



**To:** House Rules Committee  
**From:** William Vollmer on behalf of Act for Democracy  
**Re:** Testimony in favor of HB3593

Act for Democracy, a member of the Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network (COIN), is a nonprofit, grassroots organization based in Portland that seeks to promote progressive legislation and issues. Although not a member-based organization per se, over 1000 individuals subscribe to our weekly newsletter.

We believe in election reform that strengthens voter involvement and supports a strong multiparty system within the state. In particular we believe such reform should help give more voice to regular Oregonians, especially those from marginalized communities.

As an organization that supports restorative justice in our election laws, we also believe that the Oregon legislature should be examining past legislation that shaped elections in ways that were intended to undermine the basic civil rights of Americans, and re-evaluating those laws through a modern lens of equity and inclusion.

Fusion voting, and laws restricting its use, serve as a case in point. Unions, farmers, and minority voters have a long history of using electoral fusion to build winning electoral coalitions in the United States. Electoral fusion has historically been supported among communities that are marginalized, either within the broader society or within an electoral coalition, because it allows for those groups to demonstrate support for their platform. It is good for candidate, since it allows them to build a broader coalition., and it is good for voters because it allows their vote to better express their values on the general election ballot.

Although electoral fusion is still practiced in New York and Connecticut, it was eliminated in most of the country to preserve one party rule in different regions. In Oregon, the Working Families Party and Independent Party of Oregon sued the Secretary of State to restore cross-nomination provisions as part of an effort to restore fusion voting in Oregon. The two parties helped pass the current law, which allows for cross-nominations but does not require clerks to count ballots by party and by candidate.

Since Oregon adopted its current cross nomination system in 2010, third parties have become more relevant in our elections and have helped to build support for more diverse ideas and candidates. In 2010, prior to enactment of the current system, there were only 3 persons of color serving in the Oregon legislature. In 2022, fusionist parties helped elect 32 persons of color -- the most ever to serve in the Oregon legislature.

HB3593 will further expand fusion voting by allowing voters to select cross-nominated candidates by party. We believe that this new functionality will further facilitate coalition building across parties,

especially smaller parties within the state, and ultimately increase the extent to which our elected officials look like and represent the broader Oregon electorate.