

Submitter: Zachary Marlow-McCarthy
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB3509

Our current democratic system has led to weak parties and strong partisanship. The inability to vote your conscience weakens all US political parties by requiring of us to cleave completely to our closest ideological neighbors no matter how distant they may be from our own goals for purely pragmatic structural reasons. We vote for the lesser of two evils, not our brightest vision for our future. We vote against our enemies, rather than for our heroes.

This situation is completely untenable. A ranked choice voting system would allow for the creation of tertiary parties which can begin to have a serious political impact on the landscape. It would help in several ways: to signal to the two main parties in the US where their policy agenda falls short, to provide a bipartisan outlet for votes to demonstrate interests in specific issues such as Labor or Environmental issues, and to increase voter turnout and faith in our democracy.

It would allow us to solve the gridlock that we are plagued by in finding common causes that cross Democratic or Republican party lines. This would help not only the people, but also the relations between our current two parties, in that they would have to govern more closely to the varied will of the people, rather than merely pointing out the flaws in their opponents. Our current system creates a gamesmanship that completely undermines the spirit of democracy and collaborative governance.

I also would like to counter the notion that ranked choice voting is in anyway radical. Many countries such as Australia, Ireland, Malta, the United Kingdom, as well as several states including Maine and Alaska use such a system without issue. In many cases we have observed increased participation in US votes which used RCV as a voting methodology. At a time of incredible political turmoil and partisan brinksmanship, this could be a tool to bolster confidence in our democratic systems, to prevent minority vote rule, in which the winner of an election may not have a plurality of the vote, and to strengthen the mandate of candidates who succeed in a RCV system.

I kindly request, on behalf of all Oregonians, that you vote in support of Ranked Choice Voting.