

Submitter: Brian Jensvold  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Rules  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3166

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 3166. While I support the bill's intent to reform Oregon's election system and improve voter participation, I strongly oppose the proposed 5-to-2 amendments, as they fall short of addressing the core issues in our electoral process.

The 5-to-2 system reinforces the dominance of two major parties, limiting voter choice and reducing the likelihood that diverse political perspectives will be adequately represented. By advancing only the top two candidates to the general election, this method risks shutting out third-party and independent voices, leading to less competitive races and fewer options for voters. This is particularly concerning in districts where one party is overwhelmingly dominant, as it could result in a general election with candidates from only one party, further disenfranchising a large segment of voters.

Our current system of closed primaries forces many voters to register with one of the two major parties just to have a say in elections, even if they align more closely with a third party. This practice discourages political diversity and stifles democratic participation. Instead of reinforcing this flawed system with a 5-to-2 model, Oregon should move toward a more comprehensive solution such as ranked-choice voting, which would eliminate the need for primaries altogether and ensure that election outcomes better reflect the true preferences of the electorate.

Additionally, implementing a single, unified ballot for all voters—regardless of party affiliation—would simplify the election process. This would reduce administrative burdens, streamline ballot distribution, and create a more transparent and accessible voting experience. Voters already receive a single voter pamphlet containing information about all candidates; it only makes sense that they should also receive a ballot that includes all candidates, rather than being restricted by party-based ballot limitations.

Had 2024's Ballot Measure 117 been more thoroughly vetted and written, Oregon might already be on the path to full ranked-choice voting. HB 3166, as written, is a half-measure that does not go far enough in modernizing our elections. Rather than settling for incremental changes that preserve the status quo, Oregon should take bold steps to adopt a system that truly enhances voter choice and democratic fairness.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to reconsider the 5-to-2 amendments and

instead explore a more comprehensive electoral reform such as ranked-choice voting. I appreciate your time and consideration of my testimony.