



# THE PENNSYLVANIA BALLOT ACCESS COALITION

★ LIBERTARIAN ★ GREEN ★ CONSTITUTIONAL ★ NADER ★ REFORM ★ AMERICA FIRST ★ SOCIALIST ★  
★ PROHIBITIONIST ★ UNIFIED INDEPENDENT ★ NEW AMERICAN INDEPENDENT ★ AND MORE ★

PO Box 309  
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania 19081

Website: [www.PaBallotAccess.org](http://www.PaBallotAccess.org)  
E-mail: [PBAC@PaBallotAccess.org](mailto:PBAC@PaBallotAccess.org)

Voice: (610) 543-8427  
Fax: (215) 572-9248

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 29, 2005

For more information contact Ken Krawchuk at 267-496-3332 or David Jahn at 610-461-7755

## "VOTERS CHOICE ACT" RALLY HELD IN HARRISBURG

The Pennsylvania Ballot Access Coalition held a kickoff rally to introduce their Voters Choice Act last Saturday, September 24th, in the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg. A crowd of 40 supporters gathered to hear representatives from Pennsylvania's largest third parties and independent campaigns. Among the speakers were the 1998 and 2002 Libertarian gubernatorial candidate Ken Krawchuk, Libertarian Party state chair David Jahn, former Green Party state chair Jennaro Pullano, Constitution Party national chairman Jim Clymer, Reform Party state treasurer Tom McLaughlin, John Murphy of the Ralph Nader campaign, and the 2004 Libertarian presidential candidate Michael Badnarik. High-resolution photos of the rally can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/cht8k>.

"We are heading for a political train wreck in 2006," Libertarian Ken Krawchuk told the crowd. "Over one million voting-age Pennsylvanians risk being denied their right to vote for the candidate of their choice." 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 less than 3,000 for the two old parties.

Green Party's Jennaro Pullano focused on the impossibility of organizing so mammoth a petition drive. "Last year we had to work around the clock for four days to get our petitions ready for submission. I don't know how we'll be able to do it when the number is 100,000. That's the equivalent of getting everyone here in Harrisburg to sign our petition."

Jim Clymer of the Constitution Party noted that if Utah had Pennsylvania's ballot access laws, the Democrats would not be a political party, and if Massachusetts had them, the Republicans would not be a political party. "The major parties have conspired to make Pennsylvania one of the most difficult states in the nation to acquire permanent ballot access so they can maintain a monopoly stranglehold on the electoral process", Clymer concluded.

Reform Party's Tom McLaughlin focused on the statistics that result from Pennsylvania's draconian laws, specifically, that if not for third party candidates, 27% of the Congressional races would have no opposition, 28% of state senate races, and a whopping 56% of state rep races. "Republicans and Democrats try to muddy the waters or write us off as third parties", McLaughlin said. "We are not third parties, we are the only functional SECOND Party!"

John Murphy of the Ralph Nader campaign described in detail the extreme lengths that Pennsylvania Democrats went in order to keep Ralph Nader off the ballot, concluding that, "The very magnitude of that effort itself indicates that, under any conception of a democratic system, it is that very person who should be *on* the ballot!"

Libertarian David Jahn pointed out how third parties hold their own primaries at their own expense, then collect tens of thousands of signatures to get on the November ballot, while the two old parties benefit from taxpayer-funded primaries, then require *no* signatures to get on the November ballot. "This is a process that is not healthy, as it permits the major parties to run and elect sub par candidates with ease while our candidates are overwhelmed with ballot access hurdles."

At a reception immediately after the rally, the 2004 Libertarian presidential candidate Michael Badnarik addressed the crowd, comparing Pennsylvania's bad ballot access laws to the Jim Crow laws of old, since they create a second class citizenship supported by law.

The complete text of the remarks of the presenters can be found on the Coalition's website at [www.PaBallotAccess.org](http://www.PaBallotAccess.org).

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 political 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](http://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.