



THE PENNSYLVANIA BALLOT ACCESS COALITION

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★ PROHIBITIONIST ★ UNIFIED INDEPENDENT ★ NEW AMERICAN INDEPENDENT ★ AND MORE ★

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THIRD PARTIES PLAN MASSIVE "VOTERS' CHOICE ACT" DISTRIBUTION IN HARRISBURG

The Pennsylvania Ballot Access Coalition will be holding a news conference this Wednesday morning, October 19th, at 10 AM in the Capitol Newsroom, Room 524, located at the rear of the E floor in the central wing of the Capitol building in Harrisburg. Immediately following the conference, Coalition members will hand-deliver copies of their Voters' Choice Act to all 203 State Representatives, all 50 State Senators, and Governor Rendell.

"It is our goal to bring an unintended and intolerable situation to the immediate attention of our lawmakers," said Ken Krawchuk, a Libertarian member of the Coalition. Because of a fluke in the existing ballot access laws, third party and independent candidates will need to collect approximately 100,000 signatures in order to appear on the statewide ballot in 2006, as compared to fewer than 3,000 for candidates from the two old parties. The Coalition is seeking sponsors for their Voters' Choice Act which promises to institute a fairer process for third parties and independent candidates to appear on the ballot.

"For those legislators who believe in fair ballot access and democracy, our Voters' Choice Act will serve as their rallying point," Krawchuk continued. "Representative Paul Clymer, Chairman of the House State Government Committee, is already talking about holding hearings, so we know there's a constituency among lawmakers for fair ballot access."

Once the White Paper distribution is complete, the Coalition plans to allow lawmakers a few days to review the Voters' Choice Act, then follow up via phone calls, letters, e-mails, and personal visits. "Every one of Pennsylvania's third parties that we could find has signed on to the Voters' Choice Act", Krawchuk said. "And all of us are mobilizing our respective forces to do whatever it takes to bring about fair ballot access. When people of such varied political backgrounds can stand shoulder-to-shoulder on a single issue, you can bet it's an idea whose time has come."

"Grassroots democracy is one of the Ten Key Values of the Green Party", said Jennaro Pullano, former state chair of the Green Party. "The Voters' Choice Act puts democracy back within reach of all of Pennsylvania citizens."

James Clymer, national chairman of the Constitution Party, asserted, "It's time we held our legislative representative's feet to the fire, insisting that they amend the election code to conform to the Constitutional mandate of free and equal elections."

Thomas McLaughlin, state treasurer of the Reform Party, stressed how the Voters' Choice Act will result in more choices for the voters on Election Day. "In many instances, without us, the voters would have NO choice!"

John Murphy of the Ralph Nader campaign pointed out, "The burdensome and archaic ballot access laws in Pennsylvania which encourage discrimination and political chicanery against third party and independent candidates must come to an end."

David Jahn, chair of the Libertarian Party of Pennsylvania summed up the thinking of the Coalition. "This is a solution that is already being used in Delaware, and the result there have been higher voter turnout. If it works there, it will work here."

The Voters' Choice Act reforms Pennsylvania's draconian ballot access laws by leveling the playing field for third parties and independent candidates. Under the current law, Democrats and Republicans must collect 2,000 signatures to have their names placed on the statewide primary ballot, and none at all for the November ballot. However, to have their names placed on the November ballot in 2006, third party and independent candidates will be required to collect a minimum of 67,070 signatures, more than 33 times as many, despite a Constitutional provision that "Elections shall be free and equal".

The Voters' Choice Act would change the definition of a "minor political party" from the current district-by-district electoral formula (2% of a recent winner's vote total) to one based upon statewide voter registrations (0.05%), and allow minor parties to nominate candidates for all offices directly according to their party rules, and at their own expense, rather than by the existing, taxpayer-funded nomination papers process. Independent candidates would continue to nominate candidates for all offices via the current nomination papers process, but using the same signature requirements required of the two old parties rather than the current district-by-district electoral formula (2% of a recent winner's vote total).

A copy of the Voters' Choice Act and its accompanying white paper can be found on the Coalition's website at www.PaBallotAccess.org.

The Pennsylvania Ballot Access Coalition is an association of representatives from Pennsylvania's largest political third parties and independent campaigns, including the Libertarian Party, the Green Party, the Constitution Party, the America First Party, the Reform Party, the Prohibition Party, the Socialist Party, the Unified Independent Party, the New American Independent Party, and the Ralph Nader campaign, among others.