

To: Senate Rules Committee
From: Kate Titus, Common Cause Oregon
Re: SB 870 National Popular Vote
Date: April 3, 2019

Common Cause

Common Cause is a nonpartisan organization that works for open, honest, accountable government. We're more than one million Americans – including 25,000 Oregonians – working together to realize the unfinished promise of democracy.

Support for SB 870

It is with great enthusiasm that I am here today to register Common Cause's support for SB 870, a bill to enact an interstate compact to enable election of the U.S. President by National Popular Vote.

This has been a long time coming. As some of you know, Common Cause has been advocating for this here in Oregon for a full decade. We have helped pass it through the House multiple times, only to see it blocked on the Senate side in this very committee. I applaud and appreciate your leadership now.

Why this Matters

Electing the President is a core function of self-government, and part of how we publicly debate our priorities and direction as a nation. And yet currently, not every vote across the country counts equally. Oregon is one of many states that hardly matters during the presidential race, a state that is virtually ignored when it comes to campaigning and campaign policy priorities.

The National Popular Vote bill addresses this serious problem by bringing every vote into play, guaranteeing the presidency to the candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states. In so doing, it strengthens our democratic system in several ways:

- 1) **Respects Every Vote** – National Popular Vote encourages candidates to appeal for *every* vote rather than focus only on electoral votes in a few swing states.
- 2) **Puts Oregon Back on the Map** – National Popular Vote incentivizes a full 50-state presidential race, in which political campaigns invest time and money to engage with *all* voters, ensuring that policy discussions are more broadly representative, and not skewed by marginal concerns of relatively small groups in swing states.

- 3) **Increases Voter Confidence** – Americans have an ingrained sense of democratic fair play and want to know that the candidate with the most votes will indeed win. Polling has consistently shown strong support for National Popular Vote.
- 4) **Increases Voter Participation** – In general, battleground states have higher voter participation rates than “safe” states. Voters are more motivated to vote when we believe our vote matters, and less so when we don’t.

This is neither a conservative nor liberal proposal. It is something we can all support in the interest of a well-functioning democracy. Common Cause urges your support of National Popular Vote.

