

My name is Mari Carol Britt. I am retiree from Southbury.

I am testifying in support of proposed House Bill No. 5421, *An Act Adopting The Interstate Compact To Elect The President By National Popular Vote*.

Like many people, I believed based on what we learned in fifth grade civics class, that the electoral college was the ingenious invention of our founding fathers to ensure that the election of the US President would be conducted by delegates according to the majority vote in each state. We didn't learn that states can have different rules for selecting delegates, or that some states even allow delegates to 'vote their conscience' at the last minute. We weren't told that the concept was intended to protect the interests of slave-holding states -- which were coincidentally also those of some of those great men who wrote our Constitution.

At that time in history the popular vote would have given the northern states, with their large population centers, a far greater voice in government than the southern states whose voting population consisted mainly of free white plantation owners and merchants. The bi-cameral legislature and Electoral College were intended to address these concerns and assuage the fear that the union, still so fragile on the heels of war, could fall apart without the full participation by all of her states in the process of government,

I became skeptical that this system remains relevant for today after the election of George Bush in 2000. The publicity surrounding the peculiarities of that election (hanging chads, ballot shortages, etc.) and on the electoral process in general gave me pause to reconsider a system I always took for granted as uniquely suitable for our country. The civics lesson we learned from that election is that the integrity of the Electoral College concept has been subverted by the lack of consistency in the selection and assignment of delegates; by gerrymandering in some states, and by rules which allow delegates to vote as they please regardless of their state's election results. It is no wonder that so many people don't bother to vote: They don't feel their vote matters.

The privilege of voting should never be squandered or looked upon with skepticism when so much has been sacrificed to preserve that privilege. But the sad truth is that the ingenuity of our Founders has been gamed. It is time to bring people back to the voting booth. I urge you to please vote 'Yes' on H.B. 5421.

Thank you.
Mari-Carol Britt
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