Submitter:	Rebecca Farrell
On Behalf Of:	
Committee:	House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic:	HB3166

Testimony in Opposition to HB 3166
March 19, 2025

Honorable Members of the Oregon Legislature,

My name is Rebecca Farrell and I am an Oregon voter speaking against House Bill 3166. While I appreciate efforts to improve our elections, this measure introduces changes that I believe will harm Oregon's voting system rather than strengthen it. I urge you to consider the practical and democratic problems it creates for voters like me.

First, HB 3166 weakens the role of political parties in primaries by putting all candidates—party-affiliated or not—on one ballot and sending the top five to the general election. Primaries are supposed to let party members pick candidates who reflect our values. Under this bill, that process gets muddled. A party's choice could lose out to independents or rivals with broader but less committed support. This doesn't expand voter choice—it blurs the lines and leaves us with a general election where it's harder to know what candidates stand for.

Second, this bill pushes ranked-choice voting on us starting in 2028, even though Oregon voters just rejected it in November 2024 with Measure 117. I voted against it because I don't think it's right to force a complicated system on people who said no. Ranking multiple candidates is confusing in practice. In places like New York City, it led to more mistakes on ballots, especially for folks who don't have time to research every name. Oregon's mail-in voting works because it's simple—HB 3166 risks leaving people behind.

Third, the logistics worry me. County clerks already said they struggled with the idea of ranked-choice voting during the Measure 117 debate. Add a unified ballot and automatic runoffs, and you're asking for delays or errors.

Finally, I don't buy that this setup guarantees better representation. In a state split between urban and rural, a top-five primary could just push moderates forward, shutting out candidates with strong support in certain areas. Then ranked-choice voting might knock out the ones with loyal bases, not majorities. That's not more democratic—it's less fair to Oregon's diversity.

HB 3166 makes it harder, ignores what we decided in 2024, and could leave voters like me feeling unheard. Please vote no and keep our elections straightforward and trustworthy.

Thank you for your time.