

—YALE COLLEGE—
DEMOCRATS

Testimony of Makayla Haussler
B22
Legislative Coordinator, Yale College Democrats
06511

February 22, 2017
302 York Street,
New Haven, CT

In favor: H.B. 5434
An Act Adopting the Interstate Compact to Elect the President of the United States by
National Popular Vote.

Chairs and Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee,

In elementary school civics class, we were all taught a classic mantra of American elections: One person, one vote. This last fall, people of my generation excitedly went to the polls here in Connecticut or mailed in their absentee ballots to their home state for the first time, excited to have an official voice in our government for the first time. However, the electoral college distorts the idea of “one person, one vote”, so I strongly urge the Committee to vote in favor of H.B. 5434 An Act Adopting the Interstate Compact to Elect the President of the United States by National Popular Vote.

In the United States, all elections, except for presidential elections, are won by the candidate who wins the popular vote. Why is the presidency any different? The electoral college was created as a way of giving small, sparsely populated states more sway in an election, and to remove the process of electing a president from the people to a set of selected electors. Since United States Senators became directly elected starting in 1913, the electoral college is the last remaining vestige of such electoral elitism.

How does the electoral college manifest itself in the context of today’s electoral politics? It disenfranchises nearly half of the citizens in each state in presidential election years. Under the electoral college, your vote only counts toward determining the outcome of the election if you happened to vote for the presidential candidate who won the popular vote in your state. In Connecticut, for example, votes for a Republican presidential candidate have not made a difference in the last seven presidential elections,

Once the national popular vote compact takes effect, this problem will be corrected. All signatory states must grant their electoral college votes to the candidate who wins the national popular vote, ensuring that elections will be decided by the people, and that each vote will be weighted equally in our nation’s most important electoral contest. Because it moves us closer to the ideal of “one person, one vote”, I strongly urge you all to vote in favor of H.B. 5434.