

TO: The Honorable Craig Hickman
The Honorable Laura Supica, Co-Chairs
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

DATE: January 8, 2024

RE: LD 1578, An Act to Adopt an Interstate Compact to Elect the President of the United States by National Popular Vote

Dear Senator Hickman and Representative Supica,

My name is Emilia Toth. I'm a resident of Portland. I am here today as a member of LWVME's Youth Council. This program helps young people to explore how Maine's government works and build their civic leadership skills. This testimony does not represent LWVME's view, only those of the Youth Council. I am testifying in favor of LD1578, to adopt the National Popular Vote Compact for the presidential election.

I strongly support electing the United State's president and vice president through National Popular Vote, as this allows for every individual vote to be counted and included in this nationwide decision. Popular election has been a part of our Democracy for over a century, though the electoral vote tends to make the popular opinion obsolete.

As a young person, I was taught throughout all of grade school that the people of the United States have the power to elect whomever they see fit to be the president. While a National Popular Vote is counted, the Electoral Votes have determined the outcome of some of the largest presidential races of the last few decades. Oftentimes, the electoral college votes for a president that did not win the popular vote, making the idea of a "people's president" fundamentally untrue, as the decision does not reflect what the nation has decided.

There is a solution here that doesn't jeopardize or eliminate any current systems or procedures.

LD1578 would direct our electors to vote for the winner of the national popular vote, rather than the state or district popular vote. This ensures that the electoral college is making a fair decision by voting between the candidates chosen by national popular vote, instead of state popular vote. This bill would make all the difference in how individual votes are considered, allowing for a fair approach to presidential elections.

This year, I will be voting in my first presidential election, and I would like to vote with the confidence that my vote will be heard. Each individual vote matters, and this should be reflected in the outcome of every election.

While working with several college students on voter registration and information this year, I discovered that one of the main reasons young people refuse to vote is because they don't have faith in the fundamental systems that make up elections. They don't believe their vote counts or matters, and this is an idea the electoral college has reinforced time and time again.

The State of Maine has a chance to prove to the large youth population that voting is a vital piece of civic involvement, and it can make a genuine difference in how the nation is run. I urge you to consider passing LD1578.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.