

## Statement in opposition to SB 791

Chair Wagner, Vice-Chair Girod, and members of the Committee;

I write in opposition to SB 791. Not because our municipalities and state aren't in desperate need of voting method reform, but because ranked choice voting is a flawed solution. Moreover, it appears that SB 791 doesn't even change the voting method in the elections people want it to most: partisan generals.

If SB 791 were to pass, nonpartisan elections and partisan *primaries* would use ranked choice voting, but partisan general elections would not. That is to say, elections for the following offices: President and Vice President of the United States; United States Senator or Representative in Congress; Governor, Secretary of State, State Treasurer or Attorney General; and State Senator or Representative. How on earth can a good faith proposal to improve our voting method EXCLUDE all of those offices?!

More importantly, though, Ranked Choice Voting is not nearly a good enough upgrade to our current voting method. Here are some of its flaws:

- **Ranked Choice Voting does not solve the Spoiler Effect**—studies show it can result in spoilers in 15% of elections or more<sup>1</sup>, and it doesn't work in elections with more than two competitive candidates.
- **Ranked Choice Voting is not transparent.** It does not display an accurate representation of the electorate's support—exit polls look the same as our current system. The algorithm for tallying votes is complex, can't be done precinct-by-precinct, and produces confusing charts of results.
- **Ranked Choice Voting disenfranchises voters**—on average over 10% of ballots are NOT counted in the last round<sup>2</sup>. That means that 10% of people who voted don't have their voices heard. And that doesn't even take into consideration the number of ballots that are spoiled due to voter error. Ranked Choice Voting does not decrease the percentage of spoiled ballots from our current method, and studies show that the distribution of spoiled ballots disproportionately affects historically-marginalized communities<sup>3</sup>. More opportunities for voter error mean more opportunities for unscrupulous election monitors to challenge the votes of people of color.
- **Ranked Choice Voting is only marginally better than our current system**<sup>5</sup>. There are MUCH better options—like STAR or Approval Voting—that have been developed and are being used across the country and here in Oregon.

Oregon has a national reputation as a leader in electoral reform—please let Oregon lead on voting method reform as well. Do the research. Do not adopt a method like Ranked Choice Voting that doesn't deliver on its promises.

Mont Chris Hubbard (Portland, OR)

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<sup>1</sup> Ornstein, Joseph, and Norman, Robert Z. "Frequency of monotonicity failure under Instant Runoff Voting: Estimates based on a spatial model of elections". <https://tinyurl.com/OrnsteinNorman>

<sup>2</sup> Crepeau, Adam, and Sigaud, Liam, "A False Majority: the Failed Experiment of Ranked-Choice Voting", <https://mainepolicy.org/project/false-majority/>

<sup>3</sup> Neely, Francis, and McDaniel, Jason. "Overvoting and the Equality of Voice under Instant-Runoff Voting in San Francisco". <https://tinyurl.com/NeelyMcDanielOvervotingIRV>

<sup>4</sup> NBC News. "In key battlegrounds, voters of color see ballots marked for rejection at higher rates". <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2020-election/key-battlegrounds-voters-color-see-ballots-marked-rejection-higher-rates-n1245583>

<sup>5</sup> Equal Vote Coalition, "The Election Science Behind the Reform Movement", <https://www.equal.vote/science>