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ATTN: House Committee on Rules

My name is Sal Peralta. I am here to testify on behalf of the Independent Party of Oregon, requesting an amendment to section 30 in SB 224 A.

These sections were added by the Senate Rules Committee with no public hearing, no notice and without consulting anyone involved in any major or minor political party that is affected by these changes.

Section 30 of this bill does not impact any entity other than the Independent Party of Oregon.

The underlying legislation was part of a year-long negotiation between Secretary of State Dennis Richardson and our party to avoid a lawsuit by our party that related to some of the ways in which Oregon's law impairs the speech, association, and voting rights of IPO and its members, so long as we remain a major political party.

After Secretary Richardson passed, most of the bill was gutted by the Senate Rules committee which waited months to take up the bill and only restored some portions of the bill after committees had gone to one hour notice

Deleted parts of the original SB 224 would have solved the constitutional concerns of our party have not been restored, therefore we cannot support the bill.

The main laws we have concerns about are:

1. ORS 249.046 which limits eligibility in the major party primary to persons who have been members of the party for 180 days prior to the filing deadline (250 days before the primary election) (ORS 249.046).

2. ORS 254.365 which allows anyone, including non-members of IPO, to win the major party primary by write-in, while providing a huge advantage to the Democratic and Republican candidates for the same seat: a positive statement in every Voters' Pamphlet that no other write-in candidate is allowed.

The written testimony submitted by our co-chair, Dan Meek, offers an analysis of the implications of this bill. For the sake of your committee's time, I will not delve into those.

Instead, I will simply request that your committee strike the change that this bill makes to the existing Section 30.

That amendment would allow our party to return to minor party status for the 2020 election. I would additionally request that this committee take up ballot access for third parties between now and the January session through an open process that engages third parties as stakeholders.

On a personal note, I have been coming to this building on a paid and volunteer capacity since 2001. I have found the conduct of this legislative session to be extremely frustrating, particularly with respect to the Oregon Senate.

More than usual, decisions are being decided behind closed doors without input from impacted constituencies.

A few weeks ago, House Bill 2997, which was the result of a year-long community process in the City of McMinnville to address workforce housing, was gut-and-stuffed by the Senate despite having the bi-partisan votes to pass and after passing this chamber 51-8. Our city did not even have the courtesy of a meeting, despite 4 in-person requests and a letter from our mayor.

This legislation had a similar closed-door process in the Senate. It's not fair and it's not right.

Just because you have the power to do something without input from stakeholders does not mean that you should.

This is a House of the People. Every Oregonian who brings a matter to this building deserves to have their concerns taken seriously regardless of what part of the state they are from, no matter what their party affiliation or the affiliation of the person who is representing them.

My hope is that your committee will take our concerns about this bill seriously, make the amendment we are requesting, and that the House Majority Leader meet with our party and other third parties during the interim session to address ballot access in a more open, inclusive and substantive fashion.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sal Peralta