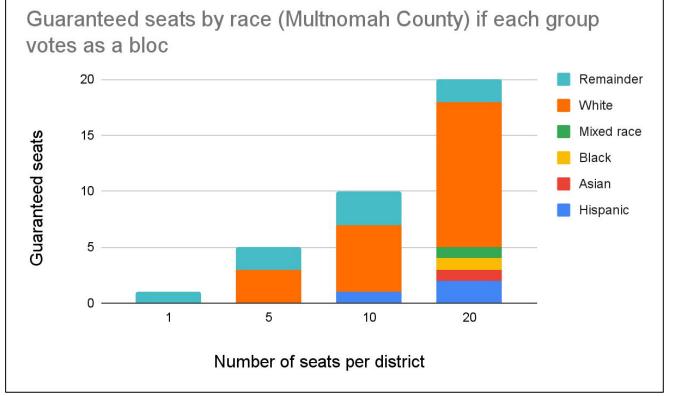# Proportional Representation Considerations

As we have seen, single-winner districts do not guarantee a seat that represents a group of people.

Similarly, multi-winner districts *might also* not guarantee a seat, depending on the number of seats.

For example, in Multnomah County, a 5-seat district would not guarantee a candidate of choice for any individual racial group apart from white people (see next slide).

Guaranteed seats by race (Multnomah County) if each group votes as a bloc

Demographic data source:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multnomah_County,_Oregon

Note: The "Remainder" category is a result of rounding down, since a group cannot elect less than a whole person.

Data is based on total county population, not voter population. The results may change when using voter demographic info.
The results may also be different depending on the specific demographics of the district being analyzed.

In order to *guarantee* a seat, an assumption must be made that voters in that group will vote in a bloc.

There is evidence that voters in Multnomah County do not vote purely based on race or gender, given that the current Multnomah County commission is majority POC and all women.
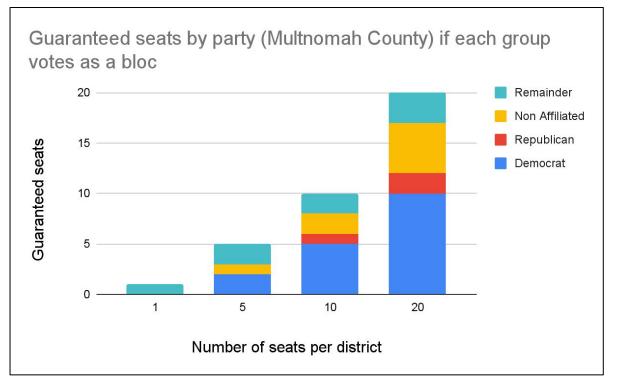
There are many different ways to break up demographics. PR is most likely to lead to ideological proportionality. As an example, this chart shows the guaranteed seats by party affiliation.

We could also take a look at things such as homeowners vs. renters, total income, age bracket, etc.

Demographic data source:
https://sos.oregon.gov/elections/Documents/registration/2020-september.pdf

Click here for the source spreadsheet of the chart data. Please let me know if you see any errors.

The results may be different depending on the specific demographics of the district being analyzed.

Pros of a smaller/ low-seat district:

– Easier for a candidate to knock on all doors in the district.

– Less expensive to campaign.

– Easier for a candidate who is familiar with the community, and familiar to the community, to win.

– Single-winner districts or low-seat PR districts make it easier to vote someone out of office.
(For example, in a 3-seat district, you would need roughly 66% of voters to vote someone out of office. In a 20-seat district, you would need roughly 95% of voters to vote someone out of office.)
You could potentially see entrenched extremists in a large-seat district.

Pros of a many-seat district:

– Easier to guarantee a candidate of choice for any particular group.

– Multi-winner districts make it harder to vote someone out of office (which would benefit the group that voted that person in).

– More likely to produce a council with diverse viewpoints.

Takeaways:

While seats are not *guaranteed* to any group in a single-winner district, we can see from our current commission that it doesn't necessarily mean people from historically marginalized groups *can't* be elected in a single-winner district.

PR provides some advantages, but there can be some disadvantages if districts become larger as a result. (For example, a greater expense to run could actually end up hurting POC, people from low-income communities, people with disabilities, etc.)
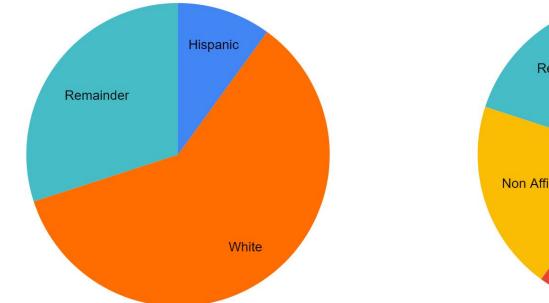
In Multnomah County, districts would need to have many seats to guarantee a seat to POC.

PR is more likely to result in ideological rather than racial diversity.

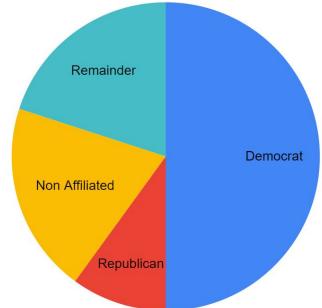(Pie charts on next slide represent a 10-seat district.)

Guaranteed seats by race (Multnomah County) if each group votes as a bloc

10-seat district

Hispanic

Remainder

White

Guaranteed seats by party (Multnomah County) if each group votes as a bloc

10-seat district

Remainder

Democrat

Non Affiliated

Republican

Race data is based on total county population, not voter population. The results may change when using voter demographic info.

The results may be different depending on the specific demographics of the district being analyzed.

<u>Some questions to ask:</u>

– How many districts is ideal, taking into consideration how district size impacts ease and cost of campaigning?

– How many candidates per district would be ideal for different district sizes?
   Does it guarantee a seat for historically marginalized groups?
   How does it break down for race/ age/ party/ income, etc.?

– What is the financial cost of additional seats?

– What are the implementation considerations?