



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

OCT 09 2019

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 696 without my signature.

This bill will require any existing political party that uses a variation of the phrase "no party preference" or "decline to state," or the word or variation of the word "independent" in its name, to change its name or to lose its qualification as a political party.

The American Independent Party of California has been using that name for more than 50 years. This bill would force that entity to change the name it has used since its inception. By requiring one existing political party to change its current name, this bill could be interpreted as a violation of the rights of free speech and association guaranteed by the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

For this reason, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,

Gavin Newsom