

Chair Wagner, Vice-Chair Girod, and members Sen. Manning, Sen. Burdick, Sen. Thatcher. My name is John Quetzalcoatl Murray. I was born and have lived my entire life in a country whose governance system was designed by the slavocracy. Two and a half centuries ago, the "great compromise" enabling the U.S. constitution said people of color were worth less - they were about half the value of white people. Three-fifths of the slave population was included in the political formula for representation in the lower house. This compromise is baked throughout our institutions of government: Our bicameral legislatures, the Electoral College, the Census questions about race and population, our mechanisms for drawing voting districts, and our two-party system.

Our two major political parties were also born and prospered within this toxic racist environment. Although the parties have switched sides at least once, they remain locked in a yes-and-no, black-and-white battle based on rules designed in 1787, with the pendulum swinging more wildly from side to side as political power shifts from one party to another. The stakes are so high and the choices so few, this year we saw the leader of one of the two major parties summoning an armed mob to the Capitol.

Our political framework locks us into an eternal debate over color caste slavery among one species, Homo sapiens, at a time when we need to be thinking about all of the species on our planet. The slavocracy constitution protects the rights of property so well that we are poisoning ourselves and killing species at an unprecedented rate. Our governance structure is not up to the task of addressing ecocide. We should be convening a new constitutional convention. We should be ensuring that the original language of the highest law in our land does NOT assign a fractional value to any human being. We should ensure that the constitution, the foundational document of our justice system, is NOT the root cause of structural racism in our society. In the meantime, we continue to work around the edges, introducing amendments and laws to: abolish the Electoral College; prevent future Parchman Farms; say that corporations are not people; address campaign finance.

Today we are here to loosen the death grip of the two-party system in hopes of preventing another January 6. Ranked choice voting is one way to introduce more parties, more voices, and more issues into our political system. On behalf of the Pacific Green Party, I urge you to vote yes on SB 791. Thank you.