



## 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 for signature/registration requirement for full party ballot access	State	Petitioning requirement for full party ballot access	Petitioning Requirement to run Presidential candidate
<b>1</b>	<b>Oklahoma</b>	<b>73,188</b>	<b>43,913</b>
2	Texas	45,253	74,108
3	Kansas	16,477	5,000
4-tie	Missouri	10,000	10,000
4-tie	Arkansas	10,000	1,000
6	New Mexico	3,781	15,000
7-tie	Colorado	1,000*	None (pay fee)
7-tie	Louisiana	1,000*	None (pay fee)

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

\*\* Requirements taken from Ballot Access News and using relevant statutes, [www.ballot-access.org/2006/090106.html](http://www.ballot-access.org/2006/090106.html)

**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). 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 3% of last vote is required).

**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. During the 1920's...the Socialist and Farmer-Labor Parties were on the ballot. In the 1930's it was the Socialist and Prohibition Parties. The Prohibition Party was the only one on, besides the major parties, in the 1940's. Then none were on until George Wallace's American Party in 1968."

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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