

Chair Senator Wagner, Vice-chair Senator Girod and members of the committee:

I am pleased to provide testimony in support of SB 791!

Ranked Choice voting leads to a more representative democracy and election system than what is currently in place. Further, it has been shown to be effective in other places across the United States. There are cases to draw data and inspiration from – an important aspect to any election reform. I'm aware of other reform efforts that are being pushed, but none have any real-world data to back up it's efficacy. If we can agree that election reform is needed, then I urge us to implement that which has already been shown to work in other electorates: Ranked Choice Voting.

The RCV system allows for more choices, promotes more diverse and representative candidates, and – most importantly – inspires these candidates to compete for the votes of ALL constituents. No community can be ignored in an RCV election. This is a needed break from the current system, where large portions of the population can simply be ignored by a candidate.

My hope is to see a more civil political discourse take hold in our state and our nation. Ranked Choice voting will facilitate more issue-focused campaigns instead of the negativity which we've become so accustomed. When candidates are competing to be a second or third choice in an RCV system, there is less incentive to attack opponents. Additionally, as a taxpayer, I would very much appreciate the cost savings in eliminating primary through RCV – a more streamlined process of instant runoffs.

The aforementioned will result in greater voter participation, more civil discourse and a more representative Democracy. A winning candidate through RCV will have majority support of voters and more fully represent the views of their respective constituents.

Thank you for your dedication and hard work, and I look forward to hearing how the proceedings go.

Respectfully,

David Lowe

Portland, OR