City of Madison

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Madison, WI 53703
www.cityofmadison.com

Legislation Text

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Title
Presentation: Pivot - Municipal Budget Amendment Prioritization Tool - Lucas Dailey
Body
Website: https://pivot-libre.github.io/

Brief

Pivot is a web application currently under development that aims to provide legislators with the most fair and democratic way to vote on and prioritize budget items. Once completed, the first legislature to use Pivot will be the Common Council of Madison, Wisconsin.

Impetus

At present, the Madison council debates and votes on budget items serially (in the order presented by the chair) until the budget is depleted - at which point any projects not yet voted on are precluded from the budget without a vote. Madison's budgeting process is similar to that of many other governing bodies, and is problematic because the order in which items are voted on plays a significant role in the final budgets, potentially causing less popular projects presented earlier in the proceedings to be adopted over more popular ones listed nearer the end.

Solution

Mathematicians and philosophers have found solutions for many of the problems posed by common voting systems. In particular, 18th century French Revolutionary philosopher the Marquis de Condorcet's ranked pair voting system offers distinct advantages over standard voting practices on ballots where voters have multiple candidates to choose from, and where there may be more than one winner.

Pivot implements a version of the Condorcet voting method in order to determine an ideal sequence for which to vote on budget items, based on the popular priorities of voters. Members of a legislative body cast ballots listing budget items in their preferred order of priority.