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ATTN: Senate Rules Committee

Chair Burdick & members of the rules committee

My name is Sal Peralta. I am Secretary of the Independent Party of Oregon. I am testifying today on behalf of the Independent Party of Oregon on SB 1510-7.

This language makes several minor but substantive changes to the state elections code.

Our party opposes the changes on page 9 that seek to limit the authority of the Secretary of State to accept more than 2000 signatures collected from prospective initiative petitions. These changes appear intended to block rulemaking, later suspended by the Secretary, which sought to make it easier for grassroots petitions to continue gathering signatures during ballot title challenges because of the frequent use of lawsuits to reduce the period available for signature-gathering on initiative petitions.

Our party opposes the provision on page 13 lines 5-9 barring individuals from signing single signer petitioner sheets that they themselves did not print. There is no compelling state interest behind this provision and we believe that the provision is unwieldy and unenforceable. The main effect of the provision appears intended to needlessly expose business owners to civil and criminal liability should they choose to circulate petitions at their place of business, since opponents of specific initiative petitions have brought criminal and civil action against certain businesses that have left petitions on their counter to sign.

Our party supports the intent behind changes on pages 13 and 14 that enumerate minimum requirements for fields to be included in the state voter file, including especially the requirement that telephone number be included. However, we caution against codifying into statute, certain mechanisms such as PRECINCT SPLIT that reflect specific fields in the current database rather than providing the agency with more generic legal direction about the need provide accurate information about the voting districts and precincts that a voter currently resides in.

We also note that the statute appears to reduce some of the requirements set forth in current administrative policy. For example. The Elections Division could comply with the requirements of (l) on page 14 simply by noting whether the elector voted in previous elections rather than providing what they currently provide, which is the elector's voting history dating back to 2006, when the state adopted OCVR. Though the statute says it is not intended to limit or restrict information that is currently available, this provision will become, in practical terms, less enforceable over time as people forget what the previous standards were.

Respectfully,

Sal Peralta  
Secretary, Independent Party of Oregon