



Testimony of Matthew Massie
Yale University, Class of 2017
National Popular Vote Director, Democracy United
Support for H.B. No. 5126

PO Box 205611
New Haven, CT 06520
(304) 395-3285
www.democracyunited.org

Co-chairs Senator Musto and Representative Jutila, thank you very much for allowing me the opportunity to testify today in favor of H.B. No. 5126 (An Act Concerning an Agreement Among the States to Elect the President of the United States by National Popular Vote). My name is Matthew Massie, and I am currently a student at Yale University. In addition to my studies, I am the National Popular Vote Director for Democracy United, an organization working for fairness, transparency, and accessibility in government. Above all, however, I am a voter in the State of Connecticut, and I believe that enacting the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact is a vital step toward improving the state of American democracy.

Voter apathy plagues today's young people. In those states whose Election Day results were all but decided by the time the polls opened, voter turnout among young people was absolutely dismal. In my home state of West Virginia in 2012, the percentage of young people who bothered to vote at all hovered below twenty-five percent, the lowest rate of any age group in any state in the country. Because of the outdated Electoral College, it is becoming harder and harder to convince our youth, the civic leaders of tomorrow, that their votes matter. Under the current system of fifty-one concurrent state-level presidential elections, it is unfortunately not a stretch to suggest that the individual votes of people in Connecticut do not matter.

But going beyond political theorizing, the emphasis that our current Electoral College system places on a few swing states has troubling practical implications. The Northeast Corridor may be home to the one of the most traveled rail lines in the United States, but it is also home to some of the most reliably "blue" states. For that reason, the members of this committee should not be surprised when I say that when federal money for high-speed rail projects became available in 2011, Connecticut was not among the first states to be approached. Instead, Florida was given preference. And when Governor Rick Scott rejected the funds, among the states to which the money was distributed included the likes of Wisconsin and Ohio. The needs of Connecticut citizens have been systematically deemed subordinate to those of swing state residents. This is unfair in every sense of the word.

What I am asking this committee and the General Assembly as a whole to do is to advance a simple piece of legislation that will transform American democracy. Just as county lines are ignored in apportioning electoral votes, so should state lines. The direct election of the President of the United States will ensure that every vote matters, and that no matter what the most recent polls may show, every state will be treated fairly. I urge this committee to advance H.B. No. 5126, and I urge the General Assembly to allow Connecticut to join the fight for a more perfect union.

Matthew Massie
National Popular Vote Director, Democracy United