

Alex Wu
Scarborough
LD 1578

Good morning members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs.

My name is Alex Wu and I am a Junior at Scarborough High School, as well as a volunteer for the League of Women Voters of Maine. I am asking you to vote ought to pass on LD 1578. While the League supports the passage of this bill, I am here not as a volunteer of the League, but as a soon to be voter. The sentiments I express in this testimony are purely my own.

As a 17 year old I am not yet able to vote, but by the time the 2024 presidential elections happen, I will be of age to vote. Before that happens though I know there are many things I can do to engage myself in the election processes to make my voice and constituent voices in general heard more. The electoral college violates the equity in representation that I fight for.

According to the University of Michigan Center for Sustainable Systems, 89% of the U.S. population and 68% of the world population is projected to live in urban areas by 2050. Constituents who live in states with highly populated areas are much less represented than those in smaller states. Therefore, typically, a town or city voter is much less represented than a voter in a rural area.

The most egregious example of this unequal distribution is between California and Wyoming constituents. 1 electoral vote in California represents 712,000 constituents whereas one in Wyoming represents 195,000. A constituent in Wyoming is nearly 4 times as represented than a constituent in California. More populated states, likewise, are underrepresented compared to smaller states like Wyoming.

If NPV was passed some argue that Presidential candidates would only campaign in the largest cities to capture the most amount of votes. Presidential candidates would not only focus on the largest cities to win the presidency though; according to the 2020 census only about 20% of the nation's population lived in the 100 most populous cities in America. Arguments against NPV regarding tyranny of the majority do not hold up, because 80% of the United State's population is not in those massive urban centers, and Presidential candidates would still have to worry about campaigning in other areas because of that.

However there is a focus that Presidential candidates put on certain states during their campaigning process. Presidential candidates will put more campaigning efforts in swing states because of the current winner-takes-all system. Only Nebraska and Maine have passed laws enabling electoral votes disagreeing with the state's popular vote. The supposed purpose of electors protecting from tyranny of the majority instead leads to a tyranny of state partisanship. If a presidential candidate knows that a state will vote for them anyways they will not campaign in that state. Battleground states, rural or not, are the real priority for the campaigning process.

I do not want my vote's importance to be decided based on what state I live in. My friends do not want their vote's importance to be decided based on what state they live in. Our votes should be counted equally. The national popular vote compact achieves this. Each voter has one vote, and is represented equally.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions from the Committee.