



503.687.1206

www.indparty.com

info@indparty.com

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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 strongly supports the underlying concept of HB 3140, which create a "People's Primary" that will allow candidates to seek the support of non-affiliated voters during the primary election. More than any other bill under consideration during the current legislative session, we believe that this legislation has the potential to increase public participation during the primary election (and at a much lower cost than some of the other ideas that have been heard).

In 2016, the Independent Party of Oregon opened its primary to non-affiliated voters. We note that in 2016, turnout in that Primary was significantly higher than that of any other third party in the state. Turnout among Independent Party members was nearly double that of non-affiliated voters (37% versus 20%), while turnout among non-affiliated voters who requested an IPO ballot was 60% -- three times the participation rate of other non-affiliated voters.

However, in order to ensure basic fairness towards all of Oregon's political parties, we believe that a mechanism should be added to allow members of minor political parties to earn a spot on the People's Primary. Currently, there is no such path other than qualifying via petition as a non-affiliated candidate, which is substantially more difficult than the provisions for a major party candidate (pay a very small fee).

Additionally, we question whether the state's sore loser law is constitutional, as applied to this legislation (but also as applied to Oregon's Presidential selection process; to minor party nominating processes, and to filing by petition). We suggest, as part of due diligence on this legislation, that the carrier request an analysis from legislative counsel on the constitutionality of Oregon's sore loser law.

Finally, we would observe that if this legislation passes, Oregon minor political parties would remain the only group in the state that is not allowed to fully participate in the state primary election. In addition to moving this legislation forward (with the suggested amendments) with a "do pass" recommendation, we urge the committee to also take up legislation to allow minor political parties to opt in to the state primary. There is currently legislation drafted in both the House and Senate that would accomplish this.

Respectfully,

Sal Peralta