

Submitter: Erica Lyon
On Behalf Of: STAR Voting Lane County
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB2004

Dear representatives,

Before passing bills 2004 and 3509 establishing Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in Oregon's elections, I would like you to look at other alternatives, namely STAR Voting, which is a voting method that takes many of the strengths of RCV and improves on them, such as offering voters even more of a choice of how to make their voices heard. It would also correct the many deficits of RCV (see below) for a more inclusive and simpler way of voting. With STAR Voting, each voter would get a ballot listing all the candidates in a given race, and they would be allowed to score each candidate on a scale of 0-5, 0 being no support, 5 being the most support. They can give the same score to as many candidates as they prefer, so if they really like two or more candidates, they can give them each a score of 5, and this voter has an increased chance that at least one of the candidates that they support will win. Conversely, if there are no candidates that the voter likes, they can give them all a score of 0 and send a more powerful message of disapproval than simply abstaining from voting. This allows voters even more voice in the elections than they would have even with RCV.

At the end of voting, scores are tallied up using simple arithmetic, and the two highest-scoring candidates advance straight to run-offs. This system would be a lot simpler to implement because it doesn't require complicated algorithms to determine a winner as RCV does. It also doesn't shut out certain voters as RCV does with the occurrence of exhausted ballots. An exhausted ballot is a ballot in which neither a voter's first, second, or third choices advance to run-off, essentially resulting in a wasted vote. Minorities and other marginalized groups are more likely than the average voter to have none of their preferred candidates go to run-off. In a state as progressive as Oregon, it seems that we would be interested in the voting method that is the most inclusive to all segments of our communities.

I would please encourage you to learn more about STAR Voting by visiting our website, www.starvoting.org or to contact us at info@equal.vote. Before Oregon makes any change as grand as implementing a different voting method, we need to be making choices based on all the information we have so that we can ensure that the final decision is as sound as possible. Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony. I hope that you will take this consideration carefully.