

July 5, 2022

Dear Multnomah County Charter Review Committee,

I want to respond to OCI's written comments dated 6.30.22 and raise an important question that I haven't heard addressed.

The OCI comments assume that continuing to use Senate Districts to select Charter Review Committee (CRC) members requires legislators to continue to select CRC members. But OCI can select CRC members using Senate districts.

**I don't care if OCI selects future CRC members, as long as legislative districts remain one basis for selection.** None of the written comments submitted suggest that legislators need to select committee members – the comments focus on using our 10 Senate Districts remain the geographic basis instead of changing to the 4 county districts. Using just 4 county districts means that all CRC members could come from inner east Portland, which could leave smaller cities and rural areas, and even downtown and North Portland, unrepresented. **Using the 10 Senate districts ensures smaller cities, rural areas and more of Portland will be represented.**

**I agree with OCI that it is more important to remove the party registration requirement, which seems outdated given our high number of unaffiliated voters.**

**I hope the committee will ask which races can be moved to the fall general election if the county's May primary is eliminated. As a follow-on question, if the May primary will remain for other jurisdictions, are you proposing using RCV for their May primary?** I haven't heard the second question answered. Based on some comments I've heard, it sounds like some folks may be assuming that the May primary can be eliminated altogether, generating substantial savings for the county. But can the county charter control Metro (which has their own charter<sup>1</sup>), state, and federal elections to eliminate those primaries and move them to a single RCV vote in the fall? If other jurisdictions maintain a May primary, then moving only county races to the fall will further reduce May turnout. And removing just 3 or 4 county races from a

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<sup>1</sup> From the Metro Charter, page 13:

Section 29. Elections of Metro Officers.

(1) Generally. Except for certain elections to fill a vacancy in office, the first vote for Councilor, Council President or Auditor occurs at an election held at the same time and places in the Metro Area as the statewide primary election that year. If one candidate for a Metro office receives a majority of the votes cast at the primary election for all candidates for that office, that candidate is elected. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast at the primary election, the candidates receiving the two largest numbers of votes cast for the office are the only names to appear on the general election ballot that year as candidates for that office. The candidate who receives the largest number of votes cast at the general election for that office is elected.

long May primary ballot won't save the county much money, especially compared to the cost of implementing RCV.

The Portland Charter reforms are being referred to voters in a single group, which I think greatly decreases their odds of adoption. Grouping all the proposals together means that anyone who objects to a single element has a reason to vote "no" on the whole proposal. Here are 2 recent articles about organized opposition to the Portland proposal (links below).

<https://www.wweek.com/news/city/2022/06/29/portland-business-alliance-considering-legal-challenge-to-city-charter-reform-ballot-measure/>

<https://www.wweek.com/news/city/2022/06/28/two-political-action-committees-plan-to-push-back-against-portland-charter-reform-ballot-measure/>

**So please beware of counting on the city to underwrite the cost of moving to RCV and to do a large part of the necessary voter education.** Most folks I know are not at all or barely aware of the city charter proposals yet, and don't know anything about how RCV works.

Best wishes, thank you for your service, and thank you for considering these comments.

Carol Chesarek