

February 2, 2021

Testimony on HB 544
Presidential Elections - Agreement Among the States to Elect the President by
National Popular Vote – Repeal
Ways and Means

Position: Unfavorable

Common Cause Maryland opposes HB 544, which would repeal Maryland’s commitment to electing the President by popular vote.

The National Popular Vote bill would guarantee the Presidency to the presidential candidate who receives the most actual votes. The states have exclusive and complete power to allocate their electoral votes, and Maryland has already decided to utilize this option and support the National Popular Vote effort. All of Maryland’s electoral votes would be awarded to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes.

Our government is based on a belief that every vote should be equal. The National Popular Vote effort reinforces that fundamental right. The Electoral College was created to prevent the people from making “uneducated” decisions. In our current age of 24-hour media coverage of elections, there is little risk that voters would make a decision without an understanding of the candidates or what they stand for.

The Electoral College system undermines the principles of every vote being equal. At the end of Election Day, a minority of voters in swing states have more influence on the outcome than the vast majority who cast their vote. As a result, presidential candidates concentrate their resources on voters in a handful of swing states, relegating the majority of the country to spectator status. Furthermore, the President could – and has, three times in our history – won the Electoral College without winning the popular vote. This situation further undermines the majority of votes in favor of the minority of swing votes that “really matter.”

The Maryland General Assembly has already fully debated the merits of supporting a National Popular Vote effort and decided to move in that direction. HB 544 would roll back that decision, and we urge an unfavorable report.