



OBAR Oklahomans for Ballot Access Reform

a coalition of Oklahomans working for FAIR laws that give voters genuine choices



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Ballot Access Petition Filed with Secretary of State Today

Oklahomans for Ballot Access Reform (OBAR) filed today to circulate an initiative petition to put a question on the 2008 ballot. The initiative seeks to reform Oklahoma's ballot access laws, considered the most restrictive in the country.

"It is time to hear what Oklahoma voters think about our state's biased electoral system. With half of our state legislative races unopposed last November, we believe Oklahomans will support more voter choice," said Matthew R. Jones, OBAR Chairman.

OBAR will collect approximately 90,000 signatures over the next 90 days, and plans to integrate petitioning with an awareness campaign, including T-shirts for circulators and information cards for signatories.

"Although our effort is receiving nationwide attention, our petitioning will rely heavily on our members volunteering. This is a real grassroots effort." said Matthew Jones.

"I'm surprised that this hasn't been tried before, considering the positive things I've heard from people about the proposal," said Jimmy Cook, OBAR Vice-Chairman and Libertarian Party of Oklahoma Chairman. "Oklahomans are tired of having politicians dictate who they can and can not vote for. This petition would give voters the ability to choose."

To form a new political party, Oklahoma law currently requires signatures equal to 5% of the last presidential or gubernatorial vote, which meant over 73,000 signatures for 2006. This number was TEN TIMES the per capita requirement of many neighboring states, including Texas, Missouri, and New Mexico.

This initiative would return the number of signatures for recognition of political party back to 5,000, the number required in Oklahoma from 1924 until 1974. This would make Oklahoma the 30th state to require 5,000 or fewer signatures for a new political party or independent presidential candidate. The initiative would also make the requirements more reasonable for a party to demonstrate support and stay on the ballot.

"To hold elected officials accountable, we need a process that engages Oklahoma citizens. Ballot Access Reform is part of OKIES' larger goal of having more competitive races," said Clark Duffe, Oklahoma Coalition of Independents (OKIES) Chairman.

"Oklahoma was the only state where voters were limited to just two choices for president in 2004. Even though the winner take all system tends toward two parties, we believe Oklahomans voters deserve more choices." said Matthew R. Jones.

Ballot access reform has a wide base of support. The 2007 Oklahoma Republican Platform states: "We support less restrictive ballot access for all political parties and candidates." Also, similar ballot access questions have passed in Florida and Massachusetts.

OBAR is a coalition of the Libertarian, Green, and Constitution Parties and the Oklahoma Coalition of Independents, unified with the simple goal of making laws fair for new political parties.

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