

Submitter: Hazel Wagner
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure: HB2004

My name is Hazel Wagner and I live in Eugene, Oregon. I am writing to testify strongly in favour of HB 2004, which would establish ranked choice voting for many federal and state positions.

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.

While it may not be as ideal as systems sadly rejected by voters like STAR voting, ranked-choice is a step in the right direction for making our elections free and fair. 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.