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ATTN: House Committee on Rules

Chair Williamson & members of the committee,

My name is Sal Peralta. I am testifying on behalf of the Independent Party of Oregon and its 120,000 members statewide.

The Independent Party of Oregon supports HB 2571, which would eliminate the option of Major Political Parties to elect precinct committee persons at the primary election.

Oregon is one of only a handful of states that still require government jurisdictions to pay for political party precinct committee elections. We believe that it is patently unfair for the state to pay for these precinct committee elections, while not allowing voters of minor political parties or voters who are not affiliated with any political party from fully participating in the state primary election.

The precinct committee system was originally created as part of a broader series of anti-corruption reforms that were intended to break up the control that regional political machines had over the everyday workings of political parties.

However, advances in technology allow for political parties to reach their members without the need for these kinds of taxpayer subsidies. For example, since 2010, IPO has used the internet and printed publications to deliver ballots to its members for candidate and officer elections.

In 2016, IPO opted out of the PCP system when it emerged as a major political party because it limits participation in party officer elections and for filling vacancies to only 1 in 500 members whereas our bylaws allow all party members to fully participate in those kinds of elections.

Members of the committee should be aware that **political parties are not required by Oregon law to comply with any provisions related to the PCP statutes**, yet the state is still required to pay the cost of the PCP elections. We note that from 2014-2017 and at earlier times, the Republican Party of Oregon has provided notice to the state that it does not intend to comply with the provisions of the statute, and yet is still given the benefit of utilizing the pcp system.

I have attached copies of letters sent by counsel for ORP opting out of these statutes. Here is the relevant part of one of these letters:

Furthermore, as stated in our bylaws, and in accordance with ORS 248.007(4), the Oregon Republican Party does not intend to be subject to ORS 248.012 through 248.315, except that we do choose to continue to elect our precinct committeepersons as we have done in the past. This notice is also provided in accordance with ORS 248.007(5) for 2014 through the next primary election in 2016 and is given not later than the 274th day before the date of the next primary election. This notice will continue to be in effect until further notice.

Best wishes,

/s/  8/13/14
Tyler Smith, ORP Legal Counsel

Respectfully,

Sal Peralta