

Isabela Villarreal
333 SE 2nd Ave.
Portland, OR 97214
RE: Support SB 791



March 16, 2021

Chair Wagner, Vice Chair Girod, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Isabela Villarreal and I am the Policy and Communications Manager at Next Up Action Fund, formerly known as the Bus Project. Our mission is to build political power with diverse young people to achieve a more just and equitable Oregon. We have diligently worked to shape our elections system for nearly two decades, with a highlight reel of victories that includes paid postage for ballots, pre-registration for 16 and 17-year-olds, the nation's first-ever automatic voter registration law, online voter registration, and more. Our work has contributed toward Oregon being the #1 easiest state to vote in, with 90.2% of eligible Oregonians registered. We're constantly thinking about how we can improve our election systems and dismantle structural barriers so that those who are left out and left behind by our democracy can have their voices heard.

As an organization that builds political power and strong, effective leadership pipelines for young people, our work and our communities are greatly impacted by an accessible and representative democracy. As such, we're here in strong support of SB 791.

Ranked Choice Voting is a simple, yet comprehensive and effective solution to creating more equitable outcomes for communities across the state, and it is the way that we can push our democracy forward. Notably, it reduces barriers for voters eliminating the spoiler effect and forces us to choose who "can win" and guarantees that winning candidates have always received more than half the vote.

RCV is the consensus reform nationally, supported by grassroots organizations and experts. It has been adopted by over 10 million voters in the U.S. It has been implemented smoothly across the country from states like Maine and Alaska, from cities like New York and San Francisco to small towns like Payson Vineyard, Utah.

Democracy should represent all the people it serves. While Oregon is a leader in the mechanics of voting, we can continue our tradition of being the national leader on democracy by upgrading our elections themselves. Let Oregon remain a leader in elections by implementing a proven and tried method, Ranked Choice Voting. Please send SB 791 to the floor with a do-pass recommendation.

Thank you,

Isabela Villarreal
Policy and Communications Manager