



Testimony on House Bill 2929

My name is Michael Slater. I am the president and executive director of Project Vote. I am also a resident of Salem, Oregon.

Project Vote is a national nonpartisan, nonprofit organization whose mission is to ensure that every American can register, vote, and cast a ballot that counts. Project Vote strongly supports the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact as a solution to the Electoral College, which functions contrary to the bedrock principle of American democracy: one person, one vote.

Project Vote cannot achieve the outcome of its mission, a diverse electorate that works equally well for all Americans, when voters in some states have more electoral power to choose the president than voters in other states. The Washington Post summarizes this problem nicely:

...each individual Wyoming vote weighs 3.6 times more than an individual Californian's vote. That's the most extreme example, but if you average the 10 most populous states and compare the power of their residents' votes to those of the 10 least populous states, you get a ratio of 1 to 2.5.¹

The author notes "That distortion will be even greater in the 2020 presidential election."

More troubling to us as a voting rights organization is the Electoral College's flaw is felt most strongly by voters of color. This is because voters of color are under-represented in battleground states compared to the total population. Andrew Gelman, a professor of statistics and political science and director of the Applied Statistics Center at Columbia University, finds that:

...per voter, whites have 16 percent more power than blacks once the Electoral College is taken into consideration, 28 percent more power than Latinos, and 57 percent more power than those who fall into the other category.²

The fact that non-white voters count for less than white voters should inspire all of us who believe that one-person, one vote is the defining principle of American democracy to find a solution. Fortunately, the solution exists: the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact. We urge the Committee to vote "yes" on HB 2927.

¹ "The Electoral College badly distorts the vote. And it's going to get worse." Katy Collins. Washington Post. November 17, 2016.

² "The Electoral College magnifies the power of white voters." Gelman, Andrew and Pierre-Antoine Kremp. Vox. December 17, 2016.