

**SUPPORT: HB 2004—Ranked Choice Voting**

House Rules Committee

Hearing Date: March 16, 2023

Testimony of Blair Bobier

I wholeheartedly support HB 2004 and respectfully request that this Committee send this bill to the House with a “do pass” recommendation.

I have been a member of the Oregon State Bar for 34 years, I am the author of the successful ballot measure that created Ranked Choice elections in Benton County, and I have been working to integrate Ranked Choice Voting in elections in Oregon and elsewhere in the United States for several decades. I am also the Board president of Oregon Ranked Choice Voting Advocates, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization.

I have been committed to creating Ranked Choice Voting elections, and have donated thousands of hours of my time, because I believe in the promise of democracy, the sanctity of elections, and I understand how our elections can be improved to make our democracy even better and more reflective of our increasingly diverse communities.

Ranked Choice Voting is simply a better way to vote. It’s not rocket science though it was developed at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. With Ranked Choice Voting, as the name implies, voters get to rank candidates in order of preference. Nothing could be more American than giving people more choices. That’s what Ranked Choice Voting does.

It is incredibly easy to use. Voters just pick their first, second and third choices, and so on. One of my sons used this method of voting in his kindergarten class, many years ago. Adults have also proven that they can navigate picking several choices in order of preference. In Benton County, we adopted Ranked Choice Voting in 2016 and starting using it in 2020 to elect our County Commissioners. Corvallis now uses it to elect their mayor and city councilors. And, as I’m sure you are aware, voters in Portland and Multnomah County recently overwhelmingly

approved charter amendments to use Ranked Choice Voting for local elections starting in 2024 and 2026, respectively.

Ranked Choice Voting is woven into the fabric of American life. It is used by Roberts Rules of Order, it has been enshrined in the Oregon Constitution since 1908, and it is used to determine which film wins the Oscar for Best Picture.

Ranked Choice Voting is used around the world, from Ireland to Australia, and across the country from Maine to Alaska. In many places, Ranked Choice Voting has created an atmosphere that is more conducive for civil, issue-oriented campaigns and has encouraged more women and people of color to seek—and win—public office. Put simply, Ranked Choice Voting will improve Oregon’s elections. And, when it comes to elections, Oregonians don’t settle for second best.