

HB 4044 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Rules

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Meeting Dates: 2/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Reduces the number of electors who must be registered as a member of a minor political party for the party to retain political party status from one-half of one percent to one-quarter of one percent of the total number of registered electors in the state.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Replaces the measure. Reduces the number of electors who must be registered as a member of a minor political party for the party to retain political party status from one-half of one percent to one-quarter of one percent of the total number of registered electors in the state. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

BACKGROUND:

A minor political party can maintain ballot access in one of two ways:

1. maintain voter registration equal to one-half of one percent of the total number of registered electors in the state as members of the party; or
2. maintain a voter registration equal to at least one-tenth of one percent of the total votes cast in the state or electoral district for all candidates for Governor at the most recent election at which a candidate for Governor was elected to a full term, and at least once in a four-year period a party candidate must poll at least one percent of the total votes cast in the electoral district for all candidates for President or any single state office.

When Oregon Motor Voter was adopted in 2015, there was uncertainty about how the increase in registered voters would impact minor and major political parties and their ability to maintain access to the ballot. In 2016, the Legislative Assembly set specific dates prior to the operative date of Oregon Motor Voter for minor political parties to use when determining ballot access for a certain period of time. Senate Bill 224 (2019), the omnibus election-related bill, extended the sunset date for determining minor political party status from November 6, 2018 to November 3, 2020.

According to the Secretary of State, a total of 2,947,391 Oregonians were registered to vote as of September 2021 ([Voter Registration Comparison by County, September 2021](#)). Only one minor party had voter registration of more than one-half of one percent, or 14,737 members. If reduced to one-quarter of one percent, or 7,369 members, then three parties meet the voter registration threshold.

House Bill 4044 reduces the number of electors who must be registered as a member of a minor political party in order for the party to retain political party status from 0.5 percent to 0.25 percent of the total number of registered electors in the state.