

Submitter: Paul DeStefano
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure: HB2004

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

20 June 2023

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

My name is Paul D. and I live in Aloha. I am writing to you in strong support for HB 2004, a referral to the 2024 ballot that would establish ranked choice voting for statewide and federal elections.

In our current elections, fear of “vote splitting” is affecting both voters and candidates: Candidates are often deterred from entering a race for fear of splitting voter support and voters are often forced to choose a candidate with a better chance of winning, instead of the candidate they actually prefer. As a result, many Oregonians – especially people of color, working-class people, rural residents, and young people – are less incentivized to participate in our elections. With over 70% of Oregon voters “extremely” or “very” discouraged by politics, we need a solution that will empower voters by giving them a real say in our elections.

I've been a hoping for RCV for many years, and I'm frustrated that our leaders are not able to make progress on simple reforms that have been well studied, and just make common sense. The system we have now simply doesn't work as designed or advertised. The stated purpose of elections is to poll the citizenry to determine their will. But, we simply cannot get that information from a plurality of votes for individual candidates. This is improper sampling and a design failure. No one blames the system for being imperfect, but it must be upgraded, and fast.

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,
Paul D.