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eholcomb@gov.in.gov

Connie Lawson, Secretary of State
200 W. Washington St., Rm. 201
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Paul Okeson, Indiana Election Commission
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Indianapolis, IN 46204
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RE: Indiana Ballot Access Petitioning Requirements and COVID-19

In light of the declaration of a state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indiana Green Party (INGP) hereby makes a formal request to Indiana Governor Eric J. Holcomb, Secretary of State Connie Lawson, and the Indiana Election Commission to waive the petition of qualified voters requirement for ballot access, as has been done in other states such as Vermont. Relief has already been granted in Indiana to the Democratic and Republican parties (Order No. 2020-37, Concerning Emergency Provisions Affecting the 2020 Indiana Primary Election, and extensions No. 2020-40 and No. 2020-44). Relief must also be extended to Minor Party and Independent Candidates in Indiana during this unprecedented time.

Collecting ballot petition signatures requires close physical contact on the part of both voters and petitioners. Minor Party and Independent Candidates running for statewide or federal office are required to obtain over 44,935 "wet" signatures by June 30, though experience with having signatures disqualified leads us to aim for double this number. Gathering this many signatures requires hundreds of thousands of contacts, which is neither possible nor responsible given the Governor's stay-at-home order, the plan to slowly reopen the state, and the need for continued social distancing. Continuing to require these signatures would put petitioners and the general public at greater health risk. It would also be an injustice for third parties and independents, who would otherwise obtain ballot access, to be excluded for ensuring public health and safety.

In view of successful petitioning by the INGP in 6 cities across the state in 2019 for City Council, Greens would likely achieve ballot access for positions all across the state this year if not for the pandemic. We have already made serious efforts to organize candidates and collect petition signatures prior to the state of emergency. Failing to waive this requirement would infringe the right of our party to participate in the upcoming election. The state of emergency, restrictions on gatherings, and other limitations designed to stop the spread of the coronavirus should not prevent voters from having a democratic choice at the ballot box this November.

A state of emergency has been declared by Governor Eric Holcomb. Relief has already been granted to the Democratic and Republican parties. We implore the state to alleviate the hardship of petitioning for Minor Parties and Independents by waiving the petitioning requirement of signatures for ballot access.

Very truly yours,

Teri Ulm
Interim Chair
Indiana Green Party