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**BEFORE THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 544 – PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS –
AGREEMENT AMONG THE STATES TO ELECT THE PRESIDENT BY
NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE –REPEAL**

February 2, 2021

House Bill 544 runs directly counter to one of our founding principles – that all citizens should have equal access to the ballot and an equal say in governance. The Electoral College and the choices of most state legislatures to award all electoral votes to the Presidential candidate who gets the most votes in that state has resulted in a system in which only a few “battleground” states receive attention from Presidential candidates and their campaigns. In 2020, only 11 states had a margin less than or equal to 8%.ⁱ Citizens living in the other 39 states know that their vote for President is inconsequential because the outcome there is as certain as anything in life.

We have had recent elections where the winner of the popular vote was not elected. That, in itself, may not be harmful to the union, but we face the prospect of a President being elected who lost by a substantial margin. In the 2020 election, the electoral college winner had 7 million more votes than the loser, but a shift of fewer than 150,000 votes in Nevada, Georgia, and Pennsylvania could have changed the outcome. Based on population trends, a winner could some day get 15 million fewer votes. That would put a severe strain on the continuation of the Union.

We applaud the fact that Maryland has joined its 10 electoral votes with other states that have 186 votes. If states with 74 more votes join, the interstate compact will become law, and future electoral vote awards will in those states will go to the winner of the National Popular Vote as determined by the chief elections officials in the several states. In that event, every single vote in every state will have equal impact on how Maryland and the other states in the Compact award their electors. All voters will have equal importance, and the Presidential campaigns will change their methods and broaden their appeals. We believe this would promote healing of the disunity that currently afflicts us.

Therefore, we ask that you issue an unfavorable report on House Bill 544 and that Maryland remain in the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact.

ⁱ <https://cookpolitical.com/2020-national-popular-vote-tracker>