

Submitter: Shari Kunz
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB2004

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

10 March 2023??

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

My name is Shari Kunz and I live in Beaverton, OR. 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 primaries, 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.

In a two-party system, the only goal is to win – at any cost. There is no concern, let alone thought for people or democracy. Because one is less likely to rank as one's second choice a candidate who has issued personal attacks against one's favorite candidate, RCV may civilize a political system that has become a blood sport.

As FairVote points out, "All states and all congressional elections currently use winner-take-all rules that elevate district lines over voters. Legislatures elected by winner-take-all are characterized by distortions in partisan representation, entrenchment of incumbents in safe seats, regional polarization, and low representation of women and racial and ethnic minorities. When combined with multi-winner districts electing at least three members, ranked-choice voting helps to make elections fairer and more reflective in every district. This ends the cycle of gerrymandering, and creates competitive elections in which every vote really counts." But I'm guessing the solutions to the many problems RCV solves, are precisely what career politicians are trying to avoid through their opposition.

Anyone who believes two-party, "winner-take-all" elections are an inherent part of Democracy, doesn't understand the fundamental premise of a Democracy – that the

people should have self-determination, and that every vote should count.

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,

Shari Kunz