

Testimony in Support of H.B. 5421

Thank you Chairs Flexer, Fox and McLachlan and distinguished members of the GAE Committee for hearing my testimony in support of H.B. 5421, An Act Adopting The Interstate Compact To Elect The President By National Popular Vote.

I believe the National Popular Vote Compact is good for voters regardless of party affiliation. Its benefit goes beyond ensuring that the candidate with the most votes wins the presidency. A national popular vote makes every vote matter, regardless of whether you live in a red, blue or battleground state. That's not the way it works today with "winner-take-all" awarding of Electoral College votes where voters in just 12 states effectively determine who goes to 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

However, last year citizen advocates didn't convince the Republican members of this Committee that the NPV Compact is a good, nonpartisan, idea for improving our democracy.

So rather than presenting my own beliefs about the merits of the NPV Compact, I would like to call your attention to some very conservative commentators who are advocating for the National Popular Vote.

First, I'd like to mention that here in Connecticut the National Popular Vote has support across the political spectrum. According to a recent poll by Making Every Vote Count, 62 percent of Republican, and 76 percent of Independent voters, agree that the candidate with the most votes nationwide should be president. A majority of Connecticut voters are more likely to vote for a state candidate who promises to support the National Popular Vote.

Matt Vespa is the recipient of the Andrew Breitbart Award for Excellence in Online Activism and Investigative Reporting awarded by the Koch brothers' Americans for Prosperity Foundation.

Addressing the concern that Democratic-leaning New York and California would decide the election, Vespa says just the opposite. Under a national popular vote, he wrote¹, "conservatives in New York and California, who have been hiding in the bunker for decades, would be incentivized to turn out and vote."

There are other benefits of the NPV Compact Vespa goes on to say: "the freedom to run a campaign that is truly at the heart of the party platform, the notion of winning California again, and the reduction in bad policies crafted to win over key counties in a handful of battleground states. The deluge of new Republican-leaning voters leaving the bunkers in deep Blue America, knowing their vote will count just as much as a battleground state voter could have a significant impact." And he says, "It's not a constitutional amendment."

From a purely partisan perspective, Vespa wrote, "...the Florida issue cannot be ignored. Florida will be blue in our lifetime. That's 29 electoral votes added to the Democrats' guaranteed 242, which is the ballgame."

That's the same conclusion arrived at by Rachel Alexander, ranked by Right Wing News as one of the 50 Best Conservative Columnists from 2011-2017 and a recipient of Americans for Prosperity's RightOnline Activist of the Year award.

She wrote², “Clinging to the winner-take-all system is a losing strategy for Republicans. Under that system, they will likely lose Florida by 2020 or 2024 due to demographical changes. It is better to take our chances with a direct presidential election than suffer certain defeat with the unfair, outdated, flawed current system that can and should be reformed.”

Alexander addresses several of the Republican concerns I’ve heard about the NPV Compact. She says, “The electoral college can remain.” and “Critics also claim that using the National Popular Vote in presidential elections would favor big cities over rural areas. This isn’t correct.”

Addressing GOP concerns about voter fraud, she says fraud “will become more difficult under a National Popular Vote, because crooked party operatives will no longer be able to focus their efforts on just a handful of states, and the windfall of electoral votes for their illicit efforts will be smaller.”

James Glassman, a former Connecticut resident who served as a high-ranking state department official under President George W. Bush, was recently quoted in CT NewsJunkie³ saying “Surveys show that politically the country is slightly right of center,” arguing for that reason that a National Popular Vote compact would “be beneficial to Republicans.”

Please don’t misunderstand. I don’t believe the reason for Connecticut to the join the National Popular Vote Compact is because it might advantage one party or the other. But I’m not naïve to political considerations. They are considered on both sides of the aisle.

There are a significant number of prominent conservatives who support direct presidential elections. They include former congressmen Tom Tancredo (R-CO), Bob Barr (R-GA), former House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-GA) and eight former national chairs of the conservative American Legislative Exchange Council.

Quoting Glassman again, he concluded, “Besides, it is the right and fair way. Right now the presidential election is decided in 10-to-12 of the bigger states. If you vote in Connecticut, your vote doesn’t count.”

To all the members of the GAE Committee, please vote H.B. 5421 favorably so that it can have an up or down vote in both chambers of the CT General Assembly this session. Thank you.

Jonathan Perloe
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¹ Could The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact Reduce Bad Policy-Making In Our Elections?, Matt Vespa, [Townhall](#), Aug 10, 2017

² Suprisingly, Republicans and Conservatives Shouldn’t Fear a National Popular Vote, Rachel Alexander, [Townhall](#), Dec 11, 2017

³ National Popular Vote Proponents Say New Poll Shows Support, Jack Kramer, [CT NewsJunkie](#), Feb 21, 2018