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NEWS RELEASE
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OBAR President's Day event to highlight lack of choices

OKLAHOMA CITY – To demonstrate the state's history of silencing third parties, representatives of Oklahoma's third parties will tape their mouths shut for a news conference on Monday hosted by Oklahomans for Ballot Access Reform.

OBAR is using the President's Day event to highlight Oklahoma's historic lack of choices in presidential elections. The conference is set for 10 a.m. in the second floor rotunda of the state Capitol, 2300 N. Lincoln Blvd.

State Rep. Charles Key, R-Oklahoma City, and Rep. Eric Proctor, D-Tulsa, will be on hand to speak to the media about **House Bill 1072**, a proposal authored by Key that would ease third party ballot-access restrictions.

Also on hand will be R.J. Harris, a Republican challenger for the fourth Congressional district, Clark Duffe, a Libertarian who will be on the ballot as an Independent for the fifth Congressional district, and representatives from each of Oklahoma's third parties – Libertarian, Green, Constitution, Socialist and Pirate.

In its history, Oklahoma has held more of the effective third-party presidential candidates off its ballot than any other state, according to *Ballot Access News* publisher Richard Winger, a national expert on the topic. These candidates garnered at least 2 percent of the national popular vote but were not on Oklahoma's ballot.

They are: Teddy Roosevelt (Progressive Party) in 1912; Norman Thomas (Socialist Party) in 1932; William Lemke (Union Party) in 1936; Strom Thurmond (States Rights Party) and Henry Wallace (Progressive) in 1948; and Ralph Nader (Green Party) in 2000.

Oklahoma also was the only state in 2004 and 2008 where voters could not vote for a third-party or independent presidential candidate.

House Bill 1072 would lower the number of petition signatures needed for recognition of a new political party. Key hopes to get a final version of the bill passed out of conference committee soon, then on to the House and Senate floors for final vote.