

Submitter: Barbara Dudley  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Rules  
Measure: HB4044

Greetings Chair Smith Warner, Vice Chairs Breese-Iverson and Fahey, Members of the Committee,

My name is Barbara Dudley and I am the Senior Policy Advisor the Oregon Working Families Party. I am writing in support of HB 4044.

The Working Families Party was established in Oregon in 2006 as a minor political party. As you know, there are two ways for a minor party to maintain its party status in Oregon; one is to run a stand alone candidate for statewide office who garners 1% of the vote and the other is to maintain a certain percentage of registered voters.

The OWFP did not want to be in the position having to run stand-alone candidates except when there were no major party candidates who we felt represented the interests of Oregon's working families. Thus we lobbied for and finally in 2009 achieved a rule change to allow minor parties to cross-nominate major party candidates, a system called fusion voting.

But cross-nominating a statewide candidate does not help you maintain your minor party status. Thus we were left with the choice of running a stand-alone statewide candidate or maintaining a substantial number of WFP registered voters which we did successfully for a number of years until the passage of Motor Voter in 2015.

Motor Voter has been a great success, adding hundreds of thousands of eligible voters to the voter rolls, creating a more responsive and representative system. But in doing so, the number of voters necessary to maintain minor party status has grown quickly due to the incredible growth of nonaffiliated voters across the state. HB 4044 will adjust the threshold requirement from one-half to one-quarter of one percent accounting for the influx in automatically registered voters and ensure that minor parties are not negatively impacted by the subsequent growth of nonaffiliated voters.

Minor parties are a vibrant and essential part of the political landscape in Oregon, allowing alternative views to be expressed within the electoral system. HB 4044 is a minor fix that will ensure that minor party voters can continue to be represented in Oregon.

Thank you for your support,  
Barbara Dudley