

April 5, 2023

To: Members of the Oregon House Rules Committee

From: Daniel Stid, Executive Director, [Lyceum Labs](#)

Re: Benefits of Full Fusion Voting

I submit this testimony to support your deliberations in the House Committee on Rules Hearing on House Bill 3593 scheduled for 1 pm on April 6, 2023. I do so in my capacity as Executive Director of Lyceum Labs, a new nonprofit project that is fiscally sponsored by the Defending Democracy Together Institute, a 501(c)3 organization based in Washington, DC.

The mission of Lyceum Labs is to improve political leadership and political parties in the United States. While we work on a nonpartisan basis with partners across the ideological spectrum who share our goals, we bring a center-right perspective to bear in our work. We regard full (or disaggregated) fusion voting as a noteworthy enabler of the kind of pluralistic (as opposed to polarized) leadership and parties that democracy in America needs to flourish in the 21st Century.

Fusion voting helps support more pluralistic democracy in two ways. First, by allowing new and / or smaller parties to develop their own agendas and support major party candidates when warranted, it gives voters the opportunity to cast ballots that better reflect their beliefs and preferences. Second, fusion voting also elevates the importance of coalition building and negotiations within and between parties of all sizes as they seek to represent the diverse range of beliefs and preferences in the electorate more effectively.

However, to realize these dual benefits fully, it is essential that each party be able to put forward the candidate it has nominated for a given office on its own ballot line. This is the only way for voters to send a clear and indeed unmistakable signal about which party's agenda best reflects their preferences. And, in turn, it is the only way for parties to measure and demonstrate their level of support—or the lack thereof—in the electorate. This information is critical for all parties as they engage in subsequent rounds of intra- and inter-party negotiations to refine their agendas and to consider and nominate different candidates. Full fusion voting thus gives voters more distinct choices, all the while recognizing and encouraging the key role that political parties play as the building blocks of democracy when it comes to developing and offering these choices.

Oregon has already taken an important step in allowing aggregated fusion voting, in which multiple parties are listed on the same ballot line alongside the candidate they have nominated for a given office. Taking the incremental step of enabling full fusion voting, and giving each party their own line on the ballot to put forward the candidate they have nominated, would serve to strengthen the signaling power of voters. It would also support a healthier and more pluralistic party system—one in which the center could hold against polarizing extremes—that would work better for all Oregonians.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to provide further information as needed.