

To: Government Administration and Elections Committee

Testimony in regards to HB 5434

February 19, 2017

In our country's current electoral system, the vote is dependent upon several 'swing states', where presidential candidates focus the majority of their campaigning efforts. Candidates have little incentive to campaign in states that they believe they can reliably depend upon to vote in their favor, Connecticut being one of these. Of the 400 campaign events held in 2016, only 1 was in Connecticut. This puts 'reliably red-or-blue' states at a two-fold disadvantage: First, candidates are not able to hear the concerns of voters from these states thoroughly or thoughtfully; second, this also means that the voters are unable to listen to the positions of the candidates first-hand, either relying upon biased mainstream-media reports, or their social media feeds, to supply them with information on a candidate's platform. While the impact of 'fake news' on the outcome of the 2016 election was exaggerated, I believe it is accurate to say that Donald Trump owed his electoral victory in large part to his practiced ability to sensationalize his message, entertain and energize his supporters, and manipulate the media. I don't think these should be the focuses of a presidential candidate no matter his or her views.

If our president were elected based on the popular vote, Hilary Clinton would have won with a 2.1% advantage of 2.9 million votes. By supporting HB 5434, and joining 10 other states by joining the NPV Compact, Connecticut would be empowering the individual vote of all Americans. By casting electoral college votes based on the popular vote winner of all 50 states, the compact is a bi-partisan measure that ensures the votes of both sides matter in every state: in the last 7 elections, CT has given its votes to the Democratic candidate, thus negating the Republican votes cast by hundreds of thousands of citizens. Supporting the popular vote would also reduce the effects of widespread, documented voter suppression throughout the United States, particularly in the form of gerrymandering.

Every election cycle, eligible voters decide to stay home because their vote "doesn't matter." They feel that their voice is meaningless in a system that swallows their individual vote within a district, or a state, that almost always votes against them. Connecticut needs to do its part to ensure the sovereignty of every American's vote by passing HB 5434.

*Elizabeth Richards, New Haven, CT 06511*