

David Souers
Friendship
LD 1578

3 North Harbor Side Lane #314
Friendship, ME 04547
January 8, 2024

Testify for National Popular Vote
Monday Jan 8th, 2024 10:00 AM- 1:00 PM
Participant Role Volunteer
210 State St
MAINE STATE HOUSE
Augusta ME 04330-6845

Good morning Senator Craig Hickman, Representative Laura Supica, and members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee. My name is David Souers, from Friendship, ME, and I am testifying in support of LD 1578 for the following reasons:

First, I believe that a “national popular vote” for the President of the United States is more in line with our Declaration of Independence which says that “all men are created equal”. This indicates that all votes should be counted equally toward the election of our President. The present winner take all Electoral College votes that most states have adopted does not effectively apply this principle of “all men are created equal” under today's conditions. This is particularly true when popular votes are dispensed with, as Electoral College Votes are counted across the United States. The disparity between the popular vote and the Electoral College can increase to the point where a candidate can win the Electoral College votes while losing the popular vote of the nation. Two presidents won the Electoral College but lost the popular vote during our nation's first 212 years, and then two presidents won the Electoral College but lost the popular vote during our nation's last 23 years. Our nation's population growth in urban areas and more populated states is increasing this distortion, and inequity of how much our vote counts. It should be equal for all Americans.

Second, though the Electoral College votes for each state is based on the census, our smallest rural states like Montana get an advantage over more populated states because each state gets two

Electoral College votes, one for each US Senator. The smaller the state the greater the advantage for winner take all Electoral College votes in those states. Maine's current method of appointing Electoral College votes is more equitable. But still does not fully support distribution that matches the popular vote.

Third, our Federal government is intended to provide checks and balances among the Administrative branch (President), the Legislative branch (House and Senate) and Judiciary branch (US Supreme Court and Federal Courts). However, the Senate is comprised of two senators per state regardless of the population. This does not provide equal representation across the US population. California with the largest population at approximately 38,800,000 people has two senators, each representing 19,400,000 Americans, while Montana with the smallest population at approximately 585,000 has two senators, each representing 292,500 Americans. Maine with a population of approximately 1,401,000 has two senators, each representing 700,500 Americans. We are not likely to change this dramatic inequity of representation, but we cannot afford to have this inequity in all branches of the Federal government and have checks and balances. The Senate has the power of advice and consent on all presidential appointments to the Federal courts who are granted life tenure. The senate has many other advice and consent powers including confirmation of Cabinet members, department heads such as the Departments of State, Justice and Defense, plus ambassadors representing the US abroad. The Senate also votes on all legislation and budgets that the House proposes and votes on. The responsibility of the Senate is significant. The importance here is that low population states have a disproportionately greater influence on legislation and on positions, departments and

the Judiciary branch. So, if the President can be elected by less than the popular vote with disproportionate influence from low population, rural states, and the Senate with greater representation also given to low population, rural states, with confirms so many presidential appointments including the Judiciary, then we do not have checks and balances across our Federal government. We have seen this adverse effect where the Senate with held voting on a US Supreme Court justice and withheld all appointments and promotions to the Defense Department over a long period of time. A national popular vote will not correct the inequities and disproportionate representation in the Senate. But it will provide more equitable representation in the Administrative branch to better represent the American people as a check to the other Federal branches.

Our democracy is more in question now than during any of our lifetimes, and perhaps during our national history. Americans must be more equitably represented to keep every American citizen motivated to vote and to accept our elections as fair, just and equitable. The recognition that a minority can wield power over the majority, and that a small minority can even stop our government from functioning is distressing and disorienting to most Americans. The belief by some that they are superior and entitled to dominate the majority of Americans must be dealt with. Maine is a relatively small state with greater representation per citizen than many states. Still, it is in our best interests to work with all states to make the Federal government more equitably representative across our nation. For any state or group of states, as with the former Confederate states, to believe that they can rule the majority of our national population is undemocratic and will lead once again to a national crisis of confidence, disunion and ultimately dysfunction that gives aid and comfort to America's enemies at home and abroad. We have many shared values and needs that are not being addressed when the least populated areas of our nation have more say than the more populated areas that generate the greatest tax revenues that are often distributed disproportionately to the less populated areas. Getting our elections and equal representation in order on a more solid footing should be our highest priority. I assume that the legislation being proposed is in full coordination with all other states that have offered and promoted their support for a "national popular vote".

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter and for hearing my testimony.

David Souers
Friendship, ME