

Monmouth, OR 97361

March 20th, 2023

Oregon Legislature
House Committee on Rules
Meeting Date: March 21, 2023
Re: HB2004, Ranked Choice Voting, Written Testimony, OPPOSED

Submitted via: PDF Upload, OLIS.OregonLegislature.gov

Dear Chairs and Committee Staff,

I am writing in opposition to the proposed HB2004, regarding ranked choice voting.

Types of changes to voting laws such as ranked choice are passed under the guise of “fairness,” of allowing minor candidates a chance at elected office, to encourage voter participation that their voices count too, or other such lofty goals.

But this cloak of fairness is a clever fraud. Because such systems are open to manipulation, allowing candidates to “win” who would not otherwise in a straightforward election with only one choice among many. This is not speculation or conspiracy theory. Indeed, “the Gibbard-Satterthwaite theorem states that every non-trivial voting method among at least 3 alternatives can be strategically manipulated.” (See, for example, “Elections can be Manipulated Often” by Friedgut, Kalai, & Nisan.¹). This is not new. Election manipulation with more three or more candidates has been happening since the Middle Ages. There are famous cases where monks successfully manipulated nuns to arrive at his choice of an abbess.

Put simply, as in so many other fields, those who don’t understand math can be manipulated by it.

Put even more simply, people who promote such elections schemes as ranked choice seek to consolidate power, not share it. That’s human nature.

And there’s a simple proof for that in this very committee.

¹ Friedgut, E., Kalai, G., & Nisan, N. (2008, October). Elections can be manipulated often. In 2008 *49th Annual IEEE symposium on foundations of computer science* (pp. 243-249). IEEE.

All of the sponsors and chief sponsors of HB2004 are democrats. So, are we seriously to believe this bill could potentially weaken the power of democrats and lead to fewer democrats elected by electing more Republicans? Even electing independents would weaken the power of the democrat-held majorities.

Anyone with two cents worth of common sense knows that this bill is to attempt to have few Republicans elected in tight races. Otherwise, if it really was about fairness, there would be an equal number of Republicans sponsoring this. But it begs the question: Why are Democrats so afraid of fair elections they need to turn to voting schemes instead of simple, one person, one vote?

Because ranked choice can be manipulated, Democrats should beware. Republicans will simply adapt the tricks. Knowingly opening the door to manipulation is a danger to all and I urge the committee and all truly fair-minded representatives to vote a resounding no on HB2004.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Anderson" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Mark D. Anderson, DBA (ABD), MBA