

I'm concerned about the dysfunction of our current winner-take-all election system. It has rendered local and federal governments dysfunctional. It is time to implement ranked choice voting as a better alternative to our current political system.

With ranked choice voting, voters facing an election with three or more candidates would be allowed to rank those candidates in order of preference. The ballots would be counted in rounds, and if one candidate received a majority of first-choice votes, that person would win. If not, candidates with the fewest votes would be eliminated, and their votes would be reallocated to the voters' second choices until there is a majority winner.

The problem with current winner-take-all rules is that they elevate district lines over voters. Winner-take-all systems force voters to choose the most viable candidate instead of the candidate they actually prefer and can discourage a range of candidates from entering a race over fear that they will "split the vote."

Ranked choice voting encourages candidates from all parties, eliminating our dysfunctional two-party system. It encourages campaigns to appeal beyond their base voters to broader swaths of the electorate.

HB 2004 would establish ranked choice voting elections for all statewide and federal offices in Oregon. This includes primary and general elections with three or more candidates. The bill would also provide a local option for cities and counties to use ranked choice voting elections, and would help ensure a standard implementation by county clerks.

I urge your readers to support this bill and make our democracy more fair and more representative of the diversity of our constituencies.

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