

Date:2/8/2022

To: House Committee on Rules

From: Thomas Mosher, Portland Resident/OWFP Treasurer

Re: HB 4044

Chair Smith Warner and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Thomas Mosher and I am the Treasurer, and former interim State Director for the Oregon Working Families Party (OWFP). I am excited to be here today in support of HB 4044, and I want to thank the House Rules committee for the opportunity to bring this issue back before you this session.

The Oregon Working Families Party firmly believes that every party has the right to maintain their autonomy and run statewide candidates that represent their values when they see fit, not simply because they must do so in order to maintain their party status. In Oregon, Minor Parties have two ways to maintain their minor party status, running a statewide candidate or maintaining a minimum statewide voter registration.

After the 2015 passage of Motor Voter, which has been a great success in its intended purpose of reducing barriers to voter registration and giving more Oregonians the opportunity to participate in our elections, there still however are unintended consequences that came from this. HB 4044 addresses some of those consequences. Motor voter added hundreds of thousands of eligible voters creating a more responsive, representative, equitable, and accessible electoral system. In doing so, however, the number of voters necessary to maintain minor party status grew nearly overnight in a way that is unattainable for nearly every minor party. This is largely due to a sizable growth of automatically registered non affiliated voters in the state. In the vast majority of cases this non affiliated status is not due to an intentional ascription, but rather because a default of non affiliated is prescribed if the motor voter registrant does not actively fill out and return a party affiliation card which arrives in the mail at a later date.

The solution is to adjust the threshold requirement from one half to one quarter of 1%. This would account for the influx in automatically registered voters and ensure that minor parties are not impacted by the subsequent increase in non affiliated voters. HB 4044 ensures an equitable and attainable number can be met, as was originally intended.

On behalf of the Oregon Working Families Party and as an Oregon Voter, I thank you for your time this morning and ask for the committee's support in advancing HB 4044 through the legislative process.

Thomas Mosher, Esq.

Treasurer, Oregon Working Families Party