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Hazel Tyliniski, hazel.tyliniski@oregonlegislature.gov

Oregon House Refers Ranked Choice Voting to Ballot to Modernize Elections in Oregon

Ranked choice voting would strengthen Oregon's democracy by ensuring voters have a voice in elections and encourages diverse and community-driven candidates on the ballot

SALEM, Ore. - Today, the Oregon House passed [House Bill 2004](#) with bipartisan support, which would establish a plan for implementing ranked choice voting (RVC) in Oregon, for voter consideration. If approved, this legislation would:

- Allow voters to rank their candidates in order of preference by establishing ranked choice voting elections for statewide and federal offices, for both primary and general elections with three or more candidates, beginning in 2028.
- Provide guidance for cities and counties to use ranked choice voting elections if they choose to implement locally
- Create a process for county clerks to participate directly in the implementation to ensure effective and standardized implementation across Oregon
- Pave the way for an effective, multilingual, and culturally responsive statewide voter education campaign to ensure all voters across the state understand and are comfortable with ranked choice voting ballots.

“House Bill 2004 establishes the blueprint for all of Oregon to implement ranked choice voting in an accessible way,” said [House Speaker Dan Rayfield](#) (D-Corvallis), chief sponsor of the bill. “Ranked choice voting creates a more collegial electoral environment. It allows all voters to be engaged and excited about election outcomes and encourages good candidates running good campaigns. This is about integrity, it’s about electing people in control with the will of the voters.”

RCV has been shown to boost voter satisfaction. In jurisdictions like Takoma Park, Maryland; Santa Fe, New Mexico; and the state of Maine, [exit polls show](#) that the majority of voters in these areas prefer RCV to their prior system. In cities with RCV, elected leadership better reflects the diversity of the population.

“Oregon voters deserve leaders that align with their values. Our current ‘pick-one’ voting system often pressures voters to cast their ballots strategically, picking a candidate they see as electable rather than the candidate whose vision best aligns with their hopes for their community,” said [Representative Khanh Pham](#) (D-Outer SE Portland), sponsor of the bill. “RCV is about understanding voters’ actual values and preferences.”

“What I appreciate about Ranked Choice Voting is that it serves as a disincentive to the kinds of mudslinging that dominate many campaigns under a first-past-the-post voting system,” says [House Majority Leader Julie Fahey](#) (D-West Eugene & Veneta). “In order to be successful under RCV, a candidate must build bridges and broaden their appeal. I’m excited that voters will get to consider this important change to our elections next year – my hope is that this change will be a positive turning point in the health of our democracy.”

RCV requires voters to rank candidates by preference instead of voting for just one person. A candidate wins by receiving a majority of the first-preference votes cast. When there is no majority winner, this method allows for an instant runoff.

The candidate with the lowest number of first-preference votes is eliminated and their vote is transferred to their second preference candidate. This process continues until a candidate achieves a majority of the votes cast.

HB 2004 passed 35-23 with bipartisan support and now heads to the Senate, where it will only be considered if Senate Republicans show up and do their jobs after walking out to block abortion rights.

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