



Supporting Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)

03/21/2023

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

My name is Nick Keough, and I am the Legislative Director of the Oregon Student Association. **I'm writing today to ask for your support on HB 2004, which will establish ranked choice voting statewide and help ensure all Oregonians are represented in our democracy.**

Oregon Student Association advocates for the interests of students in postsecondary institutions in Oregon. Our work is built around the simple principle that when people have a voice in the decisions being made that impact them, better decisions get made. One way that principle plays out in our work is when we register students to vote and encourage them to engage in the political process. Through this work, we see time and time again the importance of civic engagement and how it links to the ability of communities to have their needs met.

In our current elections, candidates in crowded races are consistently winning with less than a majority. Over half of statewide and federal races with more than two candidates won with narrow support in Oregon's 2020 and 2022 primaries, leaving voters feeling like their vote didn't count and unable to fully express their preferences.

Ranked choice voting leads to more reflective outcomes and better representation, a win-win for voters and candidates alike. By allowing voters to rank candidates in order of preference, candidates can run without fear of splitting the vote and voters are given more meaningful choices, creating results that reflect the true will of voters. Ranked choice voting encourages candidates from diverse backgrounds to run for office, and cities that have switched to ranked choice voting have seen more women, people of color, working class people, and young people not only run for office, but win.

It is for that reason that our student leaders feel that implementing ranked choice voting is critical. By allowing voters to rank candidates, their vote becomes more meaningful, has a greater impact, and, ultimately, leads to an outcome they are more satisfied with. In cities and states where ranked choice voting is used, voters continuously report that ranked choice voting is easy to use and understand. For young voters and student voters particularly, we feel RCV would encourage young people to vote at higher rates, and to feel less disillusionment with the electoral process.

The Oregon Student Association urges you to support and pass HB 2004.

Thank you,

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