

STATEMENT FOR THE CT GENERAL ASSEMBLY HEARING ON 2/22/2017

I'm John Pepe and a forty year resident and voter from Danbury. I oppose HB 5434.

The Founding Fathers of our nation determined the nature of the our government though the US Constitution. They argued and made compromises with each other to achieve a working document characterized by balance between the people and government, and between the legislative, executive and judicial branches. They also understood that times, event and beliefs may require the amendment of that Constitution. So they provided for an amendment process. HB 5434 seeks to circumvent the Amendment process contained in the Constitution.

If passed by enough states, HB 5434, nationally know as the **National Popular Vote Compact**, would require that the states that passed this Compact would be required to cast all its Electoral College votes for the presidential candidate that receive at least 50% of the national popular vote. Proponents argue that this Compact make all nationally cast votes be as equal to each other. Here are my reasons for opposing the Compact:

1. The US Constitution has been the foundation of the nation's government for more than 200 years with numerous amendments proposed and passed or failed under the Amendment process in the Constitution. This Compact is designed to circumvent the Amendment process. Joint resolutions to provide for a popular vote for president and vice-president have proposed several times in the last four decades. One in 1971 failed to get agreement for the Senate. Proposals in 2005 and 2009 died in committee. These examples indicate the correct process for changing the Constitution and the Compact proposal does not conform to that process.
2. There are apparently eleven states that have approved the Compact. With the exception of Illinois all of these states are located in heavily populated areas on the northeast coast and the southwest coast. The midwest and southeast of the country would be left isolated by this Compact. A rationale for the Electoral College is avoid the 'tyranny of the majority'. The Compact would create a tyranny of coastal states versus states in the middle. This Compact represent the first steps towards the 'tyranny of the majority'.
3. The Compact proponents argue that under their proposal the presidential candidates will spend more time in all states. It seems to me that the Compact would lead to candidates spending more time in states with large populations just increasing the likelihood of reaching the 50% threshold. Sparsely population states might be ignored instead of courted because they would potentially at little the 50% threshold. In any event, presidents would determine their own strategies for success as was dramatically highlighted in the 2016 election.

As a former member of the Danbury Board of Education, I appreciate the sometimes difficult and even contentious situations in which elected officials must make decisions that affect the lives of the people they represent. Thank you for your consideration in the matter.