

Submitter: Stefan Ostrach
On Behalf Of: Oregon Working Families Party
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB4044

Date: February 7, 2022
To: House Committee on Rules
From: Stefan Ostrach
Re: HB 4044

Chair, Smith-Warner, Vice-Chairs, Breese-Iverson and Fahey, members of the committee: my name is Stefan Ostrach and I am a resident of Lane County. I serve on the State Committee of the Working Families Party. I am writing this testimony to urge your unanimous passage of HB 4044 through the committee.

In Oregon, Minor Parties have only two ways to maintain their minor party status, running a statewide candidate or maintaining a minimum statewide voter registration. The Oregon Working Families Party believes that every party has the right to maintain their autonomy and run statewide candidates that represent their values when they see fit, not simply because they must do so in order to maintain their party status.

HB 4044 addresses unintended consequences that arose due to 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. In doing so the number of voters necessary to maintain minor party status has grown quickly and is unattainable, this is largely 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 play an important role for hundreds of thousands of voters across our state. HB 4044 ensures an equitable and attainable number of registered voters can be met.

I urge your support for HB 4044. Thank you for your attention.

Stefan Ostrach