

To me the most compelling aspect of the National Popular Vote Compact is that every vote cast for President will reflect one person, one vote, not a confusing and antiquated system of “winner takes all” that creates situations like we had in Michigan in the last election. All of Michigan’s electoral votes went to Donald Trump, who won by a mere 12,000 votes out of six million cast. This is not acceptable and does not reflect what most citizens believe should happen. It creates confusion and distance between my vote and electing the President.

The “winner takes all” method of allocation of electoral votes also gives more weight to the voters in one state over another. A Wyoming vote is weighted 3.6 times a single vote in California. In a democracy in the most admired country in the world, this just doesn’t sit right. Not for Democrats or Republicans.

The confidence our citizens have in their government has been waning for some time. It is sad and worrisome. I think the two elections in the past 12 years where the winner of the popular vote has lost the Presidential election is disturbing and encourages people to think that our elections are rigged or unfair or unclear. Our cultural and political tradition is that the candidate with the most votes wins. Simple and straightforward. Why not the same method for perhaps the most important vote we ever cast – for President of the United States?

The good news is that there is a simple and constitutional method for addressing this problem, and it has already been passed into law in 12 states. It puts every voter on the same equal footing. This solution is called the National Popular Vote Compact. It does not do away with the Electoral College, it merely, as the constitution allows, changes the way the electoral votes are cast. Our electors in Oregon would be mandated by the Compact to vote for the candidate who won the Presidential election when all the votes were counted. They would still meet as Electors and cast their votes. But every single vote would be visible in that grand tally.

And finally, the current system of “winner takes all” has created an election process dominated by “swing states” that get all of the attention of the candidates. No one showed up in Oregon who was running for President this year. I remember hearing Walter Mondale at PSU out on the lawn in the fall sun, shaking Bill Clinton’s hand on SW 4th Avenue, and seeing Barack Obama on the South Waterfront at a huge rally. Not anymore. It feels as if Oregon doesn’t count for much. It doesn’t seem fair that “swing states” get more federal dollars than the rest of us either. It’s time for a change.

I have been speaking to people at Town Halls and other meetings and by a large majority, Oregonians are in favor of the Compact. Once they understand how this change works, they light up and say, “Well of course every vote should count the same.” Statewide polling in 2008 showed that democrats, republicans and independents all favored this idea by a large majority. I appreciate that the Oregon House has passed a bill to this effect three times. I’m asking you to do it again, starting by passing HB 2927 out of committee. Thank you.