

February 7, 2022

House Committee on Rules  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE, Room 333  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: HB4044 Reduces percent of registered members for minor parties to retain status

Chair Smith Warner, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Fahey, and Committee Members:

Attached are two charts that might help you understand Oregon minor political party registration better.

The first chart shows counts of registered minor party members at general elections from 2012 to 2020.

The second chart displays the percentage of registered minor party members relative to total voter registration in Oregon for the same period.

Political party organizations are central to the theory and practice of democracy.

Parties have crucial roles in mediating between voters and elected officials by socializing voters to constructive political participation and aggregating voter preferences in party platforms.

However, political polarization and violence are becoming too common as registered members decline in both major parties.

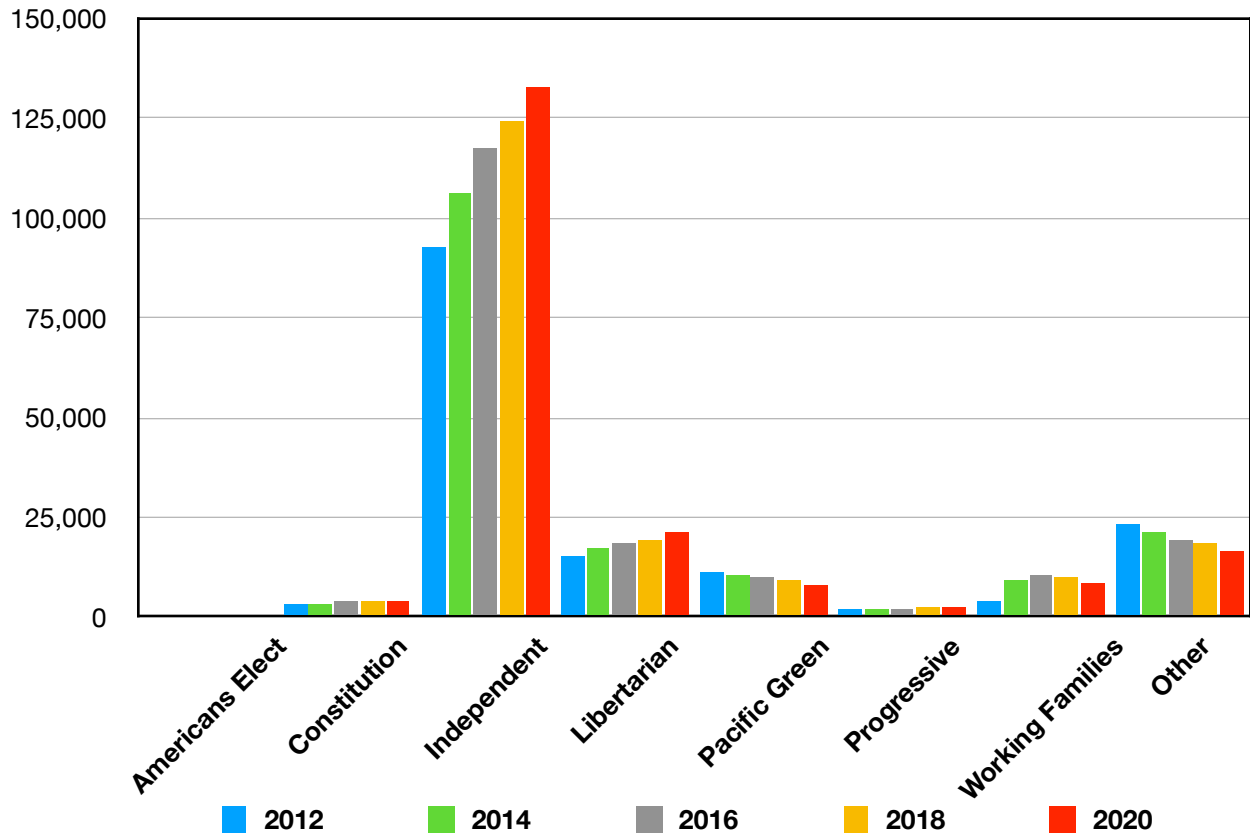
Voting and party membership should be effective channels to change public policies.

A comprehensive review of Oregon political party regulation should be conducted with the goal of fostering more positive roles for parties in elections and politics.

Sincerely,

Brian Wanty  
Eugene, Oregon

## Oregon Minor Political Party Registration Count at General Elections 2012–2020



*Data source: Oregon Secretary of State. Official Voter Registration and Turnout Statistics: General Elections 2012–2020*

The Independent Party is the largest minor party with a rising membership. This may be inflated due to some voters registering for this party thinking they are registering as independent of any political party.

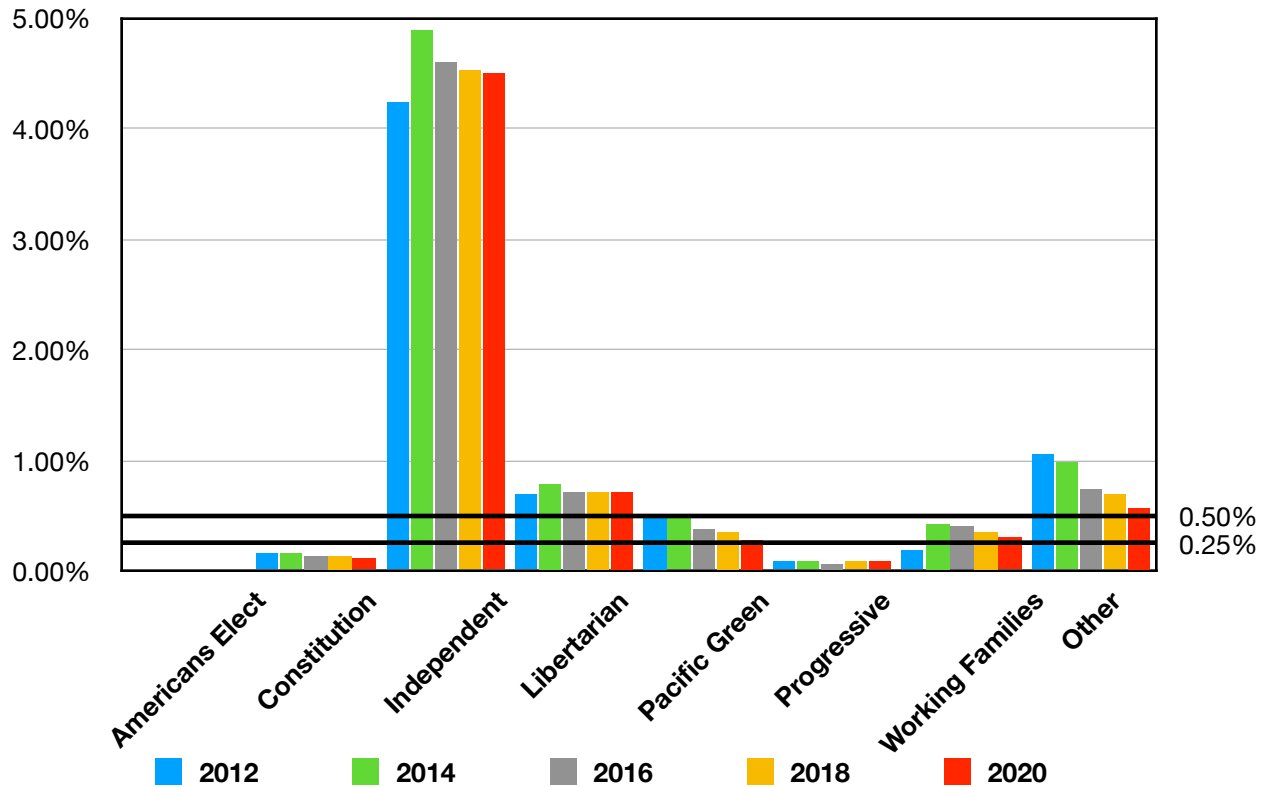
The Libertarian Party also has a growing membership and is the next largest minor party.

The Pacific Green and Working Families are medium-sized minor parties and have declining memberships.

The Constitution and Progressive parties are the smallest minor parties and have flat membership counts over the period examined.

The Americans Elect Party lost party status after 2014.

## Oregon Minor Political Party Registration Percent at General Elections 2012–2020



*Data source: Oregon Secretary of State. Official Voter Registration and Turnout Statistics: General Elections 2012–2020*

The Independent Party's membership is declining relative to all registered voters.

The percentage registered with the Libertarian, Constitution, and Progressive parties is flat.

The Pacific Green and Working Families parties registration percentages are declining.

The two horizontal lines indicate the current one-half of one percent (0.50%) standard and the proposed cutoff of one-quarter of one percent (0.25%).

Under the current standard, the Constitution, Pacific Green, Progressive, and Working Families parties would lose status.

Under the proposed cutoff, the Pacific Green and Working parties would retain status.

The Independent and Libertarian would maintain status regardless.