

# Government Administration and Elections Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-1156

AN ACT CONCERNING STATE-WIDE RECOGNITION OF MINOR PARTIES

**Title:** FOR PURPOSES OF NOMINATING PETITIONS.

**Vote Date:** 3/26/2025

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/24/2025

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administrations and Elections Committee

### REASONS FOR BILL:

For minor parties, there exists a discrepancy in which they can obtain minor party status for state-wide offices however not retain that access for municipal elections. As of now, any minor party must go through a much more complicated process to get on the ballot when compared to major parties. These obstacles deter minor parties from running candidates in state and local elections, which can discourage voters aligned with those parties. This bill provides that when a political party attains minor party status for a state-wide office at an election, any candidate from across the state may appear on any ballot for that party via a nominating petition. This bill seeks to eliminate one of those boundaries in order to ease the administrative burden on minor parties.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

### NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

#### **Chip Beckett, Chairman of the Independent Party of Connecticut**

Chairman Beckett writes that they appreciate the effort to make one petition process from the two currently required to run a new minor party candidate, but that it still places a burden on candidates and the minor parties that major parties don't incur. He shared that recently the Independent Party had 150 applications for endorsements or cross endorsements, including some from sitting legislators. There was mutual interest in endorsing these legislators but because the Independent Party had not previously petitioned for that specific seat, they could

not endorse. He concludes by arguing the importance of these minor parties, stating that because Connecticut does not have open primaries these parties allow for a more nuanced choice at the ballot box.

**Lisa Brinton**

Ms. Brinton writes that while there are hundreds of minor political parties on the state and national level, only certain parties are able to qualify due to arbitrary ballot access rules and requirements. One of these rules is the petitioning process to recognize a state party, which she cites as being cumbersome. She further points out that the petitioning requirements are usually met and that it is just another hurdle that is used by the two major parties to dissuade the use of the ballot line. Minor parties, she argues, often highlight new policy ideas and perspectives that are not adequately represented by the major parties. She further points that the media, social media, and the practice of gerrymandering have all isolated voters leading to a rise in extremism, when roughly 43% of US voters don't affiliate with a party. Exclusionary ballot access and funding have left minor parties with no chance at winning.

**John Fahan, Treasurer, Independent Party**

Mr. Fahan writes in support of the bill arguing that if any candidate of a minor party wins 1% of the vote in a statewide election, then any other candidate should be able to run on that party's platform anywhere else in the state. In 2008 Ralph Nader won 1% of the vote in Connecticut making the Independent Party a statewide party, which they have maintained. He argues further that the instructions for ED-601 indicate that it should only be used if a new party is created and that the Independent Party should not have to fill out and submit this form in places in which they have already ran, and that all that should be required for a statewide minor party candidate to run for municipal office is a petition if said party has not yet been on the local ballot.

**Michael Telesca**

Mr. Telesca supports this bill for broad reasons.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None expressed.

**Reported by: Sam Erickson and Sam Sims**

**Date: 4/2/2025**