

ONE PERSON. ONE VOTE.

Jean Koepfel

Reform the Electoral College so the electoral vote reflects the nationwide popular vote for President.

Many believe we are a democratic country, maybe even the top democracy in the world, but the United States was founded as a Constitutional Republic. And as of last month, The Democracy Index Report (issued annually by The Economist, Intelligence Unit) has demoted the US to a "flawed democracy."

The Economist uses a range of criteria to rank the leading democracies in the world, but one clear benchmark is a country's ability to hold free and fair elections. According to the report, the fact that the winner of a U.S. Presidential election is not necessarily the person who receives the most votes, is undemocratic. Our leaders are not elected directly by the people. They are elected by electors that represent the people.

There are 538 Electors that form the Electoral College, a group of citizens appointed by the political parties in each state. The Electoral College violates the principle of "one person, one vote" because it awards more voting power to people in small states. For example, half a million Wyoming voters are represented by 3 Electors. If California had equal representation, it would get about 229 Electors. But it only gets 55.

It takes just over 2 1/2 Connecticut votes to equal 1 vote in Wyoming.
It takes 3 1/2 Texan votes to equal 1 vote in Vermont.

Presently, there is no way to hold free and fair elections in our modern constitutional republic. And it is highly unlikely that the Constitution will be amended anytime soon to guarantee that the popular vote wins a Presidential election.

But that's where The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC) comes into play. This Compact is an agreement among a group of U.S. states and the District of Columbia to award all their respective electoral votes to whichever presidential candidate wins the overall popular vote in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The NPVIC would guarantee the Presidency to the candidate who receives the most popular votes.

This Wednesday, Feb 22nd, at 10AM, The Connecticut General Assembly is holding a public hearing at the State Legislative Building in Hartford to determine if CT should pass the National Popular Vote Bill (HB 5434). This is not the first time a public hearing has been held for this Bill. However, in part, due to lack of public interest, the National Popular Vote Bill has still not found its way through the Senate to be passed.

It's time to reform the election system for president so that our votes here in Connecticut matter. The General Assembly should put Connecticut's interests first this session by passing national popular vote legislation. Electing the president by popular vote would put Connecticut - and the concerns of all its citizens - back on the electoral map.

For more information about how you can demonstrate your support for this bill and to attend the public gathering & hearing this Wed, Feb 22nd, go to: www.democracyawakensct.org or www.npvct.com