

**Submitted Testimony to the Senate Elections Committee**  
**Hearing on S.F. 1872, concerning major party definition modification**

**February 28, 2023**

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**Attempted Candidate for Minnesota Secretary of State (2022)**

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Thank you for allowing me to submit this written testimony. These views are my own and do not necessarily represent the LPMN.

Minnesota rightfully prides itself on leading the nation in voter participation. This legislation will sully that reputation by making it all but impossible for voters to have more than two choices on the ballot for partisan offices.

If a candidate is not a member of a “major party,” he or she must earn their way onto the ballot through a petitioning process. I gained considerable experience petitioning last May when I attempted to get on the ballot for Secretary of State.

My primary concern with the petitioning process, however, does not pertain to the statewide offices for which the requirement is 2,000 signatures, but rather to the state House and Senate races for which the requirement is 500 signatures.

There are 201 elected positions in the Minnesota State Legislature – 67 Senators and 134 Representatives. In the 2022 general election, a total of 24 races (12%) were uncontested, meaning voters had no choice. This does not befit a representative democracy, especially when other candidates face obstacles to getting on the ballot.

Since 2000 there have been 12 general elections and over that long period only 12 Libertarians managed to get onto the ballot for a House or Senate race. Why so few? I submit it is the onerous petitioning requirement.

Unlike statewide candidates, House and Senate candidates must collect signatures exclusively from eligible voters who reside in their district. Any non-resident’s signature will be invalidated. For obvious reasons, the challenge is especially onerous in rural communities. The real losers in failed petitioning efforts are the citizens who are denied the opportunity to vote for these would-be candidates in the general election.

Let me recount just a few of the many the challenges that apply to all petitioners.

The biggest challenge is simply getting someone's attention. Last May, I knocked on the doors of several homes where the residents signaled genuine regret that they couldn't interact with me because they had Covid. Many homes have "no soliciting" signs, and I suspect many people used their Ring doorbells to avoid interaction with a solicitor. At parks and other places, some folks will literally pretend a petitioner does not exist.

Once you do get someone's attention, many are reluctant to sign upon learning they must swear they do not intend to vote in the primary election for the same office. The petition essentially asks a citizen to publicly reveal support for a candidate, a requirement we would never countenance for voters in the actual primary election. In my experience, though, the most odious requirement is to publicly reveal one's age!

Lastly, the true signature thresholds are much higher than the statutory requirement, as signatures will be stricken if they are illegible, omit an item or are otherwise filled out incorrectly.

With every fiber in my being, I am committed to achieving majority party status for the Libertarian Party of Minnesota so that we have the same opportunity to get onto the ballot as each member of this committee. Today, we can achieve that objective if we secure votes from 5% of the electorate for a statewide office. Other minor parties have done this, and our party can do that, too. But 10%? That's an absurdly high threshold.

In closing, I ask that you oppose S.F. 1827 (and support liberalization of our ballot access laws), not just to further the interests of the Libertarian Party and any other third party. Please do it for the voters. They ought to have more choices on their ballots. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.