

Submitter: Hameed Evenson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB2004

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

I am writing to testify as a private citizen in strong support for HB 2004, which will establish ranked choice voting statewide and help ensure all Oregonians are represented.

In our current elections, candidates in crowded races are consistently winning with less than a majority. Over half of statewide and federal races with more than two candidates won with narrow support in Oregon's 2020 and 2022 primaries, leaving voters feeling like their vote didn't count and unable to fully express their preferences. Fear of splitting the vote creates barriers for candidates to run and leads to voter cynicism. It's clear that our elections aren't serving voters or candidates as best as they could. Ranked choice voting is a simple improvement to our elections that will lead to more reflective elected bodies for Oregonians from every community.

The United States is a country built on the idea of democracy and freedom to choose your representative, so how is it possible that we only have ever have two viable options during each election? This breeds tribalism and extremism. Research by political scientists has shown that ranked-choice voting is a potential way to tackle those issues. People just want to be heard, and many nowadays feel like they aren't, hence the low voter turnout rates we experience in comparison to the world's developed democracies.

I am not alone in my support of this bill. This legislation is supported by a coalition of over 35 organizations, including culturally-specific organizations, labor unions, environmental groups, housing advocates, rural communities, youth-empowering organizations, and good government groups.

Ranked choice voting is a proven solution and Oregon's next step as a leader in election reform. Please support HB 2004 and pass it out of committee.

Thank you for your time and consideration.