

To:	House Committee on Rules
From:	Gary Lietke
Hearing Date:	3/16/2023 1:00 pm
Re:	HB2004

About me: I am Gary Lietke, Chair of Community Action & Engagement in the Democratic Party of Multnomah County, and long-time member of that party's Election-Government Integrity Study Group and Election Integrity Caucus of the Democratic Party of Oregon.

Voting methods are the heart of representative democracy and election integrity. While designating Ranked Choice Voting as *an* approved method in Oregon elections is preferable to the current plurality/first-past-the-post methods—RCV is substantially inferior to STAR, Score-Then-Automatic-Runoff.

Oregon is to be applauded for considering alternative voting systems! But adopting RCV when we could choose STAR is like replacing a horse-drawn carriage with an aging manual transmission gas guzzler instead of a much more user-friendly and efficient up-to-date electric vehicle.

I hope this hearing committee already knows the many flaws of plurality/first-past-the-post, and if you don't, DO study them. They are legion.

My concern is this bill's advocacy for RCV when STAR is so much better. I will address 2 among the many key differences.

1. User-Friendliness. Frankly, we face a hard enough challenge just to get good voter turnout and serious voter evaluation of candidates and ballot measures. One of RCVs' chief weaknesses is how much time voters need to reliably assess and rank each candidate. Reliability really falls as the number of candidates increases. If a given election ballot length is similar to most Oregon Primary and General elections, many voters will be discouraged from participating by the detailed work of assessment and ability to choose the rank order they are confident as the order they would repeat the next day or next week.

STAR, conversely, is based on simply rating each candidate on a 0-5 scale, a familiar exercise we all practice often in our daily lives. The scale markedly distinguishes one's personal relative degree of support, while facilitating a speedy voting experience.

2. Counting Complexity. RCV is way more challenging to compile than either plurality/first-past-the-post or STAR. RCV always requires centralized cumbersome (non-transparent black box) machine counting, and that facilitates suspicion of manipulation or error and undermines voter confidence in the count. RCV machine tabulation has also often substantially delayed releasing election results, another way to discourage voter interest and trust. STAR, like plurality/first-past-the-post, machine-tabulates quickly and can, if necessary, be hand-counted. STAR is far easier to audit. RCV may also cause significantly more problems in multi-jurisdictional elections that require intra-jurisdiction tabulation.

And for frosting on the cake, STAR was invented and developed in Oregon.

I, personally, was extensively involved in 2 rigorously designed and implemented election-integrity projects to hands-on objectively test and compare these 3 voting methods for use in major organizations. After all was said and done, STAR easily proved itself as the best method.

Thank you for considering my testimony! Our voting method of choice is consequential.

Bottom line: STAR provides virtually all the advantages of RCV over the far inferior plurality/first-past-the-post method, plus many more uniquely STAR benefits and none of RCV flaws.