



FAIR BALLOT ACCESS PROPOSAL April 2015

By Don Shrader

While details of said proposal are still being worked, below is the beginning of a proposal to allow fair and equitable ballot access that would apply equally to all candidates, regardless of political affiliation.

First, political parties should be permitted to choose their candidates in accordance with their party rules free of state mandates but at their own expense! To be recognized as a political party by the Secretary of State (SoS), any group wishing to be so recognized would need to submit a set of Bylaws to the SoS detailing how their candidates for office are to be selected by the party. Anyone failing to meet these qualifications would then be ineligible to be a candidate representing that party. Publically run primary elections should be done away with, along with the costs now borne by the taxpayer. While it may be proper to place other requirements, such as submitting a list of officers for groups wishing to form a recognized political party, whatever those requirements are, they must be fair, reasonable, and equitable applying equally to ALL political parties, even the two current major parties. They should be so constructed as to encourage competition, not limit it to a select few.

Second, to gain ballot access in the general election, candidates for political office, whether associated with a party or running as an independent, would need to secure the same number of valid signatures of Ohio registered voters within the political subdivision of the office they are seeking who have not signed another candidate's petition for the same office. My initial suggestions (subject to debate) are:

- For elective offices below the county level – 10
- For elective offices at the county level or for State Representative or State Senator – 50

- For U.S. Congress – 100
- For President of the U.S., U.S. Senate, or Statewide offices – 2,000 with 100 signatures from at least 10 different counties.

Signatures could be any registered voter within that political subdivision (i.e. precinct, township, district) for which the candidate is seeking office as long as the voter did not sign a petition for another candidate seeking the same office. Obviously, the signatures would have to be submitted to the proper Board of Elections by some specified uniform date such that the BoE has a reasonable time period to certify the signatures and print the ballots.

An alternate qualifier that might work across the board (and one that I like more and more as I think about it), rather than specifying a set number of signatures would be to make it a percentage such as 1/10 of 1 percent of the number of voters that voted for that particular office in the previous election. Thus, for the 2018 election for Governor, any candidate at any level would have to obtain at least $0.001 \times 3,056,000$ (the number of voters voting in the 2014 Gubernatorial Race) or at least 3,056 valid signatures, with 5% of those 3,056 signatures, or 306 signatures, having to come from each of at least ten different counties. For the 2016 race for Ohio's 8th Congressional District (currently held by John Boehner), each candidate would have to obtain $0.001 \times 188,330$ (the number of votes cast in the 2014 race for that District race) = 189 signatures. There should be no restriction on the signatures except that they need to be properly registered voters in the state of Ohio, reside in the political subdivision for which the candidate is seeking to be elected, and cannot sign the petition of more than one candidate for the same office.

Yes, much work still needs to be done to be certain the proposal is properly constructed and all legitimate concerns regarding its workings have been addressed. However, I believe this does provide the basis for a ballot initiative that provides reasonable and proper ballot access rules for Ohio.

I am recommending that this be a change (Amendment) to the Ohio Constitution voiding all primary voting as well as all laws and rules that conflict with this proposed Amendment (which will take time to research and incorporate into a complete petition). I am further recommending that this be instituted as a

state ballot initiative thereby voted upon by the voting public. This is an initiative that can and should be supported by every freedom loving political party and person in Ohio from the Socialist Party to the Constitution Party, from the TEA Party to the ACLU, and every independent. In reality, it should also be embraced by the Republicans and Democrats as it also gives them better control of the candidates they wish to run for political office. This a win-win-win proposition for all.

LET FREEDOM RING!

*Respectfully submitted by Don Shrader
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They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety. Ben Franklin