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Americans Elect Party Qualifies for California Ballot

SACRAMENTO – For the first time since 1995, the California Secretary of State today certified a new political party. The qualification of the Americans Elect Party brings to seven the number of political parties to appear on California's 2012 ballots. The qualified political parties and the year each qualified in California are:

<u>Party</u>	<u>Year Qualified</u>
American Independent	1968
Americans Elect	2011
Democratic	1910
Green	1992
Libertarian	1980
Peace and Freedom	1968*
Republican	1910

*The Peace and Freedom Party initially qualified in 1968 but lost its status in 1998; it qualified again in 2003.

The last political bodies to qualify were the Reform Party and the Natural Law Party, both in 1995. The Reform Party lost its status in 2002 and the Natural Law Party lost its status in 2006.

Political bodies can qualify for the California ballot in one of two ways: by registering 103,004 voters specifying that party preference (one percent of the total number of votes cast in the November 2, 2010, General Election) or by collecting petition signatures of 1,030,040 registered voters (10 percent of the total number of votes cast in the November 2, 2010, General Election).

The Americans Elect Party chose to submit petition signatures.

After a political body submits petition signatures to county elections offices, the county offices report the raw counts of signatures to the California Secretary of State – the state's chief elections officer. If the total raw number of signatures reaches the required minimum, the Secretary of State instructs county elections officials to begin verifying the validity of the

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signatures using a random sampling method. (For random sampling, the state Elections Code requires county elections officials to verify 500 signatures, or three percent of the number of signatures filed in the county, whichever is greater. Counties receiving fewer than 500 petition signatures are required to verify all the signatures filed in their elections offices.)

A political body can qualify via random sampling, without further verification, if the sampling projects a number of valid signatures greater than 110 percent of the required number. After the American Elect Party failed to qualify at the random sampling stage, county elections officials moved to a full check of every petition signature submitted. The Americans Elect Party exceeded the signature threshold today.

Since California's statewide party nomination process began in 1910, 18 political bodies have qualified as parties. For more information about political party qualification in California, go to www.sos.ca.gov/elections/political-party-qualification.htm.

The deadline for political bodies attempting to qualify for the June 5, 2012, California Presidential Primary ballot is January 22, 2012.

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