

Submitter: Troy Prouty
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB2004

RE: Support Statewide Ranked Choice Voting, HB 2004
House Committee on Rules
03/18/2023

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

My name is Troy Prouty and I live in McMinnville. I am writing to testify in strong support for HB 2004, which will establish ranked choice voting statewide and help ensure all Oregonians are represented in our democracy.

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.

Run-Off Voting does the following:

Promotes majority support - The voting continues until one candidate has the majority of votes, so the final winner has support of the majority of voters.

Discourages negative campaigning - Candidates who use negative campaigning may lose the second choice vote of those whose first choice was treated poorly.

Provides more choice for voters - Voters can vote for the candidate they truly feel is best, without concern about the spoiler effect.

Minimizes strategic voting - Instead of feeling compelled to vote for "the lesser of two evils," as in plurality voting, voters can honestly vote for who they believe is the best candidate.

Saves money compared to running primary elections (to narrow the field before the general election) or run-off elections (to choose a final winner after a general election, if no candidate has a majority, and if the law requires a majority for that office). With IRV, the result can be obtained with one ballot.

Provides an outcome more reflective of the majority of voters than either primaries (get extreme candidates “playing to their base”) or run-off elections (far lower turnout for run-off elections, typically).

I personally believe Oregon needs this. I have watched the black and white of the two party system, often controlled by special interest at the expense of the people. Join me in support for this please.

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.

Sincerely,

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