

Submitter: Eric Maskin  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules  
Measure: HB2004  
RE: Support Statewide Ranked Choice Voting, HB 2004  
Senate Committee on Rules

June 20th, 2023

I study voting systems professionally and can attest that ranked-choice voting (RCV) is superior to ordinary plurality rule (first-past-the-post) voting. In particular, RCV solves serious vote-splitting problems that often arise with ordinary voting.

To see this, imagine that there are three candidates—Alice, Barbara, and Craig—running for a particular office. Alice and Barbara have similar policies, and each is more popular than Craig (who is a very different sort of candidate) in the sense that (i) if Alice faced Craig head-to-head, she would win with 60% of the vote, and (ii) if Barbara faced Craig in a two-person race, Barbara would also attract 60% of the vote. Nevertheless, if all three candidates run, then, under ordinary voting, Alice and Barbara will split the vote of their supporters. That is, Alice will get 30% of the overall vote, Barbara will get 30%, and Craig will get 40%—and thus Craig will win. But this outcome is neither fair nor democratic because Craig is the least popular candidate of the three. RCV solves this problem by allowing supporters of Alice and Barbara to rank **both** of them above Craig. This will ensure that the winner is Alice or Barbara—whichever gets ranked above the other by more voters.

If requested, I would be happy to supplement these remarks with further written or oral testimony.

 

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