



The League of Women Voters of Oregon, established in 1920, is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

January 11, 2024

To: Co-Chairs [Senator Kate Lieber](#) and [Representative Paul Holvey](#) and members of the [Joint Committee On Ballot Measure Titles and Explanatory Statements](#)

Re: [HB 2004](#) - Proposed Ballot Title and Language - Comments

Thank you for your work to provide effective, succinct ballot title language for HB 2004.

The League of Women Voters (LWV) has been active in nonpartisan civic engagement since suffragists won the vote over 100 years ago. We continue to educate voters and advocate for good government reforms. Working from these concerns and with the objective of transparency, we are taking the opportunity to comment on the proposed ballot language of HB 2004, the 2024 statewide Ranked Choice Voting measure. We believe our recommendations would benefit all voters considering this measure.

One of the LWV's platforms is "Making Democracy Work." Among other goals, that includes making voting accessible and fair, and government transparent. When making changes to our rules and laws, being as simple and clear as possible is valuable to all voters and essential for "Making Democracy Work."

Providing clear and unambiguous language is particularly important to several large groups of voters we serve. These include older voters, first-time voters (as represented by many in our LWVOR Youth Council), and voters for whom English is a second language.

To maintain clear, and lingo-free descriptions, we believe that the acronym of "RCV" should be avoided whenever possible. Additionally, to avoid confusion, the title in particular should not describe the measure as using a "ranked choice **method**," a term not in the HB 2004 bill, nor recognized in other parts of the country as a term to describe **Ranked Choice Voting**.

Members of the League of Women Voters around the nation have been encouraged by the benefits of Ranked Choice Voting when compared to our current system. This interest has stemmed from many electoral system studies, such as [several from LWV Oregon](#).

Along with that, many of us have taken part in voter education centered on electoral systems. We have continually found that many voters don't understand their own current system. (Interesting, it too can sound confusing if described in arcane language.) For greatest clarity, we find voters need a description directly comparing our current plurality system to ranked choice voting. This is missing in the proposed ballot language sections.

An explanation in the ballot summary such as, “this measure provides voters the option to rank – or not to rank – candidates in order of preference, with their favorite remaining their choice if still in the race” would help voters understand how ranked choice voting would function. It would explain that they don’t have to rank and that their favorite remains in the race if still a viable candidate.

Voters often confuse “most votes” with “majority;” a statement such as this one would highlight the difference. A clarification explaining that candidates have to attain a majority of votes to win, compared to just the most votes, as in the current plurality system, describes why ranked choice voting can result in broader representation.

We believe the points above are a priority to the ballot title as they express to the voter what exactly is changing with a “yes” vote. Including them in the results statements and ballot summary would be the most helpful to voters, as opposed to the prioritization of which offices and locales are affected by the measure.

Finally, we are certain that this committee is doing its best to help voters understand their ballot choices. Given that goal, we urge you to consider our suggestions and make appropriate changes to the proposed language.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this proposal.



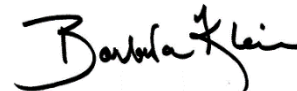
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Electoral Systems Portfolio