



State of Connecticut

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Testimony

**Government Administration and Elections Committee
Senate Republican President Pro Tempore Len Fasano,
Deputy Senate Republican President Pro Tempore Kevin Witkos
Submitted on behalf of the Senate Republican Caucus
February 22, 2017**

Re: Proposed Senate Joint Resolution 11

Resolution Recognizing the Current Electoral College System as the Best Way to Elect the President of the United States

Senator McLachlan, Senator Winfield, Representative Fox, Representative Devlin, and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Senate Republican Caucus in support of ***Proposed Senate Joint Resolution 11 Resolution Recognizing the Current Electoral College System as the Best Way to Elect the President of the United States.***

The Constitution of the United States provides, "Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress. . . ." – Article II, Section 1, Paragraph 2.

In these words, our great nation's Constitution seeks to implement a democracy that is fair, balanced and representative of all people from across the United States.

The Electoral College system prevents a single state or single region from deciding a presidential election. No single state or region has enough electoral votes to elect a president. Therefore, a candidate who is from or popular within in a single region must still earn the support of people in other regions across the country to become president. Our nation's leader must have national appeal and national support from people throughout the United States. The Electoral College, in requiring more than just the support of one large region, ensures that the president will represent the voices of people from throughout our country.

The Electoral College system exists to prevent small states like Connecticut from being dominated by states with large populations such as California and New York. Without the Electoral College system, the votes from Connecticut residents, with our seven Electoral College votes, would be made inconsequential when a candidate could take the presidency by campaigning in only the most populous states or regions: California, Texas, Florida, and New York.

Most states award all of their electoral votes to the winner of the popular vote in that state. Because the Electoral College weighs the less populous states more heavily along the lines of the Senate, beginning with two Senators and two Electoral College votes for every state and then adding more electoral votes based on population, it is possible that the winner of the electoral vote will not win the national popular

vote. While this has happened twice since 2000, when looked at over the entire history of the United States the occasions have been rare. Apart from those two elections, the last time a candidate won the popular vote and did not win the Electoral College occurred in 1888 when Benjamin Harrison was elected over Grover Cleveland.

Directly following these cases, we have seen sudden opposition to the system, often led by individuals frustrated when the candidate that they supported did not win. People should not let personal politics distract from the effectiveness of the system our forefathers created to give people from all places in our nation a voice, even if they disagree with the outcome. We also cannot fall into thinking that the system could benefit only Republicans, as Democrats have argued following the last election. For example, in 2004, if John Kerry, a Democrat, had won Ohio, which he only lost by 2%, he would have been president despite losing the popular vote.

The Electoral College aims to protect the voices of people in all states. Without it, larger states could easily overpower the voices of people throughout our country. For example, in the most recent election Secretary Clinton received more than 4 million more individual votes than President Donald Trump in the state of California. However, if you remove that one state from the calculation, President Trump won the popular vote in the other 49 states combined by more than 2 million votes. These numbers show how without the Electoral College system, the state of California in this example could single-handedly decide every single presidential election.

The Electoral College is a vital element of our nation's democracy. We are an incredible country built on diversity and strengthened by our differences. The expansiveness and inclusiveness of our country requires a system that respects the votes of all people from all places. We believe the Electoral College is the best system designed for that task.

We urge the committee to support this resolution to reaffirm the importance of the system on which our great nation was built.

Len Fasano, Senate Republican President Pro Tempore
Kevin Witkos, Deputy Senate Republican President Pro Tempore