

# Oklahomans for Ballot Access Reform

A coalition of Oklahomans working for fair laws that give voters genuine choices

**Micah Gamino, Press Coordinator**

Phone: 405.642.5732

E-Mail: [press@okvoterchoice.org](mailto:press@okvoterchoice.org)

[www.okvoterchoice.org](http://www.okvoterchoice.org)

**NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 19, 2015

## OBAR ENCOURAGES 2015 BALLOT-ACCESS LEGISLATION

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahomans for Ballot Access Reform is once again calling on state lawmakers to demonstrate their faith in democracy and hand the keys to the electoral process back over to the voting public.

“The legislature is treating the citizen electorate like an irresponsible teenager who can’t be trusted with the car keys, as if it’s consumed by fear that we, the people, *might* be dangerous behind the wheel,” said Micah Gamino, OBAR’s press coordinator. “This fight is not about party labels and ideologies; it’s not about disruptive agendas and ‘fringe’ candidates; this is about trusting the Oklahoma voter, after more than 40 years under House arrest, with the keys to the vehicle of democracy; it’s about trusting the will of the voter at the ballot box.”

In its [2015 BALLOT-ACCESS BRIEF](#), OBAR is calling on lawmakers to pass election reforms that give non-establishment candidates easier access to the ballot, thereby empowering voters by broadening their scope of choices on Election Day. We are calling for the following reforms:

- Reducing or eliminating the petition signature requirement to form a new party
- Extending the length of time a new party is recognized
- Reducing the number of votes required to retain party recognition
- Reducing or eliminating the petition signature requirement to place an Independent Presidential candidate on the ballot
- Adding a write-in option to state election ballots
- Repealing the straight-party voting option on state election ballots
- Removing the names of Presidential Electors from the ballot

In recent years, OBAR has proposed and supported incremental reforms, such as returning the new party petition signature requirement to its pre-1974 threshold – a flat 5,000 signatures. Eric Proctor, D-Tulsa, introduced such a proposal this session, HB1813. However, Proctor withdrew his bill in favor of House Speaker Jeff Hickman’s (R) proposal, HB2181, which passed unanimously in the House Elections and Ethics Committee on Wednesday.

Rep. Hickman’s bill would lower the signature requirement from 5% to 1% of the votes cast for governor in the last General Election. This would lower the 2016 threshold for new party recognition from 41,188 signatures to 8,249 – a major improvement if it becomes law. At 1%, Oklahoma’s ballot access laws would finally align closely with the national average, consequently increasing the possibility that Oklahomans will have more than two choices for president for the first time since 2000.

For more information on our current ball-access reform efforts, please visit

[WWW.OKVOTERCHOICE.ORG](http://WWW.OKVOTERCHOICE.ORG).