



Jim Dean, Democracy for America

Testimony on National Popular Vote: H.B. 6163

March 11, 2011

Democracy for America is a people-powered political action committee. We take a bottom-up approach to changing our country for the better. We believe in the power of grassroots organizing, in every state, in every town, in every community. We believe in the power of every voice to make a difference in our political landscape.

Today, however, this vision hardly squares with the way we elect our nation's highest office, the President of the United States.

Imagine if every four years, ALL Americans could see a "fifty state strategy" in their country. Candidates would campaign everywhere. The issues and values that mattered in all corners of the nation would be on the radar. Volunteers who wanted to get involved could meet up locally and talk to their neighbors. Small donors could make an impact where they lived.

The reality is different.

Presidential candidates focus 98% of their time and money on just 15 states. They prioritize the biggest swing states. Parties decline to even conduct polls to see what the rest of America is concerned about. Volunteers in Connecticut must get in the car and drive to New Hampshire if they want to get involved. Donors in safe states have to shell out cash just to get a lawn sign, while every drop of money, talent and political economy is shipped elsewhere.

The current "winner take all" state law is the problem. Candidates have no reason to campaign in a state that they are sure to lose, or sure to win. In fact, two-thirds of all resources spent in 2008 went to just six states. Of course, none went to Connecticut. Millions of Americans have no meaningful voice in their one national election.

When every vote matters and counts equally, candidates will have a different set of incentives. Investments from national candidates will lead citizens to engage at the state level. State parties will have more resources to build their organizations. The grassroots work that powers groups on both the left and the right will be given a powerful boost.

The Connecticut General Assembly can make history by passing the National Popular Vote bill. You will not only be passing a law that 74% of Connecticut voters approve of. You will be helping to ensure the health of grassroots, people-powered democracy in America for generations.



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I appreciate your consideration of this testimony and hope that you will act favorably on H.B. 6163.

Respectfully submitted,

*James H. Dean*

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Chair

Democracy for America

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