



Isabela Villarreal

RE: Support Ranked Choice Voting, HB 2004

June 20, 2023

Chair Lieber, Vice Chair Knopp, and members of the committee,

My name is Isabela Villarreal and I am the Policy and Communications Director at Next Up Action Fund. We aim to build political power with diverse young people to achieve a more just and equitable Oregon. As an organization that builds political power, our work and our communities are greatly impacted by our electoral systems. This is why we're in strong support of implementing Ranked Choice Voting, HB 2004.

We deeply care about the youth vote, and know it's of the utmost importance to increase the political and civic participation of young people in Oregon. Young people are critical constituencies that experience a chronic lack of political representation and power in our electoral and legislative systems. We work to change this by directly reaching out to tens of thousands of 18- 29-year-olds every single election cycle. Yet, we see and hear the disenchantment with our current political systems and how our electoral systems are set up. We've had countless conversations with young voters about how they feel pressured to vote for the "lesser of two evils," and not for a candidate they agree with most or who they think would do the best job. This barrier, amongst many others, is the reason we must move towards implementing ranked choice voting.

Ranked choice voting is a simple improvement that will lead to more reflective elected bodies, and will ensure that voters have more power to choose candidates that are values aligned. By allowing voters to rank candidates, their vote becomes more meaningful, has a greater impact, and, ultimately, leads to an outcome they are more satisfied with. In exit polls across multiple jurisdictions that use ranked choice voting, on average, 73% of voters prefer it to our current system.¹

Additionally, ranked choice voting expands the pool of candidates that run for office and encourages more first time candidates and candidates from diverse community groups to run, and jurisdictions across the country that have implemented ranked choice voting have seen increased wins for women, people of color, young people, and many others.²

Democracy only works when it's built for everyone. Our current system is failing us in many ways. With ranked choice voting we can move closer to a world that truly represents and serves our communities' needs, aspirations, and wildest dreams.

Thank you,

Isabela Villarreal

Policy and Communications Director

¹ FairVote, [Exit Surveys: Voters Evaluate Ranked Choice Voting After First Use](#)

² FairVote, [Data and Research on RCV](#)