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Session: (Jan. - May)

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SPONSOR STATEMENT: SB 92

Under the National Popular Vote interstate compact, electoral votes which are based on the number of U.S. Representatives and U.S. Senators in each state, would be awarded to the national winner, not the state winner. The U.S. Constitution gives the states exclusive and plenary control over the manner of awarding their electoral votes. The winner-take-all rule is not in the Constitution. The fact that Maine and Nebraska award electoral votes by Congressional district, is a reminder that an amendment to the U.S. Constitution is not required to change the way the President is elected.

As of January 2010, this interstate compact has been joined by Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, and Washington. Their 61 electoral votes amount to 23% of the 270 votes needed for the compact to take effect. The bill has also passed in one or both houses in many states and has continued to gain support nationally.

Because of the current winner-take-all rule, a candidate can, and has won the Presidency Without winning the Most popular votes nationwide. This has occurred in 4 of the nation's 56 presidential elections (and 1 in 7 of the non-landslide elections). In 2004, A shift of fewer than 60,000 votes in Ohio would have defeated President Bush despite his nationwide lead of 3,500,000 votes.

Another shortcoming of the winner-take-all rule is that presidential candidates have no reason to poll, visit, advertise, or organize in states where they are comfortably ahead or hopelessly behind. In 2008, candidates concentrated over two-thirds of their campaign visits and ad money in just six closely divided "battleground" states. A total of 98% went to just 15 states. In other words, voters in two thirds of the states were essentially spectators to the election.

Under the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact bill, all the electoral votes from the enacting states would be awarded, as a bloc, to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states (and DC). The bill would take effect only when enacted by states possessing a majority of the electoral votes — that is, enough electoral votes to elect a President (270 of 538).