

Please Support HB 2004

As professionals in the field of public and government affairs, we have been part of several political campaigns for office and have been witnesses to many more. What we have observed over the years is our state moving further and further away from the “Oregon Way” of bi-partisan compromise and problem solving that is in the best interests of our communities, due in part to how our current electoral system is designed.

We believe one reason for this is the increased polarization of our political systems. Increasingly, those who are elected come from gerrymandered districts that lean heavily to one side of the political spectrum or another in the case of legislative offices. In the case of local officials, it is often that a single person may dominate a race with the power of incumbency and name recognition. When others who seek the same office get in the race, the votes are often split, providing an easier path to victory for the more well-known candidate or the incumbent, even when that individual is not popular or the choice of the majority.

Both of these examples occur far too often, and the result is a community of voters who often decide not to get involved either at the ballot box or running for office. The choice of who to vote for seems baked in and predetermined. We are left with less community involvement and an ever increasing polarization of our elected officials.

We believe that we need to encourage *more* participation in our process, not less.

HB 2004 would be part of the solution by giving voters more of a voice through more options by avoiding “vote splitting.” Voters will not have to fear supporting the election of one individual by supporting another.

Rank Choice Voting allows the voters preferences to be fully realized and forces candidates to earn votes on their own merit, through their policy ideas and competing with one another rather than banking on a system in which a crowded field may support the election of one person.

We further believe that this process will encourage more overall participation in our democratic process by more segments of our communities, which is something that everyone who truly cares about democratic system can support, the more voices involved the more voices are heard.

Thank you for considering our thoughts on this matter.

Respectfully,

Greg Lemhouse & Carrie Reed

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