

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am a resident of Portland and I support HB 2927 and I oppose SB 825. Here is why:

I support HB 2927 because the President should be representative of all people of the United States and it is time we adopt the National Popular Vote (NPV) Interstate Compact so that one person = one vote. My vote should count equally as any other voting individual in any other state. The Compact would not come into effect unless and until states with a total of 270 electoral votes adopt it. Many states already have and it is time for Oregon to join this effort to ensure that each person's vote counts equally in the Presidential election.

I oppose SB 825 because it is clearly an attempt to kill HB 2927 and the enactment of NPV in Oregon. The legislature knows public interest democracy groups don't have the cash to run a ballot initiative.

Referring the NPV to a popular vote would also be contrary to our longstanding history and precedent. The U.S. Constitution specifically assigns the job of choosing the method of awarding electoral votes to the state legislature. There has never been a case in U.S. history where anybody other than the state legislature made this decision. Oregon's winner-take-all law was not referred to a vote by the people. It is the job of the legislature to decide this issue.

Senators Courtney and Devlin are seeking to turn the ballot process into a weapon to kill NPV. The Oregon Constitution provides a specific way for opponents to obtain a statewide vote on legislation after it is passed by the legislature. Under this established "referendum process," the opponents have the burden of getting a certain number of signatures against what the legislature has passed within 90 days after it passes. The question then goes onto the November general election ballot. The plan proposed by Senators Courtney and Devlin turns this totally upside-down. The opponents don't have the usual burden under the Oregon Constitution of demonstrating substantial opposition to the legislation by getting a petition signed.

Under SB 825, the vote would be in a low-turnout primary election, instead of the November general election, making it easier for well-funded outside opponents of NPV to prevail. Running a ballot campaign in Oregon is extremely costly. Without enough money it's impossible to raise this issue enough for it to stand out. It would be very easy for a well-funded opposition group, likely from outside Oregon, to come in and confuse the issue. We saw how the recent initiative election regarding Measure 97 resulted in outside influence that affected the outcome of that vote.

Do not let the disingenuous process outlined in SB 825 derail what would be a step towards fairness in the most important vote that any American citizen can cast – the vote to elect the President.

Very truly yours,

Mary Chaffin
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