



March 16, 2021

To: Senate Committee on Rules

From: Evelyn Guzman, Oregon Field Organizer, Forward Together Action

Re: Support of SB 791, Ranked Choice Voting

Dear Chair Wagner, Vice-Chair Girod and Members of the Senate Committee,

My name is Evelyn Guzman and I am an Oregon Field Organizer with Forward Together Action, a multi-issue organization working with Black, Indigenous, Women of Color and Non-Binary people to push for the systems change we need for all families to thrive. That's why I am testifying today on behalf of our organization's full support of SB 791, Ranked Choice Voting.

When we talk about representation and about making Oregon more accessible around elections, we must look into the ways in which our community is often left out of the conversation because they do not have access to these systems due to the language they speak or a history of exclusion. It's time for us to really think about participation in elections as not just how people submit their votes, but also what it means to truly have more voter choice. Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is a simple upgrade to how we vote that provides voters with more choices and includes more voices.

As a voter, I can speak from my own experience in having to decide who to vote for, this past year I found myself wanting to vote for someone who I truly felt represented by and felt compelled to vote for however, because this campaign was run on a grassroots level and did not have the funds to run a more intense race, I found myself having to choose the other candidate because I wanted my vote to "matter". I was forced to vote strategically instead of who I felt truly represented me and who aligned with my values.

I urge you to vote yes on SB 791 because Democracy should represent all the people it serves, and not just those that have less barriers to running.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Guzman,

On behalf of Forward Together Action