

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2003**

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**SENATE BILL 649**

Short Title: New Party Ballot Access. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Horton; Apodaca, Bingham, Brock, Carpenter, Forrester,  
Garwood, Shubert, Sloan, and Stevens.

Referred to: Judiciary I.

April 1, 2003

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO LOWER FROM TWO PERCENT TO ONE-HALF OF ONE PERCENT  
THE PERCENTAGE OF GUBERNATORIAL VOTERS A NEW PARTY MUST  
COLLECT IN SIGNATURES IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE BALLOT ELIGIBILITY.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** G.S. 163-96(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) Definition. – A political party within the meaning of the election laws of this State shall be either:

(1) Any group of voters which, at the last preceding general State election, polled for its candidate for Governor, or for presidential electors, at least ten percent (10%) of the entire vote cast in the State for Governor or for presidential electors; or

(2) Any group of voters which shall have filed with the State Board of Elections petitions for the formulation of a new political party which are signed by registered and qualified voters in this State equal in number to ~~two~~ one-half of one percent (0.5%) of the total number of voters who voted in the most recent general election for Governor. Also the petition must be signed by at least 200 registered voters from each of four congressional districts in North Carolina. To be effective, the petitioners must file their petitions with the State Board of Elections before 12:00 noon on the first day of June preceding the day on which is to be held the first general State election in which the new political party desires to participate. The State Board of Elections shall forthwith determine the sufficiency of petitions filed with it and shall immediately communicate its determination to the State chairman of the proposed new political party."

**SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective January 1, 2004, and applies to any primaries or elections held on or after that date.