



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1440

Justin Fecteau

7 Davis Street
Augusta, ME 04330
Cell Phone: (207) 248-7183
Justin.Fecteau@legislature.maine.gov

April 5, 2021

**Testimony in Support of LD 1061:
An Act To Protect Minor Political Parties That Seek Official Party Status**

Good morning Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo, and my colleagues on the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs. I am Justin Fecteau and I proudly represent House District 86, which consists of the western and northern portions of Augusta.

In the US Bill of Rights there is the “right of the people to peaceably assemble.” In the Maine Constitution, “the people have a right at all times in an orderly and peaceable manner to assemble to consult upon the common good.”

When it comes to assembling under the banner of a political party, I do not believe we are living up to our constitutional obligations. I believe Ranked-Choice Voting doubly requires us to ensure minor political parties have a seat at the table and I feel our current laws inhibit their right to assemble and get equal access to the ballot. Without a healthy spread of minor political parties, RCV in Maine has become a game of Team Red vs Team Blue vs whoever Team Red or Team Blue convinced to run to push the other Team down the ballot. Recognized Libertarians, Socialists, Reformers, Constitutionalists, and Democratic Socialists will help RCV function more properly

In current state statute, in order to enroll a sufficient amount of voters, a burdensome number of 5,000 exists. This bill proposes to halve that number. It also provides a provision that the Secretary of State must make the party aware if a party has fallen below the threshold and give them 90 days to rectify the issue. My idea for this comes from the time when several thousand Libertarians were simply unenrolled by our previous Secretary of State when they fell below the general election threshold of 10,000 voters. Those voters were simply ‘unassembled’, voter suppressed, and disenfranchised by government action.

Heeding the advice of the Presiding Officers to take bill’s out of the Revisor’s Office as soon as possible and introduce any germane tweaks to the bill in the committee, I am introducing the following friendly amendment. This is in addition to my bill. This amendment does not supplant my bill:

I am requesting that Section 301, subsection 1, part E be stricken from state statutes. Having two different hoops to jump through is, in my opinion, silly. Either a party has successfully assembled or not.

21-A, §301. Qualified parties

1. Primary Election

~~E. At least 10,000 voters enrolled in the party voted in the last general election, except that a qualified party does not have to meet this enrollment until the 2nd general election after it has qualified and thereafter.~~

There should be one number to qualify as an official political party in the State of Maine.

Even if this bill passes, there are still hurdles in order to qualify for the ballot. When I first considered running for the State Legislature, I was a registered Libertarian. I was unable to run in my district as a Libertarian since there were not 25 Libertarians within House District 86. So, I ran as a Republican instead. Now, I'm obviously Maine's coolest Republican, but that's a discussion for another day.

In summary, I am proposing one 2,500 voter threshold for a minor political party to become a recognized political party by the State of Maine. This will greatly simplify our laws and reduce the number of lawsuits the State of Maine will face.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justin Fecteau', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rep. Justin Fecteau