



To: Members of the House Rules Committee  
From: Oregon Working Families Party  
Re: Support for Fusion Voting; HB 3593

Fusion voting is used in general elections, and permits parties to nominate the candidate who best reflects their values, regardless of whether that candidate is nominated by another party as well.

The fusion balloting bill (HB 3593) would make a modest but important change to the current OR statutes (ORS 254.135 and 254.145) that permit “dual labeling” if a candidate wins the nomination of two or more parties. Currently, the law permits a candidate to list up to three party nominations on the ballot but voters do not have the opportunity to indicate which party they support. This bill proposes to modify the current system by giving each party its own separate and distinct ballot label.

Specifically, HB 3593 would (1) change the format of the general election ballot so that each nomination a candidate receives is listed separately; and (2) require the tallying of votes cast by party before adding the party totals together to determine the outcome.

With fusion, parties have their own identities and ballot lines, and they can nominate whomever they want for office. But because they can cross-nominate the candidates of other parties, fusion allows minor parties to play a constructive role in the process, since the votes they get are tallied together for the candidates they endorse. There are no wasted votes and no spoilers.

With fusion, voters get important information from the ballot about the candidates they are being asked to choose from, and they in turn can send a valuable signal to their representatives depending on which ballot line they pick. “Vote for the candidate of your choice under the party label closest to your values” is a positive statement, and a welcome antidote to the negative partisanship that has surfaced in recent years. Fusion produces coalitions and incentivizes compromise between parties, and in doing so makes government more able to solve public problems.

The Working Families Party urges support for HB 3593, for fusion balloting in partisan general elections, which we believe would significantly strengthen our democracy.