



**E. WERNER RESCHKE**  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
DISTRICT 55

March 17, 2023

To: Chair Fahey, Vice Chairs Breese-Iverson and Kropf and Members of the House Committee on Rules.

Re: Opposition to HB 2004 - Ranked Choice Voting

I urge a No vote on HB 2004 for the following three reasons:

**Simplicity.** If you ask someone today who wins in an election, an overwhelming majority of Oregonians will tell you it is, “the person with the most votes”. If we move to a ranked choice system the answer will be, “it depends.” Ranked Choice voting introduces complexity into the process of determining a winner. After the 2016 and 2020 presidential election, one of the last things our election system needs is more skepticism by Oregonians. I ask how many more voters will incorrectly fill out their ballot? How many voters will know voting for their second choice or third choice could accidentally knock out their first choice — their real choice — from the winner’s circle?

Moreover, the principle of simplicity also needs part of the voting process itself. Today, too many Oregonians are intimidated by the length of their ballot and do not understand the meaning of all the races and ballot measures. Why would we want to make the ballot even longer and more complicated with more choices? Ranked Choice voting could very well discourage voting because ballots could end up being multiple pages long.

**Timing.** Elections were meant to be held on one day and a winner proclaimed on that same day or soon thereafter. The legislature has extended voting three weeks before and receiving ballots one week after the election deadline. This has already added stress, cost and inefficiency to each county clerk’s office. We need to have a system that can declare winners in most of our races within hours of an election, not several days or possibly weeks later. For the most part, our current system still delivers that promise. Ranked Choice voting’s complexity can and will only delay election results on more races and therefore bring further confusion and doubt to the integrity of our system.

**Cost.** I ask whether county clerk’s are equipped to handle such a new system — a system to automatically tabulate Ranked Choice voting? Will they all need new equipment need to be purchased? Will the state dedicate tax payer funding to this new requirement or will counties be forced to go to tax payers asking them directly for more money to support a brand new system — a new system only a few Oregonians know about or favor?

By adding complexity to elections, it will also mean adding more staff, which means larger budgets. Will county clerks be forced to hand tabulate questionable ballots, where they aren't determining whether a blackened-circle was marked next to a candidates name but whether the voter wrote 1 vs. 7, 2 vs. 5 or maybe 3 vs. 8?

Overall, I believe Ranked Choice voting treats Oregonians like children who can't decide who they want to win for a particular race. I much rather regard my fellow citizens, 18 and older, as adults. Our most important laws certainly do, and so ought our election process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Werner Reschke', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

**E. WERNER RESCHKE**  
State Representative, HD 55  
*The Crater Lake District*