

Submitted July 15, 2022

I'm an internationally known expert in the field of election-method reform, yet I live here in Portland (OR). I'm the VoteFair guy. Please don't confuse me with the well-funded, east-coast FairVote organization.

You are wise to choose ranked choice voting for future elections. However, please don't believe everything the FairVote organization tells you. In particular, they claim that ranked choice voting cannot accept a ballot on which a voter marks two or more candidates at the same ranking level. That claim is false.

It's very important that a voter should be allowed to mark two or more candidates at the same ranking level. Here's why: (1) Fewer ballots are discarded as improperly marked -- because any marking pattern can be counted. (2) Voter education is easier and costs less money -- because voters don't need to be taught the unnatural, one-candidate-per-column limit. (3) Here in Oregon we mark paper ballots without assistance, so there are no polling volunteers to answer questions, and no machine is available to check the ballot and tell the voter it will be rejected because of how they've marked it. (4) A voter can rank their most-disliked candidate lower than every other candidate -- which is not possible when using the FairVote-endorsed ballot that limits the number of columns to fewer than the number of candidates. (5) Most importantly, the ballot only needs six or seven columns of ovals, regardless of how many candidates there are.

To make this ballot-marking concept easier to understand, I've created this infographic:

[https://www.rankedchoiceoregon.org/img/two\\_marks\\_same\\_column.png](https://www.rankedchoiceoregon.org/img/two_marks_same_column.png)

The link at the bottom of the infographic points to software I wrote to demonstrate how this counting can be done in a way that meets the requirements of the Oregon Constitution.

I've given this same advice to the Portland Charter Commission. I hope you coordinate with them so that future elections in Multnomah county and Portland will correctly count all the marks on all the ballots.

If any committee member wants to watch a video in which I quickly convey lots of important insights about election-method reform, here's a link:

<https://vimeo.com/690734251>

Thank you for helping Oregon move into a better future by wisely counting ranked choice ballots.

Richard Fobes

The VoteFair guy

Author of "Ending The Hidden Unfairness In U.S. Elections"