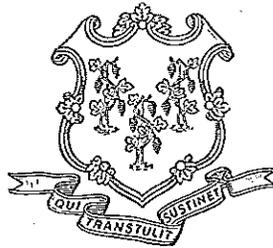


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Senator Musto, Representative Jutila, Ranking Members, and other members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 5126: AN ACT CONCERNING AN AGREEMENT AMONG THE STATES TO ELECT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES BY NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE.

My name is Gary LeBeau, the State Senator from the 3rd District, representing the towns of East Hartford, South Windsor, Ellington and East Windsor.

My support for a national popular vote is based in large part on the common sense belief that *every vote should matter in a presidential election and that every vote should be equal.*

As legislators who have probably followed national politics for most of our lives, we have become accustomed to the current system which is based on battleground/swing states and "safe" states. When we step back and ponder this reality, and understand the consequences, what we really have is a broken system.

First, consider the fact that in the recent 2012 presidential election, *four out of five Americans were essentially ignored.* Any of us who live in a non-battleground state, such as Connecticut, understand this dynamic. Presidential candidates have no reason to campaign in states where they are comfortably ahead or hopelessly behind, as a simple plurality of the votes within a particular state wins that candidate all of the state's electoral votes. This is the "winner take all rule" that exists in almost all states.

Most significantly, the map of states that matter continues to shrink – we all know that in the most recent presidential election, the state Ohio was targeted early in the campaign as the most critical state in determining the outcome, and therefore received more campaign visits than any other state. Overall, the Obama campaign conducted events in just 8 states; the Romney campaign 10 states. Again, this dynamic is not new – in the five most recent presidential elections, more than two thirds of the states have been like Connecticut – not competitive and irrelevant to the presidential candidates and their campaigns.

Second, the current system does not reliably reflect the nationwide popular vote. The state winner-take-all rule makes it possible for a candidate to win the Presidency without winning the most popular votes nationwide. This has occurred four different times in our history, most recently in 2000, and will happen again in the future under the current

system.

Finally, I am concerned that the disenfranchisement of voters by the current system has significant consequences to our democracy. As a former high school social studies teacher, I have fought for many years to get young people more involved in government and politics. The system we have right now for electing the President is an absolute deterrent to increasing participation in voting and elections.

The proposed compact legislation is, in my view, the only viable way to ensure that we have a national popular vote and ensure that the presidential candidate receiving the most popular votes wins the presidency. Please keep in mind that the compact will not become immediately effective based on Connecticut's legislation. Instead, the proposed compact will only come into effect after it has been enacted by states collectively possessing a majority of electoral votes (at least 270 of the 538). Connecticut will be in good company, joining nine other states that have enacted this law.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify before the GAE Committee - - I respectfully request that the Committee pass this legislation this year.