

Submitter: D Torres
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB952
Chair & Committee Members,

I STRONGLY OPPOSE SB 952. in granting the governor the power to appoint a U.S. Senator in the event of a vacancy.

While the intention of such a proposal may be to ensure continuity of representation, I believe that this approach undermines the principles of democratic representation and the will of the people. Our system of government is built on the idea that citizens have the right to choose their representatives, including U.S. Senators. Allowing a governor to appoint a senator bypasses this fundamental right and diminishes the voice of the electorate.

U.S. Senators are directly elected by the people to represent their interests in Congress. In the event of a vacancy, allowing a governor to make an appointment without consulting the voters directly undermines the democratic process. The people of this state should have the opportunity to elect their Senator, not have one imposed upon them through political appointment. This is especially important given that appointed Senators do not face the same level of scrutiny, accountability, or public engagement as those elected by voters.

When a governor is given the authority to appoint a Senator, the process becomes vulnerable to political manipulation. Appointments can be influenced by partisan considerations, where the sitting governor might select an individual who aligns with their political ideology rather than choosing someone who truly represents the interests of the people. This opens the door to backroom deals and cronyism, undermining the public's trust in the fairness of our political system.

The appointment of a U.S. Senator by the governor, especially in the absence of a statewide election, often overlooks the diverse political and ideological views within a state. An appointment could result in a Senator who does not represent the full spectrum of the state's population, potentially marginalizing important voices and concerns. In contrast, an election ensures that the person chosen reflects the will of a broad electorate, allowing for a more representative and inclusive outcome.

The power to appoint a U.S. Senator could erode public trust in the integrity of our electoral process. People need to believe that elections are the primary means through which they can influence their government. If appointments replace elections, it sends the message that voters' voices don't matter as much as political

maneuvering. It is essential that we maintain confidence in the power of our elections, as they are the cornerstone of our democracy.

The U.S. Constitution provides for the direct election of Senators by the people, a principle enshrined by the 17th Amendment. By allowing the governor to appoint a Senator, we risk undermining this constitutional safeguard and returning to a system that circumvents the will of the voters. The people should retain the power to choose their representatives, not have that power taken away by an unelected official.

In conclusion, while a governor's appointment power may be seen as a practical solution to filling a vacancy, it is ultimately an undemocratic one. The right to choose a U.S. Senator should remain with the people, not with a single appointed individual. I urge the committee to oppose this proposal and to stand firm in support of the democratic principles that allow citizens to elect their own representatives.