

Dear Chairwoman Burdick and Members of the Committee:

I write you in support of HB2927, the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact Bill House version without referral to a referendum. I believe no one who loses the popular vote should be President of this country. This is not a partisan issue; it is one of common sense and fairness and is an idea which most Oregonians support.

I am aware that even though the bill has been passed in the House of Representatives 4 times, each time it has moved to the State Senate it has died in the Rules Committee without a vote. I have been told that Senate President Peter Courtney opposes this bill. His objection seems to be that the bill would somehow dilute Oregon's statehood and power because it would group our voters with those of other states. I would argue that Oregonians vote for presidential candidates based on their individual beliefs about what is good for them and their country, not as cogs in the state's political machinery. No one cheers because their presidential candidate won their state. They do not feel lessened by the fact that New York or Nebraska also went for that candidate. If their candidate loses, as long as every person's vote is counted equally, which passage of the NPVIC in enough states to reach the 270 electoral vote threshold would guarantee, they can know that the election was fair.

As with most changes to our voting standards, the NPIC continues in the tradition of being initiated at the state level. Reforms like suffrage for women and African Americans were initiated in states before they were adopted at the national level, as were the change to an 18-year-old voting age, abolition of the property ownership requirement as a qualification for voting, and even the winner-take-all standard for distribution of state electors that is currently used by most states. States already use more than one way to distribute their electoral votes. I am by no means a constitutional scholar but from my reading of Article 2 Section 1, there is nothing that precludes the compact from following the letter of the Constitution.

There is also a SB825 which would make the NPVIC a referendum even though a 2008 poll showed that 76% of Oregonian's were in favor of the National Popular Vote. This appears to be a way to stymie efforts to pass the bill this year and possibly not at all. The US Constitution requires that the State Legislature determine disposition of the Electoral Votes of a state, not a referendum. This could make such a referral a poison pill that would doom the bill to be challenged as unconstitutionally decided.

I think our State Senators should be held accountable for their votes on this bill, both Republicans and Democrats, instead of being allowed yet again to side-step the issue. At the House hearing for the bill a rural Republican voter said that she had lived and voted in the state her whole life and never once had her vote for president count because of our current winner-take-all system. She said she wanted that to change. It is time to make her vote and the vote of all Oregonians count.

The NPVIC is the best chance we have to make sure that our democracy does not continue to be controlled by a tiny minority of American voters in swing states. I hope you will see fit to bring it to the Senate floor and give it the vote it deserves.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely yours,
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