



Support HB 1359 and SB 28 for Fair Ballot Access and Greater Voter Choice

Problem: Oklahoma has the most restrictive ballot access laws in the nation. We were the only state limited to just two choices for president in 2004, the first time this has happened to any citizen since 1976. To form a new political party, Oklahoma law currently requires signatures equal to 5% of the last presidential or gubernatorial vote. The table below shows how Oklahoma is more restrictive than other states in our region.

Signature Requirements for 2005-06 Election Cycle

Ranking	State	Petitioning requirement for full party ballot access	Petitioning Requirement per million residents
1	Oklahoma	73,188	20,629
2	Texas	45,253	1,980
3	Kansas	16,477	6,003
4-tie	Missouri	10,000	1,724
4-tie	Arkansas	10,000	3,598
6	New Mexico	3,781	1,961
7-tie	Colorado	1,000*	214*
7-tie	Louisiana	1,000*	221*

* Colorado and Louisiana require 1,000 to register under the new party's affiliation for ballot access.

** Requirements taken from www.OkVoterChoice.org and Ballot Access News, www.ballot-access.org

Solution:

- HB 1359 and SB 28 would return the number of signatures for recognition of political party back to 5,000; **the number required from 1924 until 1974.**
- For a party to stay recognized, this reform would require a party's candidate for president or governor to receive 1% of the vote. Over ten states have similar requirements and the median is 2% for any statewide race. The current 10% is one of the five most restrictive in the nation.
- The reform would also allow independent presidential candidates to pay a filing fee of \$5,000 in lieu of petitioning (currently, signatures requirement is equal to 3% of last major vote).

Comments: Richard Winger, editor of Ballot Access News, recently wrote, "This is about VOTER rights. Pound it in. People have a right to vote for the candidate of their choice. It's isn't a free election otherwise. Even the former president of Iran has criticized the U.S. for our lack of freedom in our elections. It would help the U.S. image worldwide if Oklahoma would fix this dreadful blot."

"When Oklahoma required 5,000 signatures for parties to get on the ballot...Oklahoma never had more than 4 parties on the ballot, including the Democratic & Republican Parties."

OBAR is a coalition committed to the cause of fair ballot access. We are members of the Libertarian, Green, and Constitution Parties, along with many independents and members of the Republican and Democratic Parties. We are diverse in our political views, but we agree on one thing – the right to vote for the candidate of **your** choice. We hope you will join us in working for a return to a fair democratic process.

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