

January 8, 2024

Good morning Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and members of the Veteran's and Legal Affairs Committee. My name is Betsy Williams and I live in Brunswick. I am testifying today in favor of LD 1578 on behalf of the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network which links Maine's 26 Unitarian Universalist congregations in working for legislation that supports our values and beliefs. One of the fundamental principles of our faith is simple, though often hard to uphold, and that is fairness. And the principle of fairness is the at the heart of the National Popular Vote Compact.

Fairness means every *vote* carries equal weight, is counted equally. With our use of the Electoral College, 43% of Mainers' presidential votes in 2020 didn't count because they didn't vote for the winner in their districts. Mainers not voting for Biden in the First District totaled 176,736. These votes were not counted, as Biden won in the First District. Mainers not voting for Trump in the Second District totaled 179,657. These votes were not counted, as Trump won in the Second District. With NPV *no* Mainer's vote would be discounted because it was among the minority in their district.

Fairness means every *state* in the union is treated equally by our national leaders, both during presidential races and after, when federal resources are allocated. With our current use of the Electoral College, 48 of our 50 states use a "winner take all" statewide strategy, creating a handful of "swing" states whose electors decide the outcome—of a *national* election. The fallout of that? In addition to millions of votes nationwide being discounted, candidates spend their time in these few states, often making promises to address the concerns of these few states, and, if elected, currying favor with these few states so they get those electoral votes again next time. Democrats do it—Republicans do it. The system encourages it. It's not fair.

Finally, who among us ever thought, when we cast our vote in our first presidential election, that the person taking second place would be the winner? With our current use of the Electoral College, it is no coincidence that this has happened twice in the last six elections. We must change the way we use the Electoral College to make the system fair for individual voters, for states, and for the first-place winner.

The race for president of the United States is a national contest, not a contest between states. We know our individual votes matter in elections for state leaders and representatives because our vote carries the same weight no matter where we live. With NPV we will know our individual votes carries the same weight for our national leader no matter where we live.

Please vote ought to pass on LD 1578.

Thank you.