

Submitter: Nate Hanson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure: HB2004

I am writing to express my strong support for the inclusion of rank choice voting on the ballot for the upcoming 2024 election in Oregon. Rank choice voting, also known as instant-runoff voting, has the potential to revolutionize our electoral system, fostering greater representation, increased voter engagement, and a more inclusive political landscape.

One of the fundamental principles of democracy is the ability for citizens to freely participate in the electoral process, ensuring that their voices are heard. However, under the current plurality voting system, our options are limited, often forcing us to choose between two polarizing candidates. This restricted choice not only undermines the true essence of democracy but also perpetuates the dominance of the two major political parties, stifling the emergence of alternative voices and ideas.

By implementing rank choice voting, Oregon can embrace a more inclusive and fair electoral system. Rank choice voting allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference. If no candidate receives an outright majority, the system eliminates the lowest-ranking candidate and reallocates their votes to the remaining candidates based on the voters' subsequent choices. This process continues until a candidate achieves a majority, ensuring that the winner truly represents the majority will of the electorate.

Rank choice voting empowers voters to support their preferred candidates without fear of wasting their vote. It eliminates the need for strategic voting, allowing individuals to vote for candidates who align most closely with their values, even if those candidates are not traditionally considered front-runners. This promotes a more diverse range of candidates, including independent and third-party contenders, who might otherwise be deterred from running due to the perception of being spoilers.

Moreover, rank choice voting encourages candidates to appeal to a broader base of voters. Instead of solely focusing on their core supporters, candidates must also seek second and third preferences from a wider spectrum of voters. This fosters a more civil and constructive campaign environment, promoting issue-based discussions and reducing negative campaigning tactics that are often employed under the winner-takes-all system.

Rank choice voting has already proven successful in other jurisdictions, including cities like San Francisco, Minneapolis, and Cambridge, as well as the state of Maine. These implementations have resulted in higher voter turnout, increased

representation of underrepresented groups, and greater overall satisfaction with the electoral process.

As an Oregonian who values the principles of democracy, I urge the committee/board to give serious consideration to including rank choice voting on the 2024 ballot. Let us give the citizens of Oregon the opportunity to decide whether they want to embrace this innovative and fair approach to elections. By doing so, we can foster a more inclusive political landscape that encourages the participation of all voices and ensures that our elected officials truly reflect the will of the people.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I trust that you will make a decision that upholds the principles of democracy and advances the interests of the citizens of Oregon.