

Dear Senator Flexer, Senator McLachlan, Representative Fox, and Distinguished Members of the GAE Committee:

My name is Jeffrey Zalesin. I am a second-year law student at Yale and a voter in New Haven. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 5421, which would make Connecticut a party to the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC).

Because of the winner-take-all system used today to award electors for President, a vote in Connecticut matters far less than a vote in Florida or Wisconsin. This inequality not only undermines the legitimacy of election outcomes, but also gives candidates incentives to ignore the interests of our state. It would be highly unusual, if not unheard of, to see a Democratic or Republican candidate for President hold a town hall in Connecticut and listen to the concerns of voters here.

The NPVIC would change that. Upon taking effect, the NPVIC would make every American voter matter equally in presidential elections. We Connecticut voters deserve no less.

I am glad to see that the Committee is holding a public hearing on this bill. A proposal this important deserves to be fully debated on the merits. In that spirit, I've personally spent a significant amount of time discussing and debating the NPVIC with my classmates at Yale Law School and neighbors in New Haven. Through these conversations, I've learned that the value of making every vote count equally is not controversial. Polling shows that large majorities of Republicans, Democrats, and Independents agree that the candidate with the most votes nationwide should become the President. As these statistics would predict, I find that the idea behind the NPVIC resonates with practically everyone I speak with.

When they first hear about the NPVIC, most people—myself included—have a lot of questions about how it would work in practice. I, for example, remember wondering, “Wouldn't changing presidential elections require a constitutional amendment?” However, as I've learned more and more about the NPVIC, I've come to understand that states have the legal power and the practical ability to make this improvement to democracy without changing the Constitution.

To those members of the Committee who are undecided on HB 5421: I encourage you to ask questions and listen with an open mind. Ultimately, I hope you will join me and the majority of Connecticut voters in supporting this legislation.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Zalesin
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