

March 14, 2023

To: Chair Representative Julie Fahey, House Committee on Rules:

Re: **HB 3509** – Establishes ranked choice voting as voting method for selecting winner of nomination for and election to nonpartisan state offices and county and city offices except where home rule charter applies. – **Support**

I would like to voice my support for this bill establishing ranked choice voting in place of the heavily flawed first-past-the-post method of today. RCV is far superior to FPP, most significantly by avoiding the real concern of “vote splitting” in which voters feel they might waste their vote if they choose their favorite (potential “spoiler”) candidate. Far too often a candidate’s perceived/subjective “electability” ends up drowning out the candidates stances of pertinent issues. And the cut-throat nature of FPP often promotes negative campaigning. RCV has been shown to curtail these issues, leading to more optimal outcomes.

Although RCV does poses the above key advantage over the current system it is still important to note that it still isn’t perfect. Some areas RCV (and FPP) fall short include:

- Vulnerable to gerrymandering
- Trend towards a 2-party system
- Does not promise proportional representation
- Does not promise a “Condorcet Winner”¹

For an arguably even more superior voting system I would urge you not to close the door on other voting methods like Score-Then-Automatic-Runoff (STAR), a system which basically build on top of RCV in order to arrive at even more optimal result. The benefits of STAR widely enjoyed/leveraged by several organizations:

- Democratic Party of Oregon - presidential delegates
- Multnomah County Democrats - internal elections
- Independent Party of Oregon - 2020 primary
- Movement for a People’s Party (New Jersey and New York)
- Portland Neighbors Welcome
- Libertarian Party of Oregon (not yet ratified)
- Other nonprofits and organizations

Finally echoing the advice of the League of Women Voters of Oregon (in their testimony on **HB 2004**), I too would urge you to emend either bill to also include school board & Oregon legislature elections, possibly consider merging this bill with **HB 2004**. The exclusion of Oregon legislature elections in my mind can only be explained by the foreseeable consequence of leaving foxes to guard the henhouse, which may require the Oregon public to begrudgingly correct via ballot initiative should this legislature fail to act on it’s own.

Thank you

Brian Jensvold
Multnomah Democrats PCP
and HD 46 ADL

¹ The candidate who wins a majority of the vote in every head-to-head election against each of the other candidates (example: Kotek vs Drazen, Kotek vs Johnson, and Drazen vs Johnson)– that is, a candidate preferred by more voters than any others – is the Condorcet winner