



TESTIMONY GIVEN BY JUDY KARANDJEFF TO THE HOUSE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE ON 3-7-2023

Good morning members of the House Elections committee, I am Judy Karandjeff, chair of the League of Women Voters of Michigan's advocacy committee.

For more than 100 years, the League of Women Voters of the United States has worked to ensure every person has the desire, right, knowledge and confidence to participate in our democracy. We are proud to be a nonpartisan organization that works on vital issues of concern to our democracy. The League of Women Voters of Michigan believes that the direct popular vote method for electing the President and Vice President is essential to representative government and that the principle of one person, one vote should govern our presidential elections.

Simply put, every vote should count, every vote should matter equally, and the candidate who gets the most popular votes should win the election. This is the case for all elections in this country except one - the presidential election.

For over a decade the League of Women Voters of the United States has supported the National Popular Vote compact and we are thrilled at the possibility of passing this reform here in Michigan this year. Voters in the last election sent a clear message: they rejected efforts to undermine our elections and politicians who want to weaken our democracy.

Because of the winner-take-all method of awarding electoral votes used by 48 states including Michigan, presidential candidates only pay attention to the concerns of voters in closely divided states. In each of this century's first six presidential elections, virtually all of the general election campaign events were concentrated in around a dozen battleground states. The politically irrelevant spectator states (home to between 70 and 80% of the country's voters in a given election) include almost all the small states, rural states, Western states, Southern states, and Northeastern states. Governance - not just campaigning - is distorted by the concentration of attention on just a few states. Looking ahead at the 2024 election it is predicted that just 9 states will be competitive in the presidential election - these states can expect to receive 100% of the attention while 80% of American voters are completely ignored.

Overall, there are four sources of inequality in the value of a vote for President under the current system. Because of the two senatorial electoral votes that each state receives in addition to the number warranted by population, there is a 3-to-1 inequality in the value of a vote in Wyoming compared to a vote in Michigan.

There are additional substantial inequalities because of the imprecision of the process used to apportion U.S. House seats (and hence electoral votes) among the states; because of intra-decade

population changes are not reflected in the Electoral College until the next census; and because of voter turnout differences from state to state (which devalue voters in high-turnout states such as Michigan).

For the League of Women Voters of Michigan this situation is untenable and has gone on for far too long. The solution to this problem is before you, the National Popular Vote compact, which has already been passed by 15 states and DC representing 195 of the necessary 270 electoral votes for the bill to go into effect. It will go into effect when passed by states with just 75 additional electoral votes.

With a national popular vote, candidates will be incentivized to campaign everywhere and take all of the nation's interest into account when governing. Every vote will be equal and every voter will be relevant in *every* presidential election.

We strongly urge you to support the National Popular Vote bill and be a part of transforming presidential elections for the better.

Thank you.