

RE: Support Statewide Ranked Choice Voting, HB 2004

House Committee on Rules

March 15, 2023

Chair Fahey, Vice Chair Breese-Iverson, Vice Chair Kropf, and members of the House Committee on Rules,

My name is Joe Van Winkle and I live in Tualatin. I am writing to testify on my lackluster support for HB 2004, which would establish ranked choice voting statewide.

While I am generally in favor of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) over our current system of voting, however, I am much more in favor of Score Then Automatic Runoff (STAR) voting.

Ranked Choice Voting (also known as Instant Runoff Voting), by its very design, gives some voters more than one bite at voting while giving others just one. In RCV, second choice votes only *ever* count for those voters who happen to see their first choice eliminated *before* their second choice. Whether you pick a strong consensus candidate or a weak extremist second, if your first choice hangs around in the count longer, your second choice is never considered by IRV. The 2009 Mayoral IRV election in Burlington, Vermont (<https://www.equal.vote/Burlington>) is a real-world example of how IRV's failure to provide an equal vote can result in an obviously non-representative outcome and subsequent repeal of the system.

There are other issues with it as well, but I can't really do it justice as much as this graphic obtained from www.equal.vote/star_vs_rcv

Wasted Votes? - Comparing RCV and STAR

	Ranked Choice Voting aka Instant Runoff Voting	STAR Voting aka Score Then Automatic Runoff
Spoiled Ballots?: Ballots voided due to voter error.	Common. Worse for lower-income, BIPOC, older, and English-as-a-second-language voters.	Rare. Equal and skipped ratings are allowed.
Lazy Voting / Bullet Voting?: Inexpressive voting.	Most voters rank multiple candidates. Strong incentives to show preference order.	Most voters score multiple candidates. Strong incentives to show preference order.
Ballot Limitations?: Can voters rank or rate as many as they like?	Usually limited to 4, 5, or 10. Limiting rankings is necessary to help prevent ballot exhaustion.	Voters can rate all candidates at any level.
Exhausted Ballots?: Ballots which are not counted in the deciding round.	10.9%* of ballots exhausted on average. Voter's next choice is often not counted even if their favorite is eliminated.	All ballots are counted in the deciding round. Equal scores are counted as votes of "no-preference."
False Majority?: Winner did not have majority support.	Winners have a majority of remaining ballots only. 61%* of competitive elections fail to find a true majority.	Winner preferred on a majority of all ballots which had a preference between finalists.

EQUAL.VOTE

* Statistics from the Maine Heritage Policy Center analysis of 94 competitive US RCV elections. Findings corroborated by other studies.

Key: Worst to Best



In addition, the more candidates' that are on the RCV ballot, the longer it takes to tabulate the results. With STAR voting, the tabulation is always 2 rounds using simple addition.

Lastly, with RCV ballots, they must be centrally counted. The state will also have to get all of the ballots from all of the counties before counting statewide races. This is why it takes Maine and Alaska take so long to determine their statewide races and they have a smaller population than ours! With STAR voting it can be tabulated and audited locally, just like it is now.

Overall, I am in support of Ranked Choice Voting but it is my second choice. It is a better system than we have now – that would be my third choice. However, my first choice is STAR voting. STAR voting is the stronger of the 3 and will serve Oregon and her residents much better than the other 2.

Thank you,

Joe Van Winkle