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House Committee on Rules
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Testimony in Support of Oregon HB 3166

Dear Chair Bowman, Vice-Chair Vice-Chair's Drazan, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 3166, the Open Primary Act, which proposes a unified primary election system where all candidates, regardless of party affiliation, appear on the same ballot, with the top five advancing to the general election. This reform is a significant step toward enhancing democratic participation and ensuring that elected officials truly represent the will of the people.

As a concerned citizen, I have observed the limitations of the current primary system, where partisan primaries often exclude non-affiliated voters and can lead to the election of candidates who do not reflect the broader electorate's preferences. HB 3166 addresses these issues by creating a more inclusive and competitive electoral process.

It should not be lost on the legislature that the current system has locked out 40 (1.3 million) percent of the electorate from the ballot. I suggest the intent of the law establishing primary elections be revisted to understand that the intent was to allow the citizenry to vote. Not to allow a minority of voters to establish who is to appear on the general election ballot.

By implementing this system, Oregon will:

- **Promote Voter Inclusivity**: Allow all voters, including those not affiliated with major parties, to participate equally in the primary process, thereby enhancing voter engagement and turnout.
- **Encourage Candidate Diversity**: Enable a wider range of candidates to compete on a level playing field, fostering innovative ideas and solutions to address the challenges facing our state.
- **Reduce Partisan Polarization**: Incentivize candidates to appeal to a broader electorate, leading to more moderate and widely acceptable policy positions.

In conclusion, HB 3166 represents a thoughtful and necessary reform to Oregon's electoral system. By adopting this open primary model, we can strengthen our democracy, ensure fairer representation, and better serve the diverse interests of all Oregonians.

I respectfully urge you to support HB 3166 and vote in favor of its passage. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dan Becker