

June 17, 2015

Dear Chair Diane Rosenbaum and Chair Val Hoyle,

The Independent Party of Oregon continues to seek amendment of Oregon's statute on allowing non-affiliated voters (NAVs) to vote in a major party primary.

At the risk of being overly repetitive with what we have said earlier: ORS 254.470(3)(c) requires each NAV to "apply to the county clerk" for the primary ballot of a major party that has opened its primary to NAVs under ORS 254.470.

Incidentally, we have suggested to the Secretary of State that she modify the voter registration form so that each NAV could have a standing request for such ballots on file (see attachment). But the form has not been changed, so each NAV must file a written application for the primary ballot of the major party. Also attached is our suggestion that the notice she sends to NAVs under HB 2177 also enable each NAV to choose to receive the primary ballots of major parties that open their primaries.

The current process severely depresses turnout in the primary and imposes unnecessary costs on the counties. For example, in 2012 Multnomah County mailed over 90,000 postcards to NAVs, as the Republican Party party opened its primary to them. Only 1,848 NAVs requested Republican primary ballots, and only 1,099 such ballots were cast--a turnout rate of about 1%. The incremental cost was at least \$24,000 for Multnomah County alone. The cost statewide was over \$100,000.

It would be less expensive for the counties to simply include the major party's ballot in the vote-by-mail package sent to each NAV. Having the ballot in hand would also greatly increase the number of such ballots actually cast. This is the principal behind HB 2177: A voter with a ballot in hand is far more likely to cast it than is a voter who must fill out a form some weeks or months in advance (such as voter registration form) in order to obtain a ballot in the first place.

Thus, we continue propose this amendment to ORS Chapter 254:

ORS 254.470(3) For an election held on the date of a primary election:

(a) The county clerk shall mail the official ballot of a major political party to each elector who is registered as being affiliated with the major political party as of the 21st day before the date of the election.

(b) The county clerk shall mail the official ballot of a major political party to an elector not affiliated with any political party if ~~the elector has applied for the ballot as provided in this subsection and that~~ one major party has provided under ORS 254.365 for a primary election that admits electors not affiliated with any political party.

(c) If more than one major party has provided under ORS 254.365 for a primary election that admits electors not affiliated with any political party, an ~~An~~ elector not affiliated with any political party who wishes to vote in the primary election of a major political party shall apply to the county clerk in writing. The application shall indicate which major political party ballot the elector wishes to receive. Except for electors described in subsection (4) of this section, and subject to ORS 247.203, the application must be received by the county clerk not later than 5 p.m. of the 21st day before the

date of the election. The county clerk shall mail to the non-affiliated elector the requested official ballot of the major political party.

(d) If the primary election ballot includes city, county or nonpartisan offices or measures, the county clerk shall mail to each elector who is not eligible to vote for party candidates a ballot limited to those offices and measures for which the elector is eligible to vote.

(e) The Secretary shall adopt voter registration forms that allow any non-affiliated elector to create a standing application to receive primary ballots from one or more major parties that open their primaries to non-affiliated voters.

We believe that this amendment will soon have the support of Oregon Association of County Clerks.

We ask that you attach this amendment to any appropriate vehicle.

Thank you.