



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Senate Passes Bill To Include New York In the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO March 25, 2014

| ISSUE: **ELECTIONS, VOTER PROTECTION**

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Measure Guarantees That The Presidency Is Won By The Candidate Who Wins The Most Votes in All 50 States

The State Senate today passed legislation that would add New York to the growing list of states joining the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, which changes Presidential elections by guaranteeing that the candidate who wins the majority of the nationwide popular vote becomes President. The bill (S3149A), sponsored by Senator Joseph Griffo (R-C-I, Rome), would make casting a vote for President a more fair, engaging, and representative process that ensures every state and every vote is important.

Senator Griffo said, "Elections are the foundation of our democracy. In order to have the most representative government possible, we need a system that both attracts voters to participate in the process and requires candidates to deal with all people and all issues. I want to empower people. I want to make New York State relevant in a national presidential campaign again. I want a democracy that creates excitement in people, not apathy. Joining the National Popular Vote compact is our best opportunity to accomplish that."

Under the existing Electoral College system, presidential candidates do not invest time, money or attention in states that have voted historically and consistently for the candidate of one party over the other. Instead, candidates spend a majority of their time campaigning in divided “battleground states” in an effort to win more electoral votes. During the 2000 and 2004 Presidential elections, the winners were selected based on the outcomes of elections in just one state because of its weight in the Electoral College. This “winner take all” system concentrates the outcome of the Presidential election into the outcome of just a handful of states, while candidates pay little or no attention to voters or issues in other states.

The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact allows states to change the way Electoral College votes are awarded. For instance, New York’s 29 electoral votes would go to the candidate who wins the most total votes in all 50 states and Washington D.C., even if the candidate did not win a majority of votes in New York. This new process ensures that the popular vote is the deciding factor in the election of a President and encourages candidates to engage all voters in each state, regardless of historical voting outcomes.

By changing state laws, the popular election of a President can take place without a federal constitutional amendment. Nationwide popular election of the President can be implemented when states pass identical state laws awarding all of their electoral votes to the Presidential candidate receiving the most popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The Compact has been adopted in nine states (California, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington) and the District of Columbia, which together represent 136 electoral votes, or more than 50 percent of the 270 electoral votes needed to activate the law nationally.

The bill passed today would take effect when it has been enacted, in identical form, by states possessing the 270-electoral vote majority (out of 538 total votes) needed to elect a President.

The State Assembly also passed the bill Tuesday.