

House Committee on Rules

RE: Support Statewide Ranked Choice Voting, HB 2004

**March 16, 2023,**

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

My name is David O'Brien and I am the Policy Director of RepresentUs. RepresentUs is a national, nonpartisan organization focused on making our political system more fair and representative through proven and effective solutions like ranked choice voting. 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.

Ranked choice voting (RCV) is an effective and commonsense way to make sure voters are heard, elections are about issues rather than attacks, and elected officials have the support of their constituents. This is why RCV is now used by over 60 jurisdictions in the United States.<sup>1</sup> We have supported RCV campaigns across the country and the results are clear:

- **Voters like RCV** – After using RCV for the first time, 77% of surveyed voters in New York City said they want to use it in future elections,<sup>2</sup> as did 65% of voters in Minneapolis,<sup>3</sup> and 61% of voters in Maine.<sup>4</sup> In Santa Fe, 94% of surveyed voters were “very” or “somewhat” satisfied with their voting experience after using RCV for the first time.<sup>5</sup>
- **Voters understand RCV** – Voters overwhelmingly understand RCV. In Alaska, 85% of surveyed voters said RCV was “simple” after using it for the first time,<sup>6</sup> as did 95% of voters in Minneapolis<sup>7</sup> and New York City.<sup>8</sup> A survey of voters in four California cities found that 89% reported RCV was easy to understand.<sup>9</sup>
- **RCV elections are more positive** – RCV changes the incentives for campaigns, rewarding candidates who stick to positive messaging and avoid mudslinging. Studies have found that in places that use RCV, campaigning has a more positive tone in the

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<sup>1</sup> FairVote, [Where is Ranked Choice Voting Used?](#)

<sup>2</sup> Common Cause NY and Rank the Vote NYC, [Edison Research Exit Poll](#)

<sup>3</sup> FairVote Minnesota, [One Defective Ballot in Minneapolis' 2009 RCV Election and Other Facts](#)

<sup>4</sup> FairVote, [Large Majority of Maine Voters Want to Keep Ranked Choice Voting and Find it Easy](#)

<sup>5</sup> FairVote, [Santa Fe Voters Support Ranked Choice Voting and Have High Confidence in City Elections](#)

<sup>6</sup> Alaskans for Better Elections, [Polling Shows Alaskan Voters Understand Ranked Choice Voting](#)

<sup>7</sup> FairVote Minnesota, *supra* note 3

<sup>8</sup> Common Cause NY and Rank the Vote NYC, *supra* note 2

<sup>9</sup> FairVote, [2014 Eagleton Poll California RCV Survey Results](#)

news and social media<sup>10</sup> and candidate debates,<sup>11</sup> and voters report a more positive tone.<sup>12</sup>

- **RCV leads to better representation** – RCV produces consensus winners who have the broadest possible support of their constituents. RCV also leads to better outcomes for underrepresented groups, such as women and communities of color.<sup>13</sup>

Oregonians in places like Portland and Corvallis have already embraced RCV's potential. Oregon has been a leader in American democracy, leading the way in advancements like all-mail elections. Ranked choice voting is a proven solution and Oregon's next step as a leader in election reform. We strongly recommend that you support HB 2004 and pass it out of committee.

Thank you,

David O'Brien  
He/Him  
Policy Director  
RepresentUs

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<sup>10</sup> Martha Kropf, [Using Campaign Communications to Analyze Civility in Ranked Choice Voting Elections](#)

<sup>11</sup> Eamon McGinn, [Rating Rankings: Effect of Instant Run-off Voting on participation and civility](#)

<sup>12</sup> FairVote, *supra* note 5

<sup>13</sup> RepresentWomen, [In Ranked Choice Voting Elections, Women WIN](#); Sarah John, Haley Smith, and Elizabeth Zack, [The alternative vote: Do changes in single-member voting systems affect descriptive representation of women and minorities?](#); FairVote, [Ranked Choice Voting and Racial Minority Voting Rights](#)