

RE: Support HB 2004, Statewide Ranked Choice Voting,  
Senate Committee on Rules

**June 18<sup>th</sup> 2023**

Chair Lieber, Vice Chair Knopp, and members of the Senate Committee on Rules,

My name is **Mary Harju** and I live in **Portland**. I am writing to testify in strong support for HB 2004, a referral to the 2024 ballot that would establish ranked choice voting for statewide and federal elections.

In our current elections, fear of “vote splitting” is affecting both voters and candidates: Candidates are often deterred from entering a race for fear of splitting voter support and voters are often forced to choose a candidate with a better chance of winning, instead of the candidate they actually prefer. As a result, many Oregonians –especially people of color, working-class people, rural residents, and young people – are less incentivized to participate in our elections. With over 70% of Oregon voters “extremely” or “very” discouraged by politics, we need a solution that will empower voters by giving them a real say in our elections.

**As a third-party voter, I often feel sidelined during elections. For many years I didn't vote at all because the two major parties, which are funded by the wealthiest 1%, do not reflect my beliefs. I believe that making the change to ranked choice voting will expand democracy and bring many more voices into this conversation. It also has the potential to end the intense polarization in our election process, and put the power back into the hands of voters.**

I am not alone in my support of this bill. This legislation is supported by a coalition of over 35 organizations, including culturally-specific organizations, labor unions, environmental groups, housing advocates, rural communities, youth-empowering organizations, and good government groups.

Ranked choice voting is Oregon's next step as a leader in election reform. Please support HB 2004, which will refer this critical piece of legislation to voters for the 2024 ballot, and pass it out of committee.

Thank you,

**Mary Harju**  
**(she/her)**