



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Testimony in Support for HB 2004**

June 20, 2023

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

My name is Khanh Pham, State Representative for HD 46, representing outer Southeast Portland. I am honored to testify in support of HB 2004, a referral to the 2024 ballot that would establish ranked choice voting for statewide and federal elections if approved by voters and provide an option for local jurisdictions to make the switch, like what the City of Portland and Multnomah County did to join Benton County and Corvallis.

I believe our democracy is under incredible, unsustainable stress right now. I fear a fundamental question going forward is not whether voters choose to vote Democrat or Republican, but whether they even vote at all, and whether their voice even matters in this democratic process when the choices don't reflect their desires.

Ranked choice voting can be a simple improvement to our elections that will help ensure more reflective representation for all Oregonians. In this system, voters can better choose their honest favorite. The current pick-one system incentivizes many voters to cast their ballots strategically, picking a candidate they see as *electable* rather than the candidate they like the most—somebody they think can win, not somebody they think should win. Our elected leaders benefit more knowing what our constituents are thinking, whether or not they voted for us.

When communities can better coalesce around their preferred candidates under ranked choice voting, those candidates can worry less vote-splitting or about vague, sometimes problematic notions of “electability. That likely means greater opportunities for more diversity in all its forms – ideology, age, gender, geography, people of color, candidates of different income levels, renters, and minor party candidates to run and earn votes with lower likelihood of spoiling the election to a less-preferred winner.

With ranked choice voting, Oregonians will be more incentivized to vote their conscience from a larger pool of choices. Oregon has been a leader in election reform. I see ranked choice voting as Oregon's next step to make our elections more accessible across the state.

HB 2004 helps ensure that voters have more voice and more power to vote their values, and that our county clerks and election officials have the tools they need to be successful. HB 2004 will create standardized implementation and voter education resources so that all Oregonians have access to multilingual, multimodal, and multicultural education. It's essential that no Oregonian gets left behind in this change, and HB 2004 will help ensure that no Oregonian does. I urge you to join me in support of HB 2004, which will refer this critical piece of legislation to voters for the 2024 ballot. Thank you for your time.

Rep Khanh Pham