



May 18, 2017

Dear Chair Williamson and Members of the House Committee on Rules,

We write today to express our strong support for HB 2927 which Enacts Interstate Compact for Agreement Among the States to Elect the President by National Popular Vote. As the grassroots arm of the women's movement, the National Organization for Women's (NOW) purpose is to take action through intersectional grassroots activism to promote feminist ideals, lead societal change, eliminate discrimination, and achieve and protect the equal rights of all women and girls in all aspects of social, political, and economic life. The National Popular Vote legislation upholds those principles by ensuring that Oregon voters are legitimately represented and actually have their votes count.

With the current electoral college system Oregonians' votes for President effectively don't count. The Electoral College operates in opposition to the basic tenet of American democracy: one person, one vote. As it stands now, residents of rural, sparsely populated states are getting the equivalent of approximately 5 votes for every vote that residents of our most densely populated states get.

Additionally, state winner-take-all laws, which, under the electoral college, most states, including Oregon have, also mean that only the 12 "battleground" states, representing only 30 percent of the voting populace, really matter in presidential campaigns. These states not only get most of candidates' campaign money and attention, they also receive significantly more federal benefits.

Of utmost importance to Oregon NOW members is the fact that the weaknesses of the Electoral College are felt most strongly by voters of color. This is because non-whites are underrepresented in "battleground" states. According to Andrew Gelman, Director of the Applied Statistics Center at Columbia University, "...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." This certainly belies the notion of "one person, one vote".

We hope that you will join us in supporting HB 2927, which will make the vote of every Oregonian count. We urge a quick vote on this bill so that it can move to the full House and onto the Senate.

Sincerely,

*Lisa Frack for the Oregon state chapter of the National Organization for Women (Oregon NOW)*  
*Sheila Swinford for Central Oregon Coast NOW*  
*Bud Feules for Greater Portland NOW*  
*TeriAnn Mason for High Desert NOW*  
*Laurie Notaro for South Willamette Valley NOW*