

**Political Party Ballot Access**

While I may have certain minor disagreements with the extent of the proposed legislation, Representative Hulseley's Bill is a needed major step forward in **Political Party Ballot Access Reform**, and were I in the Tennessee House, I would whole heartedly support the legislation.,

HOUSE  
BILL 609

By Hulseley

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 2,  
relative to political parties.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF  
TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 2-1-104(a)(23), is amended by deleting the language "at least two and one-half percent (2.5%)" and substituting instead the language "at least one-half percent (0.5%)".

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 2-1-104(a)(30), is amended by deleting the language "at least five percent (5%)" and substituting instead the language "at least twenty-five percent (25%)".

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 2-13-107(a), is amended by deleting the language "at least two and one-half percent (2.5%)" wherever it appears and substituting instead the language "at least

one-half percent (0.5%)".

SECTION 4. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 2-13-107(f), is amended by deleting the subsection and substituting instead the following:

If a petition filed pursuant to this section is determined to be sufficient by the coordinator of elections pursuant to subsection (b), such party is recognized as a minor party for all remaining primary and general elections in the current election year.

However, if the recognized minor party is established solely within one (1) county, at least one (1) candidate for the recognized minor party must have received a number of votes equal to at least one percent (1%) of the total number of votes cast for candidates for the office of county mayor in the most recent election for such office to maintain recognition. If the recognized minor party is established statewide, at least one (1) candidate for the recognized minor party must have received a number of votes equal to

at least one percent (1%) of the total number of votes cast for candidates for the office of governor in the most recent election for such office to maintain recognition.

A recognized minor party that fails to meet such requirements ceases to be a recognized minor party. Such party may regain recognition only by following the procedures for formation of a recognized minor party. The coordinator of elections shall advise each county election commission of a

recognized minor party's failure to receive a sufficient number of votes and shall order that said party cease to be recognized.

SECTION 5. This act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.

SUMMARY OF BILL: Decreases, from 2.5 percent to .5 percent, the minimum number of signatures of registered voters equal to the percentage of the total number of votes cast for gubernatorial candidates in the most recent election of governor received in order to qualify as a recognized minor party in a primary or general election. Increases, from 5 percent to 25 percent, the minimum number of votes equal to the percentage of the total number of votes cast for gubernatorial candidates in the most recent election of governor one political party candidate must receive for the party to qualify as a statewide political party. Decreases, from 5 percent to 1 percent, the minimum number of votes equal to the percentage of the total number of votes cast for candidates in the most recent election of county mayor a recognized minor party must receive if the party is established solely within one county.

Authorizes a recognized minor party to retain statewide recognition beyond the current election year if one candidate for the party received a number of votes equal to 1 percent of the total votes cast for gubernatorial candidates in the most recent election of governor.

Assumptions:

- Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-13-107(±), to retain statewide recognition as a minor party after the current election year, the minor party must meet the requirements of a statewide political party. A statewide political party is currently required to have one candidate receive the number of votes equal to five percent of total votes cast for gubernatorial candidates in the most recent election of governor to retain statewide political party status.
- The proposed legislation authorizes a recognized minor party to retain statewide status after the current election year if one candidate for the party received a number of votes equal to one percent of the total votes cast for gubernatorial candidates in the most recent election of governor.
- The proposed legislation may result in an increase of recognized

minor party participation in primary or general elections; however, it is not estimated to significantly impact the policies or procedures of the Secretary of State Division of Elections or local county election commissions.

**HB0609 002696 by \*Hulsey, Hodges, Reedy (SB0651 002696 by \*Pody)**

Political Parties - As introduced, decreases the number of signatures required for a political party to become a recognized minor party; increases the number of votes a political party's candidate for a statewide office must receive during a gubernatorial election for the party to be a statewide political party; makes other related changes. -Amends TCA Title 2.

**HB0609 002696 by \*Hulsey, Hodges, Reedy (SB0651 002696 by \*Pody)**

Political Parties - As introduced, decreases the number of signatures required for a political party to become a recognized minor party; increases the number of votes a political party's candidate for a statewide office must receive during a gubernatorial election for the party to be a statewide political party; makes other related changes. -Amends TCA Title 2.

## **BILL SUMMARY**

HB0609/SB0651

This bill revises present law provisions relative to political parties, as follows:

(1) Under present law, any group or organization may file a petition with the coordinator of elections to become a recognized minor party. That petition must bear at a minimum the signatures of registered voters equal to 2.5 percent of the total number of votes cast for gubernatorial candidates in the most recent election for governor. This bill decreases the number of signatures required from 2.5 to 0.5 percent of such votes cast;

(2) Under present law, a statewide political party means a political party at least one of whose candidates for an office to be elected by voters of the entire state has received a number of votes equal to at least 5 percent of the total number of votes cast for gubernatorial candidates in the most recent election

of governor. This bill increases the votes required to be considered a statewide political party from 5 to 25 percent of such votes cast;

(3) Under present law, for purposes of a general or primary election, if an organization intends to establish a recognized minor party solely within one county, the petition must, among other things, bear the signatures of registered voters within such county equal to at least 2.5 percent of the total number of votes cast within such county for gubernatorial candidates in the most recent election for governor .

This bill decreases the percentage required from 2.5 percent to .5 percent; and

(4) Under present law, if a petition to be recognized as a minor party provision is determined to be sufficient, then the party is recognized as a minor party for all remaining primary and general elections in the current election year. However, if the recognized minor party is established solely within one county, at least one candidate for the recognized minor party must have received a number of votes equal to at least 5 percent of the total number of votes cast for candidates for the office of county mayor in the most recent election for such office. To maintain recognition beyond the current election

year, a minor party must meet the requirements of a statewide political party as defined by present law. This bill:

(A) Removes the requirement that a minor party meet the requirements of a statewide political party to maintain recognition;

(B) Decreases the applicable percentage of votes required if the minor party is established solely in one county from 5 percent to 1percent; and

(C) Adds that if the recognized minor party is established statewide, at least one candidate for the recognized minor party must have received a number of votes equal to at least 1percent of the total number of votes cast for candidates for the office of governor in the most recent election for such office in order to maintain recognition.