

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 and not the Senate bill. The NPVIC 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. Senate President Peter Courtney has stated he opposes this bill. His objection is that the bill would diminish Oregon's power because Oregon votes would not be counted as one block. Oregonians vote for presidential candidates based on their beliefs about what is good for themselves and their country, not as representatives of a state's machinery. No one rejoices because their presidential candidate won their state. 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. Another argument against the NPVIC is that it hurts rural voters and gives benefit to city voters but rural voters make up the same percent of the population as our large city populations, approximately 15% each. The majority of Americans live in small towns, cities and suburbs across the country. If enacted it would have no impact except to equalize the power of every voter. The President of the United States represents all Americans, not just the States. How can he do so in an even-handed way if the votes of voters in certain swing states have more power than others? It is clear from data about the extra money given for infrastructure and disaster relief to swing states that he cannot.

There is also a SB825 which would make the NPVIC a referendum even though a 2008 poll showed that 76% of Oregonians were in favor of the National Popular Vote. This appears to be a way to prevent passage of 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.

All our State Senators should be held accountable for their votes on this bill instead of being allowed to yet again 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 democracy in this country is just that and 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,
Gary Jacobson
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