

From: chairman@tricitylibertarians.org
Sent: Sunday, January 19, 2020 6:58 PM
To: 'info@donharmon.org'
Subject: Congratulations / Let's work together to reform our election laws

Senator Harmon –

First and foremost, I'd like to congratulate you on your election as the newest Senate President of the Illinois Senate. I'm hoping with newer leadership in the Senate, legislation that would usually die under the Madigan/Cullerton regime would actually be heard for once.

On November 23 and 30, 2019, I submitted emails to members of the Illinois House – 86 of the 118, to be exact, regarding legislation which was introduced in 2019 regarding additional reforms to our state's current election laws.

On Feb. 15, 2019, Rep. Anne Stava-Murray filed [House Bill 3535](#), which amends the Illinois Election Code to reduce the signature requirement threshold for new political parties and independent candidates to equal that of the two established political parties, irrespective of party affiliation. While it was referred to the House Rules Committee the same day, an assignment to the Executive Committee on March 5 did not schedule a hearing on the bill. The bill picked up a co-sponsor with Rep. Carol Ammons on March 28, before being sent back to the Rules Committee the following day.

On Apr. 4, 2019, Rep. Allen Skillicorn filed [House Bill 3828](#), which calls for the same thing HB3535 was intending to do. HB3828 currently has bipartisan support with Democratic Rep. Jonathan Carroll and fellow Republican Rep. David Welter. It has yet to be assigned to a committee.

Of those in the House I have reached out to, this is where I am in my efforts:

Supporting, but hasn't signed on as a co-sponsor: LaShawn Ford

On the fence: Terri Bryant

Reps my team are working on: Brad Halbrook, Sue Scherer, Justin Slaughter, Anna Moeller, Marcus Evans, Avery Bourne, Kelly Cassidy, Kelly Burke, Monica Bristow, Dan Brady, Will Guzzardi, Mike Murphy, Tim Butler, Dan Caulkins, Andrew Chesney, Tom Demmer, Sara Feigenholtz, Jehan Gordon-Booth, Norine Hammond, Tony McCombie, Chris Miller, Martin Moylan, Ryan Spain, Katie Stuart, Keith Wheeler, Blaine Wilhour, Kathleen Willis, Patrick Windhorst, Mike Zalewski

Haven't responded back: Too many to count

I have been quite public about this particular issue with this part of our election code on social media since Sen. Andy Manar first introduced this reform in February 2013. Former Sen. Kyle McCarter introduced the same reforms in January 2017, roughly around the same time Rep. Skillicorn introduced the House companion.

This marks my sixth election cycle since I've first started collecting petition signatures for the Libertarian Party. This marks my third cycle with the Libertarian Party of Illinois and the first time as this party's political director, in which I've previously served as candidate recruitment director and as its deputy communications director. I can attest that having to collect 5 to 10 times the threshold allotted to the two established parties is aggravating and intentionally keeps people who are fed up with only two choices (in most districts, they only have one choice) off the ballot.

In other political races lesser than the General Assembly, this “multiplier” that is enforced by county clerks and the Illinois State Board of Elections is even worse when it comes to the larger population area in the Chicagoland and Metro East regions, where the threshold is sometimes up to 150 times the threshold of Democrats and Republicans.

So back to social media – I made a [public post](#) on LinkedIn last week regarding the November communications in hopes to get attention of any connections I had in the House or Senate. The first Senator whose attention I caught was that of Craig Wilcox, who cited I should contact him and other Senators regarding getting support for these bills and hold long-overdue committee hearings on them. I’m sure without much effort, I should have Sen. Manar on board, considering he started this movement to reform our election laws.

In the past, a couple of this state’s election and campaign finance laws ended up challenged by the Libertarian Party of Illinois in the legal system while Lisa Madigan was Attorney General:

- In *Libertarian Party of Illinois v. Scholz*, it took a Federal circuit court decision to strike down the full-slate requirement for inclusion on the ballot, a law that had existed for nearly nine decades, in which the court decision declared the law unconstitutional.
- In *Ball v. Madigan*, it took a Federal circuit court decision to declare a 2013 law banning licensed medicinal marijuana cultivators, processors and retail business owners from making campaign contributions to political candidates, PACs or other political committees. It was only brought to light because a business owner who supports Libertarian candidates was asked for a campaign contribution and discovered the state prohibited it. The Federal decision declared that law unconstitutional.

In my first full year as Political Director, I would rather go about making these reforms a reality through the legislative process, not the judicial process. If there needs to be any progress in politics, then reforming our election laws should be an utmost priority to ensure we have fair and competitive elections, especially considering the average of 60% to 67% of General Assembly seats and 75% of countywide and county board seats going uncontested every cycle. That needs to change.

Thank you for your time, Senator.

Jake Leonard

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