

SECTION 1. The Political Party Qualifications Standards Act

SECTION 2: Section 17-1-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-1 entitled "General Provisions" is hereby amended to read as follows

17-1-2. Definitions.

“Political party” or major “party” means: (i) any political organization which, at the next preceding general election for the election of general officers, nominated a candidate for governor, and whose candidate for governor at the election polled at least ~~five percent (5%)~~ one percent (1%) of the entire vote cast in the state for governor, or (ii) any political organization which at the next preceding general election for the election of a president of the United States nominated a candidate for president and whose candidate for president at the election polled at least five percent (5%) of the entire vote cast in the state for president, or (iii) any political organization which, on petition forms provided to the chairperson of the organization by the state board of elections, obtains the signatures and addresses of that number of registered qualified voters equal to ~~five percent (5%)~~ one percent (1%) of the entire vote cast in the state for governor or president in the immediately preceding general election. All the signatures must be obtained no earlier than January 1 of the year in which the political organization desires to place a candidate or candidates on any ballot as a “party” candidate.

If the political organization wishes to select its nominees in a primary election, the petitions, bearing the requisite number of valid signatures, shall be presented to the appropriate local boards of canvassers no later than June 1 of the same year. If the petitions are validated by the local boards as containing the requisite number of valid signatures, the political organization shall be deemed to be a political party for all elections held during the year and may select its nominees in a primary election. If the political organization does not wish to select its nominees in a primary election, then the petitions need not be returned to local boards of canvassers until August 1 of the same year. An organization qualifying as a political party through the petition process shall qualify as a political party only during the year in which signatures are obtained unless the candidates for governor or president of the United States of the party at a general election held in the year, shall receive ~~five percent (5%)~~ one percent (1%) of the vote as provided in this subdivision for either governor or president of the United States. If the candidates do not receive ~~five percent (5%)~~ one percent (1%) of the vote, the organization shall no longer qualify as a political party unless and until it shall, in a subsequent year, once again qualify by the submission of petitions at the last preceding general election, nominated a candidate for President, United States Senator, Representative of Congress, governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, or state treasurer, who received at least ~~two percent (2%)~~ one percent (1%) of the total votes cast in the state, or has one or more members serving in the

general assembly, or at least five thousand (5,000) votes were enrolled in the party as of June 1 of a general election year;

"Minor parties" means: any political organization which has yet to reach five thousand (5,000) registered voters or whose candidate(s) received less than ~~two percent (2%)~~ one percent (1%) of the total votes cast in the previous election;

Section 3. If any provision of this act is found to be invalid, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 4. This act shall take effect upon passage.