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Submitted to: Oregon House Committee on Rules Date: March 20, 2025]

Re: Testimony in Opposition to HB 3166 – Ranked Choice Voting

Dear Chair and Members of the Oregon House Committee on Rules,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding House Bill 3166, which proposes the adoption of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in Oregon elections.

As a concerned citizen, I respectfully urge you to oppose this bill.

In my opinion—just my personal view—the voting process should remain straightforward, cost-effective, and accessible to all Oregonians. I believe HB 3166, by introducing RCV, risks making voting more costly and confusing, and I'd like to outline several practical drawbacks that support my opposition.

- First, RCV is undeniably more complex than our current "pick one" system. Voters would need to rank candidates in order of preference, which requires a clear understanding of the process. For some, especially less engaged or first-time voters, this could feel intimidating or confusing, potentially leading to mistakes on ballots or even discouraging participation. A voting system should empower voters, not overwhelm them.
- Second, the cost and logistics of switching to RCV are significant. Updating voting machines, redesigning ballots, and training election officials would demand substantial funding and time—resources that many Oregon jurisdictions, already stretched thin, may not have. Educating the public on how to use RCV would add another layer of expense. I worry that these costs could divert money from other critical priorities, all for a system that's not guaranteed to improve our elections.
- Third, RCV slows down the vote-counting process. Unlike our current method, RCV often requires multiple rounds of tallying as lower-ranking candidates are eliminated and votes redistributed. In tight races, this delay could leave Oregonians waiting days or weeks for results, potentially fueling frustration or distrust in the system, something we can ill afford in today's climate. Another concern is "exhausted ballots." If a voter only ranks one or two candidates and those choices are eliminated early, their ballot might not count in later rounds. This could leave some feeling their vote was wasted, even if they participated initially. A system that risks disenfranchising voters in this way doesn't align with the goal of fair representation.

Additionally, while RCV aims to reduce strategic voting, it doesn't eliminate it. Voters might still rank candidates insincerely—perhaps elevating a weaker contender to sideline a stronger rival—undermining the idea that RCV always reflects honest preferences. This complexity could muddy the process rather than clarify it. Perhaps most troubling is that the candidate with the most first-choice votes doesn't always win under RCV. Instead, the system prioritizes broader support through later rankings, which can confuse or frustrate voters who expect the "most popular" candidate to prevail. This disconnect could weaken confidence in election outcomes. Finally, because RCV is less familiar to the public, it's

ripe for misinformation. Bad-faith claims about rigging or unfairness—however unfounded—could exploit this unfamiliarity, eroding trust in Oregon's elections even if the system itself is sound. In a time when faith in democracy is already tested, we should avoid adding fuel to that fire.

In conclusion, I oppose HB 3166 because I believe our voting system should remain simple, affordable, and transparent. RCV, while well-intentioned, introduces unnecessary complexity, cost, and risks that outweigh its potential benefits. I remind you all that Oregon Voters voted down Ranked Choice Voting by a substantial margin in 2014. It was 893,688 yes (42.30%) and 1219013 No (57.70%).

I respectfully ask the Committee to vote "no" on this bill and preserve a voting process that Oregonians already understand and trust. Thank you for considering my perspective.

Sincerely, Kim W. Rollins ` Oregon Citizen & Voter