

Submitter: Eric Bronner
On Behalf Of: Veterans for Political Innovation
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB2004

Oregon House Committee on Rules Members,

I'm writing as a Navy veteran and the founder of Veterans for Political Innovation to register our strong support for HB 2004. Veterans for Political Innovation is a national, cross-partisan community mobilizing military veterans as advocates for election innovations that unlock competition, make our politics less toxic and our government more effective. We have over 200 active state leaders in 40 states, including Oregon. Veterans for Political Innovation strongly supports nonpartisan election reforms, such as ranked choice voting, in cities and states across the country.

There are many reasons to support ranked choice voting (RCV) -- a simple, nonpartisan reform that results in a more representative democracy. In every city, county or state where RCV has been recently adopted (Maine, Utah, New York City and Alaska), voters have found it simple to use, voter turnout has increased (over 30% in New York City's first use, e.g.) and a more diverse group of candidates has been elected (again, over 30% increase in BIPOC / women representation in NYC). Voters respond positively to RCV because it gives them more power to express their true preferences without being forced to vote strategically. RCV effectively counteracts vote-splitting. And, by requiring election winners to have a majority of the final round votes, RCV gives elected officials a much stronger mandate to lead and align themselves with the policies that are most important to a majority of their constituents.

RCV makes campaign season less toxic by rewarding common sense problem-solvers who run more positive, collaborative campaigns. With RCV, even losing candidates have an impact on the platform and policies championed by the winning candidate. Because, in order to win an RCV election, oftentimes, a candidate must also be the second (or third) choice of most voters.

Countries such as Ireland and Australia have used a form of RCV for over 100 years, and New Zealand has used it for about 30 years. All three of these countries are ranked in the top-10 strongest democracies in the world (by the 2022 Economic Intelligence Unit Report). These countries are not suffering from a political polarization crisis thanks, in large part, to the use of RCV.

In sum, RCV is a powerful, nonpartisan election reform that gives voters more power through more choice, and rewards a far more diverse group of candidates who have

the broadest possible level of support. Like most Americans, the members of Veterans for Political Innovation want to see less political theatre and more problem-solving. RCV is a powerful tool to help make this a reality.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric H. Bronner

Founder | COO

www.VeteransforPoliticalInnovation.org