

From the Desk of
Senator Brian Boquist

Making the conservative case for the popular vote

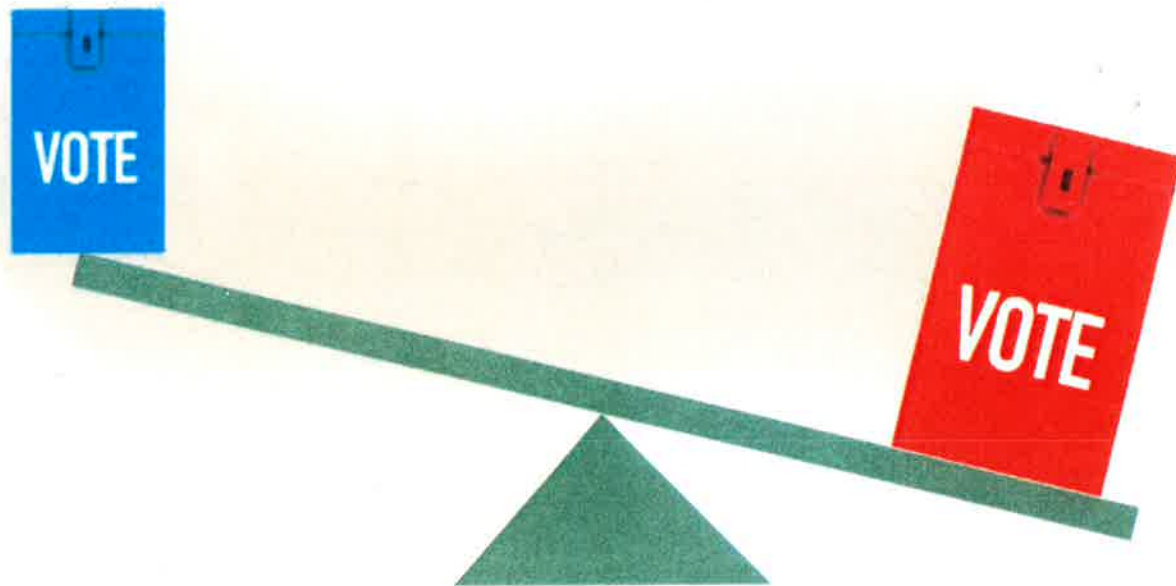


Illustration on popular vote determining presidential elections by Alexander Hunter/The Washington Times more >

By Brian Laurens - - Thursday, March 21, 2019

ANALYSIS/OPINION:

Democrats are gunning for the Electoral College again, with presidential candidates Elizabeth Warren and Pete Buttigieg both endorsing doing away with the system. They seem to think that Democrats would benefit if the

Electoral College were dumped and the fundamental role of states was usurped with presumably the federal government taking charge of the election.

They're wrong. Here's why: If you a conservative residing in the deeply red and rural South, you're taken for granted every four years while the Republican ticket pours almost all of its time and money into 12 so-called "battleground" states. There's basically no reason to even bother to vote.

There's a better way — the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, which would guarantee the presidency to the candidate who receives the most popular votes across all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

In a nutshell, the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact will go into effect when enacted by states possessing a majority of the electoral votes necessary to elect a president: 270 out of 538. In December following every presidential election, when electors meet to cast their ballots for president and vice president, the electoral votes of all the compacting states would be awarded to the candidate who receives the most popular votes across the nation. And in keeping with the Constitution, the pact does not actually do away with the Electoral College.

The compact significantly amplifies the voice of each individual vote, including conservative voters, in choosing the president.

Under the current system, each state's voters have a direct voice in allocating just their own block of electoral votes. Under the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, voters in the compacting states gain a direct voice over the disposition of 270 electors. That's enough to elect a president.

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No one would have their vote cancelled out by their state's winner-take-all system of allocating electoral votes because they didn't side with the majority in their state. Every voter would have their vote counted directly toward their choice for president. And the presidential candidate who gets the most votes nationwide would become president.

Currently, no one can make a rational argument that the current system empowers conservative voters.

All together in 2016, Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas and Louisiana delivered 5,971,583 popular votes and 45 electoral votes to the TrumpPence ticket — exactly one-sixth of the 270 electoral votes necessary to elect a president. Yet, just four of the 151 major Republican general election events held across the country took place in those five deeply red states.

It's easy to understand why campaigns treat their most solid supporters so offhandedly. Why, they reason, should we waste precious resources in states where we are so far ahead we can't possibly lose? (Or, for that

matter, in states where they are so far behind they can't possibly win.) So, while 38 states sit on the political sidelines, the real campaign takes place in 12 battleground states with big blocks of electoral votes, and a propensity to swing them back and forth between red and blue every four years.

As a result, Americans don't elect a president of the United States of America. Rather, they elect a president of the Battleground States of America.

The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, which has already passed 14 states and the District of Columbia with a current 186 electoral votes, would change that situation dramatically.

Knowing they need to win the popular vote in order to be awarded 270 electoral votes and the White House, candidates would be compelled to conduct truly national campaigns, seeking out every voter in every nook and cranny of the nation. The Democratic ticket kissing babies in rural red Kansas, while the Republican ticket mines for conservatives in blue Oregon. Just imagine that.

Here's the bottom line: The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact would give conservative voters in the South, in rural America and all across the country enormous new clout in electing the president. Most importantly, it is fully in line with the Constitution as it preserves the Electoral College, just as the Founding Fathers intended.

• *Brian Laurens is a Republican activist from Georgia.*

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