

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

March 10, 2023

Chair Fahey, Vice Chair Breese-Iverson, Vice Chair Kropf, and members of the House Committee on Rules,

My name is Theron Cross and I live in Eugene. I am writing to testify in strong support for HB 2004, which will establish ranked choice voting statewide and help ensure all Oregonians are represented in our democracy.

In our current elections, candidates in crowded races are consistently winning with less than a majority. Over half of statewide and federal races with more than two candidates won with narrow support in Oregon's 2020 and 2022 primaries¹, leaving voters feeling like their vote didn't count and unable to fully express their preferences. Fear of splitting the vote creates barriers for candidates to run and leads to voter cynicism. It's clear that our elections aren't serving voters or candidates as best as they could. Ranked choice voting is a simple improvement to our elections that will lead to more reflective elected bodies for Oregonians from every community.

Political discourse is on a one-way train to violence in this country due in no small part to the loudest, most partisan behavior being rewarded by the current system. When the only competition in elections is in primaries and based on who can whip up the base the most, it's no surprise that everyone is scared and angry all the time. We need to encourage a thoughtful middle that has no incentive to villainize and "other".

I am not alone in my support of this bill. This legislation is supported by a coalition of over 30 organizations, including culturally-specific organizations, labor unions, environmental groups, housing advocates, rural communities, youth-empowering organizations, and good government groups.

Ranked choice voting is a proven solution and Oregon's next step as a leader in election reform. Please support HB 2004 and pass it out of committee.

Thank you,

Theron Cross

¹ Oregon Secretary of State, [State of Oregon Elections: Election History](#)