



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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### **LD 1578 – “An Act to Adopt an Interstate Compact to Elect the President of the United States by National Popular Vote”**

**Good morning Chairs Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee. My name is Art Bell, I represent House District #103 in Yarmouth, and I am please to be here to present to you LD 1578 ... “An Act to Adopt an Interstate Compact to Elect the President of the United States by National Popular Vote”.**

The Constitution doesn't say much when it details how the country elects the President. It specifies that a candidate has to earn a majority of the Electoral votes, that is 270 or more to become President. And then article II section 1 explains that states control the way the Electoral College works: "Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors...."

In Maine we have 4 electoral votes, and only Nebraska joins us in awarding electoral votes based on results in Congressional District and statewide. All the other 48 states use what's called the "winner-take-all" method of awarding electors. **Nebraska and Maine laws are a reminder that the way the Electoral College functions is left up to state law.**

The winner-take-all method and the Congressional District method of awarding electoral votes weren't in the Constitution. In the early years of our country, states tried different methods of awarding electoral votes. By the 1830s winner-take-all became the standard until we in Maine passed the district law in 1969.

The way states award electoral votes today is creating problems for our nation. The current system has elected the 2nd place candidate win office – twice in our lifetimes and five times in our history. Five out of 46 Presidents is a pretty bad error rate. Elevating the 2nd place candidate erodes faith in our democratic system.

Under the current system, candidates focus on dozen or so battleground states and routinely ignore the 70% of voters because they happen to live in reliably "red" or "blue" states. Joe Biden knows he can ignore Iowa because he can't possibly win. Donald Trump knows he can ignore Iowa because he's sure to win. Meanwhile they both shower Pennsylvania and New Hampshire with millions of dollars and campaign activity because those states could go either way. A recent Washington Post analysis suggested that only 18% of American voters will play a meaningful role in the 2024 election. That erodes faith in our democratic system.



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With the adoption of the National Popular Vote, all of a sudden the candidates and their campaigns will work to connect with voters in all 50 states.

That's what a healthy process looks like. ***That's how we all get elected.*** That's how over 500,000 state and local officials in this country get elected. That's what National Popular Vote, this bill, means once it has passed enough states.

### ***So here's how it works:***

***Today, under our "district system" here in Maine,*** a candidate earns 1 electoral vote by winning each district and 2 from getting the most votes statewide. ***Under National Popular Vote,*** to win the 4 electors from Maine, a candidate will have to get the most votes in the nation.

***Since National Popular Vote started in 2006,*** sixteen states and the District of Columbia have passed this law. Together they have 205 of the 270 electoral votes needed to bring the law into effect. Once a handful more states enact this bill, it won't matter which states have passed it.

The candidates will run their race and we will add up the popular votes from all 50 states plus DC. At that point, the candidate with the most votes will be guaranteed the 270 or more electoral votes from the national popular vote states. And that candidate will be guaranteed to go to the White House.

***This bill will make every vote equal – I know we all agree one person, one vote is an important principle. And it will create a system where every voter, in every state, matters in every election.***

***Finally, it will guarantee the candidate with the most votes gets elected.***

***I urge the committee to support passage of LD 1578, thank you.***