

Libertarians file signatures to get on Oklahoma ballot

BY RICK M. GREEN
Capitol Bureau
rmgreen@oklahoman.com

When Oklahomans go to the polls in the June 28 statewide primary, there's a good chance there will be Libertarian candidates on the ballot.

Officials of the party, which favors free markets, personal freedom and peace, filed thousands of voter signatures with the state Election Board on Monday.

They needed 24,745 signatures to get their candidates on the ballot.

Oklahoma Libertarian Party Vice Chair Tina Kelly said a total of 42,000 signatures were gathered.

"I have been overwhelmed by the support and enthusiasm of Oklahomans who do not feel represented by the two parties currently in power and want more choices," she said.

"The message of 'Minimum Government. Maximum Freedom' resonates with those of us who believe in personal responsibility. We want to be left alone to live our lives without government interference and just as importantly we want the same thing for our neighbors."

The state Election Board will go through a verification process for the signatures. Barring major problems, Libertarian candidates would appear

on the Oklahoma ballot for the first time in 16 years.

"Candidates from all levels of government are reaching out to us with their intentions to seek office as Libertarians," she said. "The other parties have made a mess of things and it's very exciting to know that this year for the first time in a long time, there's potential to see real political change in our state."

Assuming it makes the ballot in this year's election cycle, the party would need to receive 10 percent of the vote in the presidential race. If it doesn't reach that threshold, another round of signature gathering would be required to qualify the party for the 2018 general election.

Pending legislation this session would reduce that requirement from 10 percent to 2.5 percent.

Kelly said that having another candidate on the ballot in many races

would improve competition and give voters more choices. Every election, some incumbents will face no competition.

Nicholas Sarwark, chair of the Libertarian National Committee, said the party wants to ensure that "every American has a Libertarian option on their ballot."

"Our political system is broken," he said. "Both of the old parties that you may be familiar with are dying. They are shrinking in numbers, while our voter totals go up."

"We are the only political party growing and it's because we are the only political party in this country dedicated to all of your freedoms all of the time, the freedom to control your wallet, the freedom to control your body, the freedom to pursue happiness in every way you want as long as you don't hurt anyone else and you don't take their stuff."

**MINTER & SONS**
HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING
American Standard.
HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING
\$25 OFF
Service Call
348-9600
LIC. #62221
EXPIRES 2/29/16
Free Estimates on Replacement Equipment

THE OKLAHOMAN | NEWSOK.COM

METRO | STATE

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2016

3A

WHAT YOU'RE READING

Top stories on NewsOK.com for the last 24 hours.