

SB 343 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Rules

Prepared By: Leslie Porter, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 3/16

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Permits counties to adopt ranked-choice voting to conduct county elections. Requires Secretary of State (SOS) to create and staff new division to assist counties that adopt ranked-choice voting in purchasing compatible computers, voting machines, and vote tally systems. Appropriates funding to SOS for new division. Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2021.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Ranked-choice voting allows voters to rank multiple candidates by preference instead of voting for only one candidate. When a majority winner does not exist, this method allows for an instant runoff election.

In 2016, Maine became the first state to authorize ranked-choice voting for statewide races. In 2018, Maine used it for all state and federal primaries, and for all general congressional elections. In 2020, Maine used it for the presidential primary and general elections. Also in 2020, voters in Alaska approved a measure to replace Alaska's partisan primary with a "top-four" primary system and implement a ranked-choice voting system for the general election.

In Oregon, ranked-choice voting was approved by Benton County voters in November 2016 through passage of ballot measure 2-100, and was first available in the November 2020 general election. Ranked-choice voting will be used only when a minimum of three candidates are listed on the general election ballot for the office of Benton County Commissioner.

Senate Bill 343 allows ranked-choice voting to be used for all county elections.