

I strongly oppose Oregon Senate Bill 343.

I do support the adoption of ranked ballots, but this bill is not the way to do it.

Declaring an emergency without clearly indicating the nature of the emergency is totally unacceptable.

Furthermore, the bill does not even mention how a change in elections would resolve the unspecified emergency.

If there is an emergency that justifies making a significant change in elections, then a far better choice would be to adopt Approval voting in primary elections.

(Approval voting is not good enough to be used in general elections.)

Approval voting uses the same ballots we currently use. It simply requires changing the instructions to indicate that the voter can mark more than one candidate in each race. This method would improve the fairness of primary election results.

Note that Approval voting would not require the expense of new equipment because it uses the same ballots we use now. Ideally our existing vote-counting equipment could be reprogrammed to handle Approval voting.

As a further flaw in this bill, the "ranked choice voting" counting method as specified would often fail to elect the most popular candidate. This failure happened in the 2009 mayoral election in Burlington, Vermont, after which that equivalent version of ranked choice voting was rejected by the voters a few years later. The same unfairness would occur here in Oregon.

I have already submitted testimony explaining how Senate Bill 791 could be improved to adopt a version of ranked choice voting that does not have the flaws contained in this bill.

This bill does have some wording improvements that could be, and should be, incorporated into Senate Bill 791. However otherwise it does not deserve serious consideration.

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The VoteFair guy

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