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Committee: House Committee On Rules  
Measure: HB2004

I oppose Ranked choice voting; it is a scheme to disconnect elections from issues and allow candidates with marginal support from voters to win. It obscures true debates and issue-driven dialogs among candidates and eliminates genuine binary choices between two top-tier candidates. It also disenfranchises voters, because ballots that do not include the two ultimate finalists are cast aside to manufacture a faux majority for the winner.

Such a system would present many opportunities to rig the electoral system. Governor Jerry Brown Jr. (D) in 2016, he vetoed a bill to expand ranked choice voting in his state, saying it was “overly complicated and confusing” and “deprives voters of genuinely informed choice.” David Sharp, “Ranked Choice as Easy as 1, 2, 3? Not So Fast, Critics Say,” Associated Press, October 9, 2016, <https://apnews.com/6>

Ballot exhaustion is inevitable. A study published in 2015 that reviewed 600,000 votes cast using ranked choice voting in four local elections in Washington State and California found that “the winner in all four elections receive[d] less than a majority of the total votes cast.” Craig M. Burnett and Vladimir Kogan, “Ballot and Voter ‘Exhaustion’ Under Instant Runoff Voting: An Examination of Four Ranked-Choice Elections,”

The liberal Labor Party won the Australian House despite receiving only “38 percent of first-place votes on the initial ballot, while the second-place Liberal-National coalition [the center right choice] captured 43 percent” of first-place votes. Waxman, “Ranked-Choice Voting Is Not the Solution.” In other words, more voters wanted a center-right government than a left-wing government, but ranked choice made sure that did not happen.

Ranked choice obscures true debates, true issue-driven dialogues between and among candidates, and eliminates genuine binary choices between two top-tier candidates. You never really know who will be running against whom in the final vote count with ranked choice. Your votes are thrown into a fictional fantasy in which no one knows which candidate is really a substitute for another candidate who may not survive the initial rounds. It is all a numbers gimmick. You, as a voter, are not given the opportunity to make the final decision between competing substitutes.

In other words, a ranked choice election will, in the end, boil down to only two opposing candidates, but many voters (not knowing how the roulette wheel will spin) will not cast ballots between those two choices. That voter ends up with no say in the

contest between the final two candidates in the black box elections governed by ranked choice voting.

I OPPOSE HB 2004

Sincerely,

Casandra Larson