

Feb. 25, 2013

Dear Chairmen Sen. Musto and Rep. Jutila, and Members of the Committee,

Please find attached the testimony submitted by the Connecticut Young Democrats in support of two of the bills on your agenda for the Public Hearing on Feb 25, 2013. CTYD supports:

HJ 36 RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION
TO GRANT INCREASED AUTHORITY TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY REGARDING ELECTION
ADMINISTRATION

and

SB432 AN ACT CONCERNING AN AGREEMENT AMONG THE STATES
TO ELECT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES BY NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE.

Thank you for your time and consideration if you have any questions please feel free to contact us.

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SB432 AN ACT CONCERNING AN AGREEMENT AMONG THE STATES TO ELECT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES BY NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE.

The Connecticut Young Democrats support SB432, to do away with Connecticut's winner-take-all rule of allocating our electoral votes, and instead award them to the presidential candidate who finished with the most votes cast throughout the country. The U.S. Constitution expressly reserves the right of states to determine how they award their electoral votes. Connecticut, like most other states, gives all our votes to the candidate who wins the popular vote of our state. The proliferation of winner-take-all rules has led to a system of swing and safe states, effectively eliminating all but a handful of states from relevance in today's presidential elections.

Four times in our history, a candidate who has lost the popular vote has still declared victory because of Electoral College math. That includes the 2000 election. In 2004 a change of less than 60,000 vote in one state would have elected John Kerry president despite George W. Bush finishing with over 3,000,000 more votes nationwide. While President Obama was re-elected by a margin of nearly 5,000,000 last year, Mitt Romney would be president if less than 215,000 voters in four states had changed their minds.

As a safe state, Connecticut receives little if no attention from presidential campaigns, which spent 98% of their resources on only ten states in 2012. When the campaigns are over, safe states are proven to receive less attention in the form of federal grants. Swing states receive an average of 5.7% up to 11% more grant dollars for swing states than non-swing states¹

By adopting National Popular Vote, Connecticut voters will be assured that every one of their votes matters in every election. In 2012, 1,558,042 Connecticut voters cast a ballot for president. Due to our winner-take-all rule effectively once 50% +1 votes were received for President Obama all other votes were irrelevant or 270,190 votes on the Democrat line and 18,067 votes on the Libertarian and Independent lines were thrown away.

Some states are currently considering schemes that would game the system rather than apply the fairest standard: that every vote should count, in every state, every time. National Popular Vote is the fair not only compared to reform other states are proposing but more importantly it is fundamentally fair – one person's vote should be worth the same as another's regardless of the jurisdiction in which it was cast. If we adopt National Popular Vote we will be moving towards that principle. Why is an Ohio citizen's vote worth more candidate time and money than a Connecticut citizen's vote? Why should Connecticut receive 6% fewer federal dollars simply because it isn't a "swing" state? National popular vote will help fix that problem. National Popular Vote will ensure that the President of the United States is elected by the people of the United States, not the vote of Ohio, or Florida or any "swing" state.

¹ Hudak, John Joseph. 2011. *The Politics of Federal Grants: Presidential Influence over the Distribution of Federal Funds*. Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. Working Paper # 01-2011. www.vanderbilt.edu/csdi/research/CSDI-WP-01-2011.pdf

HJ36 RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO GRANT INCREASED AUTHORITY TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY REGARDING ELECTION ADMINISTRATION.

The Connecticut Young Democrats support HJ36, and the bill previously heard by this committee on 1/28/13, HJ16. Passage of HJ36 for the second time (it was passed by a simple majority of the legislature last year) will put a question on the 2014 ballot for voters in Connecticut to decide whether or not to allow the legislature the authority to establish early voting in our state.

CTYD supports initiatives that ensure access to voting and increase opportunities for voter participation. While this bill won't prescribe how early voting take places in CT--in fact that would be decided later--there is no doubt that amending our constitution to allow early voting is the necessary first step toward these reforms, and it should be taken.

30 other states have some sort of early voting. 32 million voters cast a ballot before Election Day in 2012. In Connecticut, many young people live busy lives, often balancing one or more jobs, school work, and all else life entails. They should have a legal option to cast their ballot at a time that is convenient for them. We urge passage.