

Minnesota Senate Bill SF 752, Minnesota House Bill HF 708
(Ballot Access Inclusiveness Bill)

SYNOPSIS

This proposal contains a comprehensive set of reforms to improve and modernize Minnesota's outdated statutory definitions of political parties. It encompasses revisions and modifications to arbitrary petitioning requirements, percentages, and timelines that as currently exist create and sustain exclusivity to ballot access for the main two parties.

Goals are to bring Minnesota's prohibitive standards in-line with neighboring states, to eliminate unconstitutional and inequitable restrictions, and to harmonize the various statutes while keeping robust system integrity and encouraging democratic participation. A formal request is hereby made for committee hearings to discuss these matters.

MAIN POINTS

Section 1: Revises major political party threshold percent from 5% to 1%, for both direct petitioning and election results methods. (for reference WI, SD are at 1%, IA is at 2%).

Section 2: Modifies our system into recognition of two simple tiers of political parties versus the current three tiers. (to become major and minor only, like all other states).

Section 3: Allows petitions to be on common size 8-1/2x11 letter size paper (vs 8-1/2x14).

Section 4: Modifies oath on nominating petitions to allow signors to still participate in the major party primaries. (*"I solemnly swear that I know the contents and purpose of this NOMINATING petition, that I do not intend to vote at the primary election for the office for which this nominating petition is made, and that I signed this petition of my own free will."*)

Section 5: Revises statute to allow signors to sign more than one nominating petition.

Section 6: Modifies the number of signatures required into ratios of flat numbers based on district size for state, county, and municipal races (400 for State Senate, 200 for State Rep, 200 for municipals, versus the current statutes set at 500 for all).

Section 7: Expands the days allowed to collect signatures from 14 to 88, by attaching the window to the general election vs the primary election (in alignment with the statutory window we have for Presidential electors). (WI gives 70 days, SD 112 days, IA 140 days).

Section 8: AMENDMENT IS FILED TO REMOVE THIS SECTION (*to give a political party the ability to approve a candidate's affiliation with it prior to filing for primary ballot*).

Section 9: Addresses special election parameters. It adds 7 extra days for the SOS to conduct, adds 9 days to the (5 day) filing window, and reduces the number of nominating petition signatures required to half per the office sought.

<u>State</u>	<u>Major (or Recognized) Party by votes in election threshold</u>	<u>Major (Recognized) Party by direct petitioning</u>	<u>Number of signatures</u>	<u>Per Capita signatures</u>	<u>Population of state</u>
*Minnesota *(proposed)	1% of statewide race	20,000 signatures (or 1% of last vote)	20,000 (or 26,000)	0.4%	5,577,000
Minnesota (current)	5% of statewide race	5% of last state vote total	130,000	2.3%	5,577,000
Wisconsin	1% of Governor or President	10,000 signatures	10,000 (<.0.1%)	0.2%	5,795,000
Iowa	2% of Governor or President	n/a	n/a 2%=26,420	n/a 2%=0.8%	3,146,000
South Dakota	1% of Governor or President (was 2.5% prior to 2018)	1% of last state vote total (was 2.5% prior to 2018)	3392	0.4%	869,000
North Dakota	5% of Secretary of State vote	7000 signatures	7000	0.9%	755,000