

March 15th, 2023

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

RE: Support of HB 2004 and Statewide Ranked Choice Voting

Thank you for hearing this bill and the opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Dr. Andrea Haverkamp and I am the Political Organizer for the American Federation of Teachers – Oregon. Our statewide labor federation represents over 18,000 members across the education workforce of Oregon, including childcare, K-12, and higher education. We are part of a broad coalition of over 35 organizations, including culturally specific organizations, labor unions, environmental groups, housing advocates, rural communities, youth-empowering organizations, and good government groups. I am writing to testify in strong support of HB 2004, which will establish ranked choice voting statewide and help ensure all Oregonians are represented in our democracy.

AFT-Oregon strongly encourages your support of HB 2004. Since 2019 our labor federation elects our leadership through a ranked-choice democratic process. We can attest to the benefits of this system. It has strengthened our internal democracy and we would like to see the same system across Oregon. Many of our members have lived in Benton County as well and have seen the benefits of ranked choice in those races since 2016.

In Oregon's 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 simple and proven to work well in Oregon already. Ranked choice leads to outcomes that better reflect the community's true will. By giving more candidates a realistic choice to win, Oregonians will not be worrying about "wasting their vote." Ranked choice ensures that candidates have broad support in contested races. Because candidates are encouraged to seek not only first-choice votes, but second- and third- choice votes, they are incentivized to engage with voters across racial, ethnic, gender, and ideological spectrums. Ranked choice voting leads to better representation for all Oregonians.

Ranked choice voting is a proven solution in our labor federation and across Oregon. This bill has earned the endorsement of our Political and Legislative Affairs Committee. On behalf of AFT-Oregon, we ask that you please support HB 2004 and pass it out of committee.



Dr. Andrea Haverkamp (she/her)
Political Organizer
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