

Oral Testimony presented by Andrew Mangione, Senior Vice President, AMAC Action

Ladies, gentlemen, and honorable members of the committee,

My name is Andrew Mangione, Senior Vice President of AMAC Action, the Association of Mature American Citizens' advocacy affiliate. AMAC represents more than 2.1 million members nationwide and over 48,000 members in the great state of Wisconsin. AMAC members care strongly about election integrity and the need for free and fair elections. For this reason, AMAC Action strongly opposes SB 528, which would create a five-person general election ballot and use ranked-choice voting to determine the winner.

Thank you for allowing me to share AMAC Action's opposition to this proposal. AMAC represents Americans aged 50 plus, and time and time again; the evidence shows that ranked-choice voting hurts the democratic process, especially those over age 50 who have spent more than 30 years using the simple and effective one-person, one-vote system. My comments today will outline the problems created by the proposed ranked-choice voting system.

First and foremost, we must look at the complexity created by ranked-choice voting compared to the current system. Our current system's simplicity is its strongest feature; one person has one vote for one candidate for each open office. Ranked-choice voting does the opposite by forcing voters to choose multiple candidates, including some for whom they have little information, creating confusion. Ranked-choice voting is also more likely to lead to errors on the ballot, which creates systematic unfairness in the election.

Moreover, the complexity leads to confusion. Wisconsin has used the principle of one person, one vote since its founding in 1848. Changing to a new, unnecessary system will confuse Wisconsin voters. Ranked-choice voting is a complex system that will disenfranchise voters who are unfamiliar with how to rank their choices. Voters should be confident in their elections; ranked-choice voting degrades that confidence.

One of the worst outcomes of using ranked-choice voting is gaming the voting system instituted by campaigns. Campaigns more familiar with the ranked-choice voting system will get supporters to vote strategically to reduce the likelihood of opponents making it through the tabulation rounds. A candidate favored by a large percentage of the electorate could see their rank voted lower because the second-place campaign urges their voters to do so, even if many of that candidate's supporters also support the first-place candidate. Gaming the system is unfair to the voters.

In addition to the undemocratic components I have already mentioned, the financial impact should not be ignored. Wisconsin has and should continue to invest in secure voting technology; however, any election using ranked choice voting requires a much more significant investment in technology to help validate the rankings and recount the votes as candidates are removed. In addition to the technology costs, a massive voter education campaign is necessary to inform

voters of the new and different voting system. This legislation should not advance through the Wisconsin legislature without consideration of the cost.

Finally, I want to raise the issue of ballot errors leading to contested elections. As previously mentioned, the increased complexity of ranked-choice voting leads to confusion for voters. Campaigns affected by the confusion have a solid case to make to their supporters that the voting system, not lack of support, caused them to lose. Already, we have seen the discord created when voters do not trust the integrity of their elections. Ranked-choice voting is not the appropriate method for ensuring fair and secure elections.

In conclusion, ranked-choice voting is a solution in search of a problem. Wisconsin already has free and fair elections based on the principle of one person, one vote. As I have outlined today, this committee should reject ranked-choice voting and continue to ensure that Wisconsin's elections stay free and fair.

Thank you for your time and consideration.