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On Behalf Of:
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Measure: HB2004

I am a strong proponent of voting reform. Our current voting system, plurality, does a poor job of electing individuals who truly represent our populace. It promotes hyper-partisanship and splits the vote. When it comes to critiques of plurality voting, I share all concerns laid out by proponents of RCV.

However, RCV is not the answer. It also splits the vote. Additionally, it has a strange glitch in its algorithm that triggers approximately in 1 out of 3 contested elections amongst three or more candidates (illustrated below). I find it unfortunate this glitch is a bit difficult to understand: you have to nerd out a bit to wrap your head around it. But, frankly, the glitch will happen, and effect us, whether we understand it or not. Proponents of RCV say this is only theoretical, but it happens, frequently, such as in the very first and second elections in Vermont, Louisiana, and elsewhere across the globe.

Plurality and RCV are both widely used systems, and are both proven to split the vote in real elections. They are the two worst systems.

Updating our electoral system is costly and difficult. Here in Oregon, we mustn't swish from one voting system to another. This is not a situation where an "incremental" improvement makes any sense. It would be like spending a lot of money to update the plumbing of a building from 1920 plumbing to 1930 plumbing, when you can just put in 2023 plumbing.

I'm not sure RCV is worse than plurality, but in effect, it might be. This is because even though plurality is not a good system, we are used to it, and most voters do "primaries" in their own heads, to help avoid the spoiler effect. With RCV, it's so hard to game or predict, you can't really do that, but the system can still glitch and spit out random results. RCV looks good on paper, but in real life it will generate strange, random results - and we Oregonians will pay the price for it.

I would fully support a transition to any working, non-vote-splitting voting system, such as approval voting, range voting, or STAR.

*Explaining the RCV glitch:

Let's say candidate C is loved by every voter. They are the voter's first or second choice. A and B are polarizing. Observe this RCV election below. Letters listed are the voter's first and then second choices.

Voter 1: AC
Voter 2: AC
Voter 3: AC
Voter 4: AC
Voter 5: BC
Voter 6: BC
Voter 7: BC
Voter 8: CB
Voter 9: CB

In the above example, even though candidate C is everyone's first or second choice, their votes are thrown out by RCV's glitchy algorithm, as they did not have enough first-choice votes. The C voters flip to B, and B wins.

Voter 1: AC -> A
Voter 2: AC -> A
Voter 3: AC -> A
Voter 4: AC -> A
Voter 5: BC -> B
Voter 6: BC -> B
Voter 7: BC -> B
Voter 8: CB -> B
Voter 9: CB -> B

Worse for those poor A voters, if two of them just stayed home, their votes would have flipped to C, and their worst choice, B, wouldn't have won.

Voter 1: AC -> C
Voter 2: AC -> C
Voter 5: BC -> B
Voter 6: BC -> B
Voter 7: BC -> B
Voter 8: CB -> C
Voter 9: CB -> C

This doesn't make any sense. We shouldn't have a system where your vote can actually hurt your first or second choice, and in RCV, your vote CAN hurt your second choice.

Others have explained this better than I have. More information and citations can be found here: <https://electionscience.org/voting-methods/runoff-election-the-limits-of-ranked-choice-voting/>