

Submitter: Anthony Betz
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure: HB2004

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

My name is Anthony Betz and I live in Sherwood. I am writing to testify 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.

As a non-affiliated moderate voter I currently have to go through the process of deciding which party primary I want to have a say in and update my party registration each election depending on which party has better candidates in the most important race. Often I want to vote in the Republican primary for one race and Democratic primary for a different race, which is impossible under the current rules. I shouldn't need to affiliate with a party to vote in elections that I as a taxpayer fund, and I should be able to vote for the candidate I support in each race regardless of party affiliation.

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,

Anthony Betz