

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

6-20-23

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

My name is Julie Westerman and I live in Hillsboro. 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.

In a time when our very democracy is at grave risk of disappearing, we need to do all that we can to empower voters and show them that their voices DO matter. I work with today's youth, discussing government, civic duty, and the importance of involvement in local and national politics. Please show us, your supporters, that we DO have a working democracy in this state, and leadership that is willing to share control/power with our citizenry.

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,

**Julie Westerman**  
**She/her**

