

LWVPDX Testimony on election code ordinance
3:00 pm 4/12 hearing

Good afternoon, I am Janice Thompson, representing the League of Women Voters of Portland. We thank the Council for hearing this ordinance as well as for the previous steps you have taken to ensure timely compliance with the voter-enacted charter changes.

We urge your support for this election code update. This is a step that you can take with great confidence due to the research-based team effort by election administrators and attorneys from both Multnomah County and the City of Portland.

We are in very good hands with local election officials who are seasoned professionals. This is reflected in this code update that is informed by research on election data in the growing number of jurisdictions using ranked choice voting. It was prudent to consult with the RCV Resource Center, an organization founded by election administrators with extensive practical experience on this voting system.

It was also prudent to seek public input on a draft version of this election code update. This input and the "on the ground" local experience of the collaborative Multnomah County-Portland team results in a code that is a good fit for our city.

This afternoon is a time for questions about this ordinance. However, keep in mind who will use this code: our election management professionals. Voters do not need to read the election code before casting their ballots.

Voters will benefit from educational outreach on ranked choice voting. Not because it is inherently confusing; after all people make ranking choices all the time. However, it is in keeping with "how to" educational best practices by election administrators to explain the application of this ranking process on ballots. Such education is mandated in the charter and the League urges robust funding that includes outreach to historically disenfranchised constituencies. All Portlanders benefit when educational efforts reflect our city's diversity.

The League urges a "yes" vote on this election code update. We thank you for this - and your previous steps - to carry out the charter changes adopted by Portlanders.