

Testimony of Harry Roth
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Oregon House Bill 3166

Honorable Representatives,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit my written testimony. While the Oregon House of Representatives considers House Bill 3166, it should first consider where the voters stand on the issue. This past November, Oregon voters overwhelmingly rejected Measure 117, with 60% voting against it. And it wasn't just Oregon; voters in Arizona, Idaho, Colorado, Montana, and Nevada also rejected measures related to ranked-choice voting in 2024.

If enacted, this bill would give the Secretary of State the power to change election protocols on a whim. That would create instability and open the door to election schemes like ranked-choice voting and approval voting.

HB 3166 is a backdoor to implement a system that Oregon voters just rejected. Ranked-choice voting and similar schemes lead to voter confusion, disenfranchisement, and delayed election results.

During a tight campaign in Maine's Congressional District 2, Representative Golden and Austin Theriault were forced into a runoff, delaying the final results by weeks. A memory stick failure caused delays two years prior, in 2022.

Another major problem associated with ranked-choice voting is ballot exhaustion. When voters do not rank multiple candidates on their ballots, those ballots may be exhausted if the candidates they ranked did not receive over 50% of the votes. During the 2021 NYC mayoral primary election, 141,000 ballots were exhausted. That level of voter disenfranchisement is a shocking example of the dangers of this system.

In 2024 alone, six states banned ranked-choice voting to protect their voters. In total, thirteen states have banned it statewide, with more bans working their way through state legislatures. I hope you will consider the examples I've given before deciding whether to allow the Secretary of State to implement this broken system in the state of Oregon.

Thank you again for your time.