



OREGON HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE

For Immediate Release

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

House Democrats adopt partisan proposal to circumvent Electoral College

Salem, Ore. - On a party-line vote, House Democrats today adopted HB 2927, a measure designed to circumvent the U.S. Constitution and the Electoral College by requiring Oregon's electoral votes be awarded to the winner of the national popular vote for President of the United States. In opposing the bill, House Republicans argued that the current Electoral College system is consistent with the principles of federalism, ensures that the president is elected by a constitutional majority and protects against presidential campaigns that focus primarily on densely populated urban communities.

"This bill is inconsistent with the tenets of federalism and will almost certainly result in small states like Oregon being passed over in the presidential horserace for large population states and urban centers," said Rep. Gene Whisnant, a longtime critic of the national popular vote movement. "I am disappointed to see this Legislature pursue such a blatant attempt at an end-run around our Constitution."

Formally known as the Agreement Among the States to Elect the President by National Popular Vote, the compact requires a state's electoral votes to be cast for the winner of the national popular vote regardless of the outcome in that state. In other words, if the national popular vote compact were in place during the 2004 election, Oregon's electoral votes would have been cast for George W. Bush, despite the fact that John Kerry carried the state by nearly 100,000 votes.

"It is important for people to understand that under HB 2927, our state's electoral votes might be cast for a candidate that did not even win our own state," said Rep. Bill Post (R-Keizer). "I believe that kind of situation would give a lot of folks pause if it were to become a reality here in Oregon. I believe the best way to make Oregon more relevant in presidential races is to move up the date of our primaries."

Republicans went on to point out that the national popular vote model would make presidential candidates far more likely to visit urban, densely populated states and ignore rural, sparsely populated states. Some also suggested that such a system could lead to the regionalization of presidential races, throwing our entire electoral system into chaos.

"We often look at national popular vote system through our current two party system," concluded Rep. Whisnant. "But I think it is important to recognize that this model could lead to a situation where a group of candidates split votes in different geographic regions, culminating in the election of a president who only won with a small plurality of votes. Is that an outcome we are prepared to accept?"

If HB 2927 is signed into law by Governor Brown or passed by Oregon voters via a [legislative referral](#), the provisions of the compact would not become operative until a group of states representing a majority of electoral votes has also adopted the compact. According to the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#), 10 states and the District of Columbia have adopted the compact for a total of 165 electoral votes pledged so far, meaning proponents of the national popular vote are still 105 delegates short of

what they need to advance their proposal. Should the National Popular Vote Compact achieve the required 270 delegates, it would almost certainly face extensive litigation.

HB 2927 passed the House by a vote of 34-23. The bill now moves to the Senate for further consideration.

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