

Committee Chair and Members:

My name is Matt Clark, Political Director testifying on behalf of the Libertarian Party of Kansas. **LPKS strongly opposes HB2516** and offers an alternative path to resolving its issues.

Restricting candidate access to ballots should never be taken lightly, whether by a state Supreme Court or a state legislature. Is there anything as fundamental to freedom in a republic as the **freedom to vote** for the candidate of your choice? Inherent in this idea is that citizens may easily choose their elected officials. Therefore, legislation that severely limits ballot inclusion is wrong.

Allow us to be blunt: This bill exists because Republicans believe their candidate would have won the gubernatorial race in 2018 and 2022 if it weren't for an independent candidate running in each of those elections.

We propose another solution. Implementing **Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)**, as introduced in SB202, will solve the problem. With RCV the winner of the race needs to achieve a 50% +1 vote.

For example, in 2022 no gubernatorial candidate received more than 50% of the vote. Since Libertarian Cordell earned the lowest vote total, under the RCV method he would be dropped from the race.

- Everyone who voted for Cordell as their top choice would then have had their votes distributed to their second-ranked candidate (if applicable, but not mandatory).
- If after this step one candidate achieves 50% +1 vote, the election is decided.
- If there is still not a 50%+1, then the Pyle voters would have their votes counted for their next-lower-ranked candidate remaining in the race. At this point the election is decided.

RCV is being implemented in other states - why not in KS? RCV eliminates the perceived problem of “spoiler” candidates while clearing the path for independents to ballot access.

Increasing the petition requirement from 5,000 signatures to 25,000 while also eliminating the fee option is a big-government solution, and an ugly one. Implement Ranked Choice Voting instead for a **limited-government solution** that fairly represents more voters.

