

HB 1959 -- NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE ACT

SPONSOR: Dugger

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Elections by a vote of 7 to 4. Voted "Do Pass" by the Select Committee on Local Government by a vote of 9 to 0.

Currently, electors to the Electoral College typically favor the presidential candidate receiving the majority of their state's popular vote for president. This bill authorizes Missouri to enter into the Interstate Compact on the Agreement Among the States to Elect the President by National Popular Vote Act. The compact requires the chief election official of each member state to designate electors to the Electoral College who will vote for the presidential slate receiving a majority of the votes cast nationwide. Methods for ensuring the accuracy of the national popular vote are specified.

The compact will take effect on July 20 of the year in which it becomes effective in those states or districts that have a majority of electoral votes in the Electoral College. The compact allows any state to withdraw by a simple repeal of the enacting statute; however, a state cannot withdraw from the compact during the six months preceding a presidential election. If the Electoral College is abolished, the compact will terminate.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill will ensure that the national popular vote elects the President of the United States. It will make all states and citizens equally relevant to the election process. Current empirical evidence suggests that those states deemed as competitive receive tremendous attention and benefits in the form of federal subsidies and grants, whereas non competitive states like Missouri are ignored by candidates and legislators. The National Popular Vote Act is a nonpartisan compact supported by many of all ideologies as a way to enhance the democratic process.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Dugger; Rob Johnson, National Popular Vote; Brendan Kelly; JP Dunn; Missouri Broadcasters Association; Neal Breitweisel; Mark Maassen, Missouri Press Association; Rob Twitchell; and Renee Maxey.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that there are possible constitutional problems with the National Popular Vote Act and that we should leave the existing electoral college structure intact. The current process was the product of extensive discussion and compromise by our founders and it should not be undermined by unilateral actions of some of the states which seek to form a

compact fundamentally changing the nature of presidential elections.

Testifying against the bill were Trent England, Save Our States Project, Oklahoma Council Of Public Affairs; Missouri Alliance for Freedom; Concerned Women For America Of Missouri; and United For Missouri.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill offered descriptive information related to the history of the act.

Testifying on the bill was Patrick Rosentiel, National Popular Vote.