

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

June 20, 2023

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

My name is Debbie Kitchin and I live in Portland. I am writing to testify in strong support for HB 2004, which will establish ranked choice voting statewide and help ensure all Oregonians are represented in our democracy.

In our current elections, candidates in crowded races are consistently winning with less than a majority. Over half of statewide and federal races with more than two candidates won with narrow support in Oregon's 2020 and 2022 primaries¹, leaving voters feeling like their vote didn't count and unable to fully express their preferences. Fear of splitting the vote creates barriers for candidates to run and leads to voter cynicism. It's clear that our elections aren't serving voters or candidates as best as they could. Ranked choice voting is a simple improvement to our elections that will lead to more reflective elected bodies for Oregonians from every community.

While Oregon has enjoyed a great deal of success with approaches that broaden access to democracy and voting, such as vote by mail and Oregon's Motor Voter act, we need to strive to make voting as participatory as possible to encourage more voters to express their preferences. This participation helps our communities and state because people are more invested in the community when they feel that their vote matters. Ranked choice voting is a method that allows voters to express their full preferences without fear that their vote "won't count" because their first choice is not as likely to win. Many voters are discouraged by the current system and do not feel motivated to vote. Ranked choice voting can allow people to express their full preferences.

This legislation is supported by a coalition of over 30 organizations, including culturally-specific organizations, labor unions, environmental groups, housing advocates, rural communities, youth-empowering organizations, and good government groups.

Ranked choice voting is a proven solution and Oregon's next step as a leader in election reform. Please support HB 2004 and pass it out of committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support,

Debbie Kitchin (she, her)

¹ Oregon Secretary of State, [State of Oregon Elections: Election History](#)