

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

My name is Toni Kenner Pepe and I am from Danbury. I support HB 5434. I urge you to pass this bill for the following reasons:

1. **A vote from a citizen of CT should be counted exactly the same as a vote from a citizen of any other state.** The right of U.S. citizens to choose our representatives at every level of government in free, fair and open elections is a hallmark of our democratic republic, where we elect officeholders to represent us and conduct the business of government. My vote is my voice. I want my vote to count. Under the current system my vote is worth less than half the vote of a citizen in some other state.
2. The Founders left it up to the states how to allocate their electoral votes. The “winner take all” system was not part of the Electoral College process originally, and makes the presidential election process inherently unfair, unlike nearly every other election process in the country. Voting for president is one of the most important acts I can take as a U.S. citizen. **I want my vote to be counted at the national level, not discounted at the state level by a “winner take all” system that is not applied in any other election.**
3. **By joining the National Popular Vote Compact, Connecticut can stand up for its citizens whatever their party.** In Connecticut, for instance, all of Connecticut’s electoral votes have gone to the Democratic candidate in the last seven elections, and therefore the votes for the Republican candidate haven’t mattered. Under the compact, votes for each candidate for president will matter and will matter equally. That is fair and nonpartisan.
4. Small states like Connecticut are largely overlooked in presidential campaigns (except in fundraising events) both because they hold relatively few electoral votes and because they are taken for granted by the candidates of the respective parties as highly likely to vote red or blue. Not only are there very few campaign events held, but research shows that they receive less federal grant money than “swing states” with more electoral votes. That may be unfortunate but appears to be the case. **Connecticut should make sure that its voters are more likely to have the attention of candidates for president and that it receives a fair share of federal funds.**

My grandmother enlisted in the Women’s Army Corps in World War II and was a lifelong member of the League of Women Voters, one of the most respected citizen groups in the country. She headed the Washington office of NJ Rep. Peter Frelinghuysen (R) in the 60s. She inspired me to be involved in governance and my community. I worked in the district office of CT Rep. Bill Ratchford (D) in the 70s and am also a longtime member of the League of Women Voters, which supports the National Popular Vote Compact.

It is seldom that legislatures have the chance to pass a bill which serves the common good, harms no one and costs very little. I hope you will approve HB 5434