



February 6, 2020

Chair Holvey, and Members of the Committee.

For the record my name is Thomas Mosher and I am the Interim Director of the Oregon Working Families Party. For nearly a decade the Oregon Working Families Party has been a proud and active minor political party, allowing Oregonians across our state to signify their values and come together to endorse and nominate candidates under the OWFP banner.

I'm here today to offer our support for House Bill 4026 which in many ways is an extension and further fix for what was attempted last year as part of Senate Bill 244.

Under current law, every two years we are given two ways to maintain our minor party status. The first option is to have .5% of all registered voters be members of our party. This is a metric we have been proud to meet in the past. However, because Motor Voter automatically registers voters (most of which are Non-Affiliated Voters), it has unintentionally raised this bar by nearly 50%.

The second option to maintain our status is to run a statewide candidate of our own. At the Oregon Working Families Party, we want to be able to choose whether and when we run stand-alone statewide candidates based on our core policy mission, not just as a means to maintain our status.

Unfortunately after final amendments were adopted, last years Senate Bill 244 did not adequately solve the situation. That is why we are here today to ask that you pass House Bill 4026 which would adjust the threshold for maintaining minor party status to account for the increased influx of automatically registered voters through motor voter.

House Bill 4026 would reduce the percentage needed to maintain minor party status from $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1% to $\frac{1}{3}$ of 1%. As we have noted we have seen a large influx of newly registered voters through automatic voter registration, and while we are supportive of the efforts of automatic motor voter registration we believe it is important to avoid the unintended consequences to minor parties.

The Oregon Working Families Party would rather spend our time and efforts in 2020 reaching out to these newly registered voters in efforts to get them to affiliate, and working with cross

nominated candidates we support than having to seek out a candidate to run for statewide office purely to maintain our status as a minor party. By reducing the threshold needed to maintain minor party status to be reflective of the influx of newly registered voters that have come on the roles because of automatic motor voter registration it gives us that opportunity.

That is why we ask that you pass House Bill 4026.

Thank you for your time,

Thomas Mosher
Interim Director, Oregon Working Families Party