

RE: Support HB 2004, Statewide Ranked Choice Voting, Senate Committee on Rules

**6/18/2023**

Chair Lieber, Vice Chair Knopp, and members of the Senate Committee on Rules,

My name is **Ken Nichols** and I live in **Portland**. I am writing to testify in strong support for HB 2004, a referral to the 2024 ballot that would establish ranked choice voting for statewide and federal elections.

I grew up in Medford, attended university in Salem and Stanford, and now live in Portland. I am a renewable energy developer and work with county residents across the state, but primarily in Central and Eastern Oregon, as well as Washington, Nevada, Idaho, and Wyoming. In my opinion, it is not hyperbole to say RCV could save Oregon democracy and improve our legislative process. I also think RCV can encourage more candidates, and more diverse candidates, to run for office with a better chance of getting elected. Every day I see examples in Oregon, and across the nation, of candidates need to appeal to the far left or far right. We need a mechanism to encourage more balanced candidates and policies. Oregon historically has been a place that accommodates innovative and balanced policies. RCV throughout the state might avoid legislative walkouts and other symptoms of dysfunctional democracy. HB 2004 and RCV enactment can help Oregon regain our cultural and policy balance and become a national leader in improving American Democracy.

Katherine Gehl has been promoting RCV and Final Five Voting for many years. It has seen success in states like Alaska and Maine.

<https://www.yourvalley.net/stories/gehl-how-final-five-voting-can-help-save-democracy,381034>

<https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/upcoming/rankedchoicefaq.html#:~:text=The%20ranked%2Dchoice%20voting%20law%20states%20that%20a%20voter%20may.name%20and%20rank%20that%20candidate.>

<https://time.com/6112318/american-democracy-final-five-voting/>

I am not alone in my support of this bill. This legislation is supported by a coalition of over 35 organizations, including culturally-specific organizations, labor unions, environmental groups, housing advocates, rural communities, youth-empowering organizations, and good government groups.

Ranked choice voting is Oregon's next step as a leader in election reform. Please support HB 2004, which will refer this critical piece of legislation to voters for the 2024 ballot, and pass it out of committee.

Thank you,

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