



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Senate Bill 61

National Popular Vote

Sponsor Statement

Senate Bill 61 will give every Alaskan voter a meaningful vote in presidential elections by entering the National Popular Vote agreement with other states to guarantee the presidency to the candidate who receives the most votes nationwide.

SB 61 would have Alaska join the 15 other states and the District of Columbia who have already joined the agreement. Together these states have 195 electoral votes. Once states totaling a majority of the electoral college (currently 270 votes) join the agreement, these states will begin to award their electoral votes to the presidential ticket that receives the most votes nationwide. Until this threshold is reached, Alaska will continue to allocate its electoral votes to the winner of the statewide vote.

Under the current system presidential candidates do little to campaign for Alaskan votes, and they do not need to develop positions on – or even learn about – issues unique to Alaska. The last time a major presidential candidate came to Alaska to campaign for general election votes was John F. Kennedy in 1960.

It is not only Alaskan voters who are ignored in presidential elections – almost all serious campaigning happens in only 12 states. The entire Pacific Coast includes non-competitive states meaning presidential candidates do not have to address concerns that Alaska shares with other West Coast states like Pacific fisheries management. Under the National Popular Vote system, savvy presidential campaigns will fight for every persuadable vote, no matter where they are located, and develop messages addressing concerns of all regions.

The National Popular Vote agreement will not give any political party an advantage. An analysis by well-known statistician Nate Silver found that "there's almost no correlation between which party has the Electoral College advantage in one election and which has it four years later."

Passing SB 61 will help ensure that all American votes truly are equal and that Alaskans' concerns must be taken seriously by presidential candidates.