



**The League of Women Voters**  
A Voice For Citizens, A Force For Change

P.O. Box 101345, Anchorage, AK 99510-1345

March 16, 2017

Dear Representative Fansler and Members of the House State Affairs Committee:

The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) supports the use of the popular vote in the election of the President and Vice-President and supports the use of the National Popular Vote Compact as a way to achieve this goal until the electoral college can be abolished through an amendment to the Constitution. The Alaska League (LWVAK) agrees that every vote should count toward this most important election and therefore urges the passage of HB 175.

Historically the attendees at the Constitutional Convention struggled over the best method to elect the President. The end result was the use of electors from each state who would gather to pick the best possible candidate for the job. Today we have presidential elections still held with state electors who, in all but two states, are chosen in a winner-take-all contest; the candidate with the most popular votes in the state wins the total electoral vote count for that state. And with the rise of political parties, which George Washington warned against, the emphasis has shifted to winning rather than finding the best candidate.

The end result of the winner-take-all process of electing a president has several negative effects. In each state, those who voted for the candidate who did not win the state's popular vote find their votes lost in the counting because those votes go no further than the state line. Secondly, this loss of a counted vote for a national office leaves some elections in which the winner of the electoral vote loses the popular vote, leaving that President-elect with more citizens who voted against him/her than voted for him/her. This has happened five times in the history of the United States, including the 2016 election. Since 1988, when non-landslide elections increased in frequency, the ratio has been 2 elections in which the winner lost the popular vote out of the 8 elections held. This type of election result is more likely to increase in number given the trend toward non-landslide elections as the political parties retreat further from the center.

When voters know that their vote will actually count in the end result, they might be more interested in voting for President and Vice-President. The turnout for the 2016 election equaled about 60% of eligible voters. That means that approximately 27.6% of eligible voters elected the winner in 2016. When voters realize that if they live in a blue state and they support the red candidate and vice versa, they have less incentive to vote. In addition, there is the current feeling that only 11 or so "battleground" states actually matter in a presidential election, and campaign funds tend to flow to those states as well as candidate visits. Adopting the popular vote could increase voter turnout and give each voter's choice an equal opportunity.

Two of the League's purposes are to encourage voting and encourage an educated voting population. Given these principles, the League of Women Voters of Alaska strongly supports the passage of HB 175.

Sincerely,

Pat Redmond, President LWVAK

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Marianne Mills, Past-President

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***The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.***

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