bowen
- Oakland City Council