

Submitter: Shaktari Belew
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure: HB2004

Please Support HB 2004, Statewide Ranked Choice Voting

June 20th, 2023

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

My name is S. Belew and I live in Ashland.

I am writing to testify in strong support for HB 2004, a referral to the 2024 ballot that would establish Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) for statewide and federal elections.

In our current elections, fear of splitting the vote is affecting both voters and candidates:

* Candidates are often deterred from entering a race for fear of splitting voter support for their party, and

* Voters are often forced to choose a candidate with a better chance of winning, instead of the candidate whose policies they actually prefer.

As a result, many Oregonians from various demographics are less incentivized to participate in our elections.

Yet a true democracy needs the participation of ALL eligible voters if we actually want a government that reflects the "will of the people."

Sadly, data shows that over 70% of Oregon voters are "extremely" or "very" discouraged by politics. We need a solution that will empower voters by giving them a real say in not just candidates, but actual POLICIES in our elections.

And it is POLICY, NOT PERSONALITY that matters most! RCV allows voters to prioritize policies by ranking their choices.

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 for all your hard work on our behalf,
S. Belew