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ATTN: Senate Committee on Rules

Chair Burdick and members of the committee,

My name is Sal Peralta. I am offering this testimony on behalf of the Independent Party of Oregon.

The Independent Party of Oregon supports this legislation.

Most of the sections of the bill create terms that allow minor political parties to opt in to the state primary election. We support those provisions for a couple of reasons:

- Sending partisan ballots to voters tends to increase voter participation.
- It addresses an inequity in our current election system. If public monies are spent to administer the elections of some parties, then all parties should have the same right to participate.

These sections do not impose any new requirement on county clerks to adopt a new election system like ranked-choice voting. They are merely extend the same opportunity for minor parties to use a public process to conduct their elections.

As an organization that pioneered the concept of conducting a binding party-run primary election using an alternative voting system, we believe it is good for all political parties to have the opportunity to conduct their elections through an open public process.

Section 11 allows political parties to establish rules allowing people who were not members for more than 250 days prior to the date of the primary election to seek a party's nomination.

This section is needed because Oregon's current law, which prohibits any candidate from appearing on the ballot of a political party unless they were a member of that party for more than 250 days before the date of the primary election is overbroad and likely unconstitutional.

The Democratic Party of Alaska last year won a lawsuit in 2017 against a similar state law that was less restrictive than Oregon's.

There are other public interests served beyond more correctly aligning Oregon statute with the constitutional rights of political parties.

This change will also allow us to set up a process that would allow candidates like many of you, who have been allowed to compete on our party's ballot in the past for our cross-nomination as a minor party, to appear on the ballot to continue competing for the cross-nomination of parties like ours as a named candidate on the ballot.

This provision is also beneficial for election administrators like the county clerks, since it will significantly reduce the number of write-in ballots that they will need to process, since there will be many more named candidates on our party's ballot

It is important to note, just to avoid possible confusion, that this provision would not allow a second party's cross-nomination to be used to circumvent Oregon's sore loser law.

Section 34 changes the denominator for when an assembly of electors qualifies as a major or minor political party. This provision is intended to mitigate the impact that the new Motor Voter law has had on voter registration in Oregon, significantly increasing the number of non-affiliated voters in a way that threatens ballot access for our party and for several of Oregon's minor political parties. We are really agnostic about how that denominator is set. But this does achieve the promise that was made by legislative leadership a few years ago that the Motor Voter law would not harm third parties in Oregon.

Section 41 requires that candidates seeking nomination for public office by write-in must file a statement of intent with the filing officer. This is intended to reduce the workload of dealing with write-ins on county elections officials.

Section 42 allows political parties to file a rule requiring that candidates receive a minimum number of votes in order to win a party's nomination by write in. This is intended to ensure that write-in candidates have bona fide support of party members and to provide a modicum of assurance that candidates are legitimate proxies for a party's interests.

We encourage your committee to move this bill forward with a "do pass" recommendation.