

Testimony in support of LD 1578

Rick Davis
Belfast, Maine
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Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee:

My name is Rick Davis. I have lived in Maine for nearly fifteen years. I am writing today in support of LD 1578, “An Act to Adopt an Interstate Compact to Elect the President of the United States by National Popular Vote.”

I have been an active voter since 1968. It seems like after every Presidential election, complaints have emerged about the Electoral College as an outdated and unfair way to elect our President. And every four years, those concerns melt away until the next election.

I remember clearly waking up on November 9, 2016, to learn that the Presidential candidate who received almost three million votes more than her opponent had actually lost the election because of the way the Electoral College works.

Many states are reliably “red” or “blue”, so the voting results in just a handful of so-called “swing” states determine the eventual winner, regardless of who received the most popular votes overall. Candidates eagerly campaign in those states while ignoring others. In 2020, 33 states had zero campaign visits; Maine had two.

The election of 2016 was not a one-off. In 2000, Al Gore received almost 544,000 more popular votes than George W. Bush, but the election came down to a few hundred votes in Florida. In six other states, the margin was less than 10,000 votes.

That could happen again in 2024, but it doesn’t have to. The Electoral College was incorporated into our Constitution and getting rid of it would require passing an amendment, which is a daunting task. Each state determines the rules for casting its electoral votes. In all but two states (Maine being one of them!), the candidate with the most votes in each state receives ALL of that state’s electoral votes.

The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact is an alternative. Sixteen states plus DC have already agreed that all of their electoral votes will go to the candidate who wins the National Popular Vote regardless of who won their own state’s popular vote. These 17 jurisdictions represent a total of 205 electoral votes, just 65 short of the 270 needed for the Compact to go into effect.

I urge the Maine legislature to join this national movement by passing LD 1578. Doing so supports the democratic process and recognizes the worth and dignity of every voter, regardless of where they live.

Thank you.

Rick Davis
Belfast