

Subject Major Party Status
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Summary

Under current law, a political party can be recognized as a “major political party” by meeting a minimum standard for organizational structure and also meeting one of a set of qualifying thresholds designed to indicate sufficient public support for the party.

Among those thresholds, a party may qualify by presenting at least one candidate for election to a state constitutional office, or for president of the United States or United States Senator, at a state general election, so long as the candidate received votes in each county, and received votes from at least five percent of the total number of individuals who voted at the election statewide.

A party may also qualify by submitting a petition to the secretary of state that includes signatures of a number of the party members equal to five percent of the total number of individuals who voted at the most recent state general election.

This bill would increase the qualifying standard for both of these thresholds so that the party’s candidate must receive at least ten percent of the total number of votes at the most recent state general election, or submit signatures of a number of members equal to ten percent of the total number of individuals voting at the most recent state general election, respectively.

Based on the current standard, the following parties are recognized as major political parties in Minnesota: Democratic-Farmer-Labor; Republican Party of Minnesota; and Legal Marijuana Now Party. Most recently, the Grassroots-Legalize Cannabis Party was recognized as a major political party, but failed to meet the qualifying thresholds at the 2022 state general election and is now recognized as a minor political party.

Further information on the rights and duties of major political parties, and how these parties differ from other political parties in the state, is available in the House Research Department publication “*State Regulation of Political Parties*,” available here:

<https://www.house.mn.gov/hrd/pubs/regpolparty.pdf>