

HB 2927: National Popular Vote STRONGLY IN FAVOR

March 9, 2017

I am writing in strong support of HB 2927. It is time Oregon joins the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact and allows **each** Oregonian's vote to count. In the last three presidential elections, Oregon was ignored by presidential candidates. Not one major candidate held a campaign event in our state, instead focusing on the "battleground" states. I have voted in Oregon in three presidential elections, and I have never had the opportunity to hear from a presidential candidate in person. I have never once had my vote matter. In 2016, I had friends tell me that they saw no need to vote as Oregonians. Some made voting a game, writing in their spouses or best friends because they thought it didn't matter. They were right. Their vote and my vote doesn't matter and won't ever matter in Oregon under our current system.

Recent research has revealed that battleground states also receive more federal grant funding than other states. For a state like Oregon, this is important. We sit on a seismic time bomb and have cities that are poorly equipped to handle the massive earthquake that will eventually strike the area. Our bridges and roads are in disrepair. Our schools desperately need seismic upgrades. Where are the federal funds for this? When Hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana, President Bush was slow to respond and slow to acknowledge the disaster there. Would he have done the same had that hurricane hit neighboring Florida? Given that Florida is an important battleground state and Louisiana is not, it's doubtful. In the 2004 campaign, Bush and Cheney traveled 61 times to Florida in the last five weeks of the campaign and zero times to Louisiana.

There have been at least 700 proposed amendments to modify or abolish the Electoral College. Our founding fathers knew we had a problem right from the beginning. The Electoral College system that was created in 1787 was a compromise whose sole purpose was to appease the slave states. The two-fifth compromise allowed for slaves to be counted in the population and, thus, for electoral votes. Without this compromise, slave states would have had to bend to the will of the north and chance losing their abhorrent system. In the first presidential election in 1789, the winner-take-all rule was used by only three states. By 1804, the Electoral College system was already being revised via the 12th Amendment. This racist, elitist system was never meant to be the final system, and the Constitution was written to allow for change.

Recent attempts to reform the Electoral college have occurred in 1950, 1956, 1966, 1969, 1979, 1992, 1997, and 2004. Supporters over the years have ranged from Richard Nixon, to Lyndon B. Johnson, to Newt Gingrich. This is a bipartisan issue. Our legislators know the Electoral College is flawed, and NPV would be the easiest and most logical way to fix it.

Those who claim that the NPV would favor large population states fail to realize that all 50 governors of all 50 states are elected by popular vote. In California, four recent Republican governors were elected and none of them won Los Angeles, one of the largest cities in America and the largest city in California. The population of the 50 biggest cities is only 15% of American population. 85% of the American population live in places with a population less 360,000 people. So rather than disenfranchising the rural population, what NPV will actually do is make the rural vote count too.

I am the mother of two girls one of whom will be able to vote in four years. When she reaches that magical age of 18 and fills out her first ballot, I want her to know that her vote really does matter. With this understanding, my daughter will be an engaged and active citizen who pays attention to the very important election process. She will have the critical thinking skills to push through alternative facts and fake news. She will value the ballot decisions she will have to make. However, if we hold onto the archaic system we have today, voter engagement and voter turnout will continue to be dismal. For a nation that barely inspires more than 50% of its eligible voting population to vote, it's time for a change. Vote YES on HB 2927 and make Oregon matter in our presidential elections. **It's time to make every vote count.**

Respectfully,

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