

From: THERESE STOKAN

Sent: Monday, December 07, 2020 10:12 PM

To: Gores, Alanna

Cc:

Subject: "CRC Recommendation in Favor of Legislation for Ranked-Choice Voting" Presentation to BOCC, planned for Monday, December 14, 2020. Letter to BOCC and attachments.

*** EXTERNAL EMAIL *** This message was sent from outside our County network.

12/07/2020

Clallam County Board of Commissioners:

On behalf of residents of Clallam County, I had agreed to bring a proposal to the 2020 Charter Review Commission (CRC), in support of a "Recommendation in Favor of Local Options Bill for Ranked-Choice Voting."

When the CRC met on November 12, 2020, this proposal was reviewed, and with a modification, the following Recommendation was approved by a vote of: 10 yes, 4 no, 1 absent:

Title: "Clallam County Charter Review Commission: Recommendation in Favor of Legislation for Ranked-Choice Voting."

Recommendation: "The Charter Review Commission recommends that the Clallam County Board of County Commissioners pass a resolution calling on the state legislature to pass legislation, which would enable the County (and other jurisdictions in the state) to adopt Ranked-Choice Voting for local elections, if they so choose."

On behalf of the Charter Review Commission and our residents, I will be honored to present this "Recommendation" at your upcoming BOCC Worksession, planned for December 14, 2020. I will be accompanied by Lisa Ayrault, Director for FairVote Washington, a group which is described as "a non-partisan, non-profit, volunteer-driven champion of electoral reforms like Ranked-Choice Voting with the goal of giving voters a greater choice, a stronger voice, and a more civil, representative democracy that works for all Americans". <https://fairvotewa.org/>

Following are some key reasons to support this proposal:

1. We desire to restore a "Right", that the voters of Clallam County once had.

In the tradition of our predecessors, who worked to make Clallam County the second of seven counties in our state, to adopt "Home-Rule Charter" as our form of county government, we value autonomy and self determination.

In 2007, we had the opportunity to vote for IRV (Instant Runoff Voting), also known as "Ranked-Choice Voting", that would be used in place of the current election system. While it did not pass at that time, the Charter Review Commission in 2007 had the ability, the "freedom", to submit that idea to the voters of Clallam County.

State Law has changed and now we are "mandated" to have a "Top Two" primary system. It will take our legislators to make a change in the state law to help "Restore" this "Right" we have been stripped of.

2. Community Support

Considerable support for Ranked-Choice Voting has been demonstrated in our community. In a very short period of time, this topic has elicited more public input/support than any other topic received by the CRC, except the Franchises/EMF/NEPA proposal.

3. Financial Savings for the County

By eliminating primary elections, we could expect significant and ongoing financial savings for our county.

4. Liability Concerns

Any county election system in our state can face liability for unfair voting practices under the new Washington State Voting Rights Act. For example, in Yakima County, they use a district model, like our current system. Our county commissioners may and could face a similar situation in the future. Ranked-Choice Voting is the remedy that plaintiffs in Yakima are requesting, because it ensures more equitable representation in county government within a diverse county.

5. Provide a more majoritarian and more democratic form of voting

The Washington State League of Women Voters has endorsed alternative voting systems such as Ranked-Choice Voting and Proportional Representation. (See attachment.)

"The Civic Benefits of Ranked-Choice Voting" - are multiple. (See attachment.)

6. Finally, to clarify:

This Recommendation "is not" stating that the Charter Review Commission is specifically endorsing Ranked-Choice Voting.

This Recommendation "is" saying that we want the "Right " to be able to consider alternative voting systems, such as Ranked-Choice Voting...a right that was previously ours. We want that right "Restored".

On behalf to the 2020 Charter Review Commission and our residents, we are urging the Clallam County Board of Commissioners to emulate the determination and leadership ability that our predecessors demonstrated and pass a resolution:

"...calling on the state legislature to pass legislation, which would enable the County (and other jurisdictions in the state) to adopt Ranked-Choice Voting for local elections, if they so choose."

For your reference, the Local Options Bill for Ranked-Choice Voting, [HB 1722 & SB 5708](#), would allow local jurisdictions in our state to adopt Ranked-Choice Voting if they so choose. The bill is merely permissive and does not mandate anything.

Thank you for listening. Lisa Ayrault has much information on local and nationwide applications of Ranked-Choice Voting, and will help answer any questions that the Commissioners have.

Therese Stokan, Charter Review Commissioner District 3