



State Senator James I. Manning, Jr.

Senate President Pro Tempore

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To: Members of the House Committee on Rules

From: State Senator James I. Manning, Jr., Senate District 7

Date: February 8, 2022

Subject: HB 4044

Chair Smith Warner, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson and Members of the Committee,

As a longtime supporter of the Oregon Working Families Party, I write in support of HB 4044.

Minor political parties are critical to our election process – they allow Oregonians across our state to voice their support of candidates that they feel reflect their own values. HB 4044 is a necessary statutory fix that will ensure minor political parties, including the Working Families Party, have realistic voter registration thresholds to meet in order to keep their party status. For thousands of Oregonians, making this change will ensure that voters will continue to have the option to select the party of their choosing when they register to vote.

Oregon's great work on automatic voter registration has meant that more of our neighbors are registered to vote, which is great news for our State. Because minor party status is linked to the percentage of all registered voters, the number of registered voters needed to maintain minor political party status has increased. HB 4044, by changing the threshold to .25 of 1% of registered voters (compared to .5 of 1% as is current law), will allow parties like the Working Families Party a more achievable voter registration threshold that takes into consideration our increased voter registration efforts of the past and provides flexibility for further automatic voter registration efforts without jeopardizing some minor political parties status.

This bill will help make party registration requirements more realistic and will remove barriers to minor party political status that increased voter registration efforts have created. House Bill 4044 is a simple but necessary fix, and I urge your support.

Sincerely,

Senator James I. Manning, Jr.
Senate President Pro Tempore
Senate District 7