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Testimony – Governor’s Ranked Choice Voting Working Group public comment meeting

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I was wrong.

For years, I have been telling my family, my co-workers – anyone who was willing to listen to me – that if we don’t like the way our government is run – we need to vote for 3<sup>rd</sup> party candidates.

They tell me I’m throwing my vote away.

I’ve been saying “Well, if we all vote for this 3<sup>rd</sup> party person, they will win!”.

I’ve finally come to realize that they are right.

I believe I finally came to this realization during this election cycle; both major political parties are saying that the ‘end is near’ if the other party gets elected – and in this polarized environment – most people believe one side or the other.

3<sup>rd</sup> parties right now don’t have a chance. If you truly believe that the ‘end is near’ if party ‘x’ gets elected, you would never think of voting for a 3<sup>rd</sup> party.

The option to have Ranked Choice Voting is more important now than ever. With Ranked Choice Voting, you will have the ability to vote for a 3<sup>rd</sup> party candidate that you support – knowing that if others don’t vote for them, your vote for ‘runner-up’ will actually mean something. It will provide that crutch so a person can at least feel that although their primary candidate didn’t get enough votes – that your vote for that candidate over another one didn’t cost another candidate the election.

Let me put it another way – let’s say that 40% of voters supported a Democrat, 15% of voters supported the Green Party, and 45% of voters supported a Republican. In this scenario, without Ranked Choice Voting – the Republican wins. Considering that Democrats and Greens both ‘lean left’ – you now have an election where 55% of the voters ‘lean left’ – but are represented by someone who ‘leans right’. This truly doesn’t make sense – and in the end, it isn’t ‘representative government’.

I implore this working group to recommend legislation to implement Ranked Choice Voting as soon as possible. In this polarized political environment, this would at least open the door to getting more diverse political views, and hopefully, more compromise so that government can continue to move forward.