

My name is Paul Honig and I live in Harwinton, CT

I'm here to enthusiastically support HB 5421 the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact bill.

I'd like to make 4 points about this legislation

1. It's completely within the bounds of the constitution.
2. This bill is good for CT.
3. This bill is good for the US.
4. This bill should not be a partisan issue.

1. Constitutionality

Our current system of a State assigning all its electoral votes to the winner of that State's popular vote is not what the founders had in mind when they drafted the constitution. If you don't believe this, I suggest you read Federalist 68. As originally conceived, electors were supposed to be elites who would choose who they thought was the best candidate for president regardless of the will of the people. Between the 1790s and 1820s, the system morphed into the state by state winner-take-all system that we have now precisely because the constitution gives state legislatures the power to decide how to choose their electors.

The NPV Interstate Compact is completely within the bounds of the Constitution:

"Each State shall appoint, **in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct**, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress"

Even now, not all States award all their electors to the winner of the popular vote in that State. Maine (4) and Nebraska (5) divide up their electors and award some to the overall state winner and one to the winner of each congressional district.

2. This bill is good for CT

Currently, CT is largely ignored by presidential campaigns. We get no visits from candidates. We get no candidates taking positions on issues specifically to benefit CT voters. Presidential campaigns do not need to earn our votes. Contrast this with FL, OH, NC, PA, etc. Last election the Clinton campaign was here zero times and the Trump campaign came for 1 hour on August 13th.

CT is the 4th most densely populated state in the nation. 15% of the country lives in the nations 40 largest cities with populations > 450,000. 15% lives in rural areas. The remaining 70% lives in between in places like CT. Clearly campaigns would have as much incentive to visit us and pander to us as they would with anywhere else in the country **if they had to win the popular vote.**

Right now if there's a particular issue that sparks someone's interest and makes them want to rally like-minded voters towards or away from a particular candidate, doing so in CT will have no bearing on outcome of the presidential election. It doesn't matter if 500 or 700 democrats come out to vote in Harwinton. It doesn't matter if 1000 or 1200 republicans come out to vote. Our 7 electoral votes are still going to the same place either way. This isn't the case in a swing state like FL, OH, NC, PA, etc. where votes matter. If we elected based on the national popular vote it would matter the same here and anywhere else in the country.

3. This bill is good for the US

Trump and Clinton each got about 65 million votes. Over 90 million didn't show up to vote. Swing states came out to vote at 64.9% average turnout, spectator states at 56.5%. A difference of 8.4%. Perhaps, by making every vote count we can incentivize more people to vote.

When a president is elected while winning fewer votes than their opponent, their mandate to accomplish anything politically is diminished. When half the country feels cheated by an election result, we all lose.

4. This should not be partisan issue

Polling data from January this year shows 74% of CT likely voters support this bill. It has broad support across the state from all political affiliations. 93% of Democrats, 74% of Unaffiliated, 55% of Republicans support this bill.

8 Former ALEC National chairs support this legislation. Many Republican national political figures do also.

I attended the committee hearings on this bill last year and was shocked at how hyper-partisan this bill had become with nearly unanimous opposition coming from Republicans. I was confused by the unanimity of the opposition to what I was told was not a caucus bill. The objection that I heard over and over from Republicans was something along the lines of "the founding fathers were wise to give us the system we have now and we shouldn't change it". But the truth is that the founding fathers did not give us the state by state winner-take-all system we have now. They did, however in their considerable wisdom, give state legislatures the power to change the system by changing the way they select their electors. That is exactly how we got to the current system from the system the founders actually envisioned. And that is how we can gracefully exit this system without changing the Electoral College at all.

For Republicans who support the status quo because it's worked in favor of Republican candidates recently, the shoe could easily be on the other foot. In 2004 George Bush won Ohio's 20 electoral votes by 2%. If a mere 1% or 60,000 Ohioans out of the 6 million who voted had switched their votes from Bush to John Kerry, Kerry would have been president despite having lost the popular vote by 3 million votes.

So, if you oppose this legislation because you erroneously believe that the status quo benefits Republicans, when the day comes that a Republican presidential candidate gets the short end of the Electoral stick and you do come around to supporting this bill, I'll join you in advocating for its passage because HB 5421 is constitutional, it's good for CT and it's good for the US.