



# The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact Demystified and Myths Countered

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The NPV Compact is a solution to elect the President according to the will of the majority in a manner consistent with the Constitution. States that join the Compact pledge to vote all of their electors for the candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states. The Compact comes into force once it has been adopted by states that collectively have 270 electoral votes, the majority needed to elect the President.

To date, 10 states<sup>1</sup> and the District of Columbia have joined the Compact, representing 165, or 61 percent, of the 270 electoral votes needed for the Compact to take effect.

H.B. 5434, *An Act Adopting The Interstate Compact To Elect The President By National Popular Vote*, is under consideration in the General Assembly. As of April 25, it has 57 co-sponsors.

These are the most common critiques of the Compact and why we believe they don't have merit.

## 1. The Compact is an “end run” around the Constitution

As befits our federal system of government, the Constitution leaves it up to the states to decide how to vote their electors. It reads, “Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors.” It wasn't until the 1820s that states began adopting the winner-take-all method of voting electors that is today used by 48 of the 50 states.

## 2. Democrats are pushing the Compact just because Hillary lost to Trump

The Compact is not new, and not partisan. In a survey of CT voters in 2009, two-thirds of Republicans (and three-quarters of Democrats) agreed that the President should be the candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states.<sup>2</sup>

Bills have been introduced in the CT General Assembly five times over the past 10 years. It passed the House in 2009, and was voted favorably out of Committee in 2011, 2013 and 2014. The non-partisan League of Women Voters endorses it. President Trump supports the popular vote, saying in a 60 Minutes interview after the election, “I would rather see it where you went with simple votes.” In 2014 Newt Gingrich wrote, “America would be better served with a presidential election process that treated citizens across the country equally. The National Popular Vote bill accomplishes this.”

To date, 10 states and the District of Columbia have joined the Compact, more than half the 270 votes needed for the Compact to come into force.

## 3. The Compact will disenfranchise Connecticut voters because the state may cast its electoral votes for a candidate who did not win the state's popular vote

The Compact does exactly the opposite; it makes every vote matter. In the 2016 election, 673,215 Connecticut voters cast their ballot for Trump. Because we use winner-take-all, their votes made no difference to the outcome. They could have all stayed home and the Electoral College count for Trump would have been exactly the same. Saying our votes don't matter because the nation votes differently than Connecticut is like saying a

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<sup>1</sup> States that have joined the Compact: CA, HI, IL, MA, MD, NJ, NY, RI, VT, WA, and District of Columbia

<sup>2</sup> Public Policy Polling, May 2009, [nationalpopularvote.com](http://nationalpopularvote.com)

town's voters are disenfranchised because the majority in the town voted for the Republican gubernatorial candidate but the state went Democratic. There is no such thing as the "Connecticut vote." Individuals cast votes; that's how they should be reflected in vote counts, as they do every other election in the country.

Someone opposed to the Compact posted on Facebook, "If a popular vote were to decide the president, there would be no battleground states." He's right, and that would be a good thing. Voters in Connecticut would matter, whether they vote Republican or Democratic.

Most voters look at overall election results, not just the state outcome. That's why 74% of Connecticut Democrats and 62% of Republicans agreed<sup>3</sup> that it was more important to guarantee that the candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states becomes president than casting Connecticut's electoral votes to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes in Connecticut.

#### **4. The Compact isn't fair because the votes of large cities will dominate rural areas, determining the outcome**

There are fewer than 50 cities with a population of more than 500,000. It's the 87% of the population living outside large cities (15% in rural areas) that would have voting power in a direct election. In battleground states such as Pennsylvania and Florida, candidates today canvass the entire state, not just Philadelphia and Miami. Candidates for statewide office campaign all across the state because every voter is as important as the next, and cities alone do not determine the election. These critics also conveniently ignore that today our entire state is ignored!

#### **5. The founding fathers created the Electoral College to protect small states**

While it is true that low population states have a disproportionate number of electoral votes compared to larger population states, the Electoral College was not designed to protect small states. The intent of allocating electoral votes equal to a state's Congressional seats was done to give slave-owning states more influence than they would have had with a direct vote.

A direct election of the president would have disadvantaged southern states whose slaves could not vote. As said Virginian James Madison, "The right of suffrage was much more diffusive (extensive) in the Northern than the Southern States; and the latter could have no influence in the election on the score of Negroes."

Because slaves accounted for three-fifths of a person for purposes of assigning U.S. Representatives, the Electoral College gave southern states more influence relative to northern states than under a popular vote. The scheme worked; slave owners from Virginia won the presidency in eight of the nine elections following ratification of the Constitution.

#### **6. Smaller states will be ignored under the Compact**

Similar to the urban vs. rural critique, evidence suggests otherwise-candidates campaign where the votes are. Candidates for governor in Connecticut do not campaign in just Stamford, Hartford and Bridgeport. They campaign across the state because every voter is as important as the next, and cities alone do not determine the election. As it is now, Connecticut is ignored entirely, so it can only go up from here.

#### **7. There are more urgent things in the legislature this year**

Without minimizing the important work that needs to be done to solve Connecticut's fiscal issues, we believe

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<sup>3</sup> Public Policy Polling, May 2009, [nationalpopularvote.com](http://nationalpopularvote.com)

there is nothing more important than making everyone's vote matter and getting our democracy closer to the ideal of one person, one vote. In virtually every other election in the country, the candidate who gets the most votes wins. The will of the majority should be reflected in the choice of the nation's leader. The Compact achieves that in a manner fully consistent with the Constitution.

#### **8. We're a republic, not a democracy—states should decide who is president**

As the term is used in the Constitution, a republican form of government is when citizens do not rule directly, but instead elect officeholders to represent them and conduct the business of government in the period between elections. That doesn't change based on how a state votes its electors. We will continue to be a constitutional democracy under the Compact.

#### **9. We should stay with the status quo because there might be unintended consequences**

The Compact has been thoroughly researched. It is backed up by a 1,000+ page book reviewing every detail. "Unintended consequences" is one of the specific concerns that National Popular Vote has considered.

When states switched to a direct election of their chief executives there were no undesirable impacts. In 1787, only five states (including Connecticut) conducted popular elections for the office of Governor. During the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the states switched, one-by-one, to direct popular elections of Governors. Today, 100% of the states elect their Governors by direct popular vote. After over 5,000 direct popular elections for Governor in over two centuries, no state has ever decided to eliminate its direct popular election for Governor.

The fact that the League of Women Voters [endorses](#) the Compact — after several years of careful consideration, should allay concerns.

Moreover, there are unintended consequences, very serious ones, of the current winner-take-all system. Twice in the past five elections the will of the majority has been thwarted. In 2000, that led to the Supreme Court deciding the election, surely not a good consequence. Neither is it good for 38 states to sit on the sidelines while 12 battleground states determine who occupies the White House.

#### **10. It would be better to wait until next year so it doesn't look like this is a Democratic partisan response to losing the 2016 election**

First, this is not a partisan response to the election. In a survey of CT voters in 2009, two-thirds of Republicans (and three-quarters of Democrats) agreed that the President should be the candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states.<sup>4</sup>

There are several reasons not to wait. We have the momentum now, and we should capitalize on it. Never has CT been closer to passing the legislation (there are more co-sponsors than ever before). We don't know what will be before the legislature next year. If it's viewed as partisan now (even though it is not), there's no reason that to change one year from now. By passing the legislation this year, CT can generate momentum that will make it easier for other states to pass next year (the Compact was introduced in approximately 20 legislatures this year).

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<sup>4</sup> Public Policy Polling, May 2009, [nationalpopularvote.com](http://nationalpopularvote.com)

## **11. H.B. 5434 and the Compact are being pushed by special interests**

*National Popular Vote CT*, the grassroots group that has been organizing citizen support for the Compact is hardly a special interest. The Working Group that leads the organizations came together organically after the election, and while we have the support of a number of national organizations, it is an all-volunteer organization with more than 1,000 supporters from towns across the state.

The Compact has widespread public support. A 2009 poll in Connecticut reported 74 percent in favor of direct elections, including two-thirds of Republicans.

*If you have a question about the Compact, check out [nationalpopularvote.com/answering-myths](http://nationalpopularvote.com/answering-myths) or get in touch with us at [npv.ct@icloud.com](mailto:npv.ct@icloud.com).*