

**Testimony of Jasper Hendricks III before the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee of the Maine Legislature in opposition to LD 1578, the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact**

Esteemed Senate Chair Hickman & House Chair Supica and members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee:

Good [morning/afternoon]. I am Jasper Hendricks III, representing Democrats for the Electoral College. Having served proudly as a Presidential Elector in Virginia for Hillary Clinton in 2016, I understand the concerns many Democrats hold about our presidential election process. However, I stand here today to voice my opposition to LD 1578, the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact.

NPV seeks to change how presidential electors are selected through state legislation, disregarding individual state voters and allocating electoral votes based on the national popular vote. In Maine, this would mean overlooking your statewide and congressional district results and causing the interests of Maine's people to be ignored by presidential candidates.

The compact seeks to impose a makeshift scheme upon the Electoral College, bypassing the constitutional amendment process. This genuinely threatens democracy by fostering instability and eroding trust in our political system.

A critical question arises: What defines the national popular vote? NPV lacks a precise definition, leading to potential discrepancies among compact member states in interpreting the "national popular vote," potentially yielding different winners being declared by different member states. NPV gives power to a select few state election officials, relying on their judgment to calculate and merge votes across state lines, assuming no disputes or uncertainties over any state's results. But because the states operate 51 separate elections with differences in who votes, how they vote, and how votes are counted and reported, there are bound to be disputes and uncertainties, including those over ranked-choice voting.

There is also the problem of unequal access to the ballot. Some states require voters to present a government-issued photo ID in order to cast their vote while others do not require any form of identification at all. In addition, limits on the right of convicted felons to vote vary by state. These and other policies impact voter participation, yet NPV pretends that different levels of access to the ballot box in different states can be overlooked or ignored. Any move to a popular vote system would need to ensure that all voters have equal access to the ballot, regardless of their state of residence.

Rather than changing rules for short-term advantages based on the politics of the day, political parties should concentrate on winning voter support in states like Maine. As an American, I advocate for a stronger nation through confidence in election outcomes. As a Democrat, I work for a resilient party with support from a diverse coalition across the entire country. The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact does neither and raises serious concerns about the integrity and clarity of our electoral process. I urge you to reject it. Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.