

National Popular Vote

S. 353—SEN. MENARD, H. 4156—REPS. MURPHY & BRADLEY
AND 68 CO-SPONSORS



Massachusetts

COMMON CAUSE

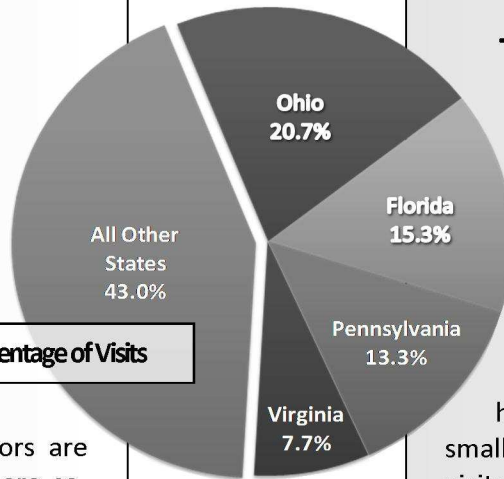
The system now.

Currently, electors in almost all states are chosen as a 'winner-takes-all' bloc pledged to a specific candidate.

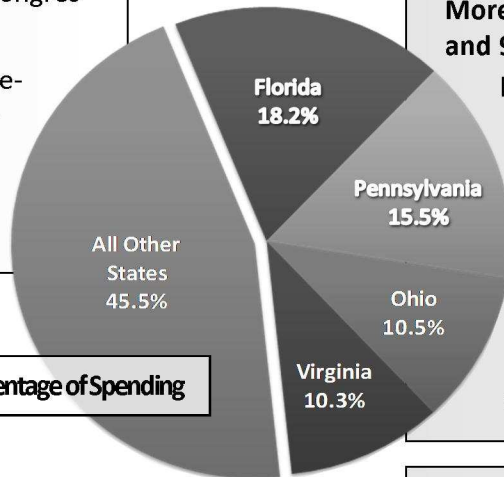
Each state's number of electors is equal to its number of congressmen and senators combined.

In Maine and Nebraska two electors are chosen state-wide and the others are selected independently within each congressional district.

In the past, electors have been selected independently of presidential candidates, selected by state legislatures, and elected on a district-by-district basis.



Percentage of Visits



Percentage of Spending

The effects in 2008.

Four states—Ohio, Florida, Pennsylvania, and Virginia—received 57% of campaign visits and 54.4% of ad spending.

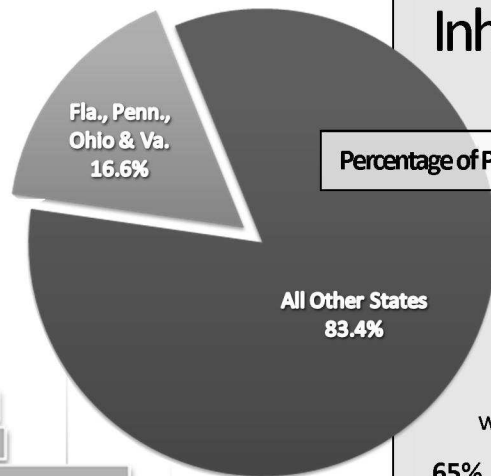
Ohio's population equals the combined population of the 12 least populous states, yet Ohio had 62 campaign visits and the small population states had a total of 12 visits, all in New Hampshire.

More than 98% of all campaign events and 98% of all campaign spending took place in only 15 states.

Voter turnout in those 15 states was 6% higher than in the others. Turnout declined in 18 states.

In 2004, the disparities in ad spending were even greater—73% was spent in only five states.

All Other States



Percentage of Population

Inherent problems.

The candidate who placed second in the popular vote was elected in 2000, 1888, 1876, and 1824.

Candidates have no reason to poll, advertise, organize, or visit states that they cannot possibly win or lose.

65% of voters reside in 'spectator states' and have very little incentive to go to the polls as their votes do not affect the outcome of the election.

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40%

SOURCES: CNN, FairVote, Washington Post, U.S. Census

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How it would work.

Under the National Popular Vote bill, all of a state's electoral votes are given to the candidate who receives the most votes nationwide. The law will only take effect when enacted, in identical form, by states constituting a majority in the Electoral College—that is, 270 of the 538 electoral votes.

To determine the winner of a presidential election, state election officials would simply combine the certified results from each state and select electors accordingly.

The Constitution does not instruct the states on how to select presidential electors—in fact, this is each state's responsibility and they are free to change the way electors are allocated at any time. The Supreme Court has ruled that the state's power to choose the manner of selecting electors is 'plenary' and 'exclusive.'

The benefits.

- It would eliminate the false idea of 'red' and 'blue' states.
- It would ensure the candidate with the most popular votes is elected.
- Every vote in every state would be equal.
- It would increase civic participation by giving voters in all states an incentive to vote in elections.
- It would bring candidates to our state and ensure that they are attentive to our concerns.
- It reduces the possibility of 'faithless' electors—or those electors who do not vote for the candidate to whom they have pledged support.
- With a single group of 124 million votes, there is less opportunity for a close outcome or recount—and less incentive for fraud—than with 51 small groups where a few hundred votes have a bigger impact on an outcome. The popular vote total has never been within the margin of error (0.1%).

Its supporters.

PUBLIC. It's backed by 72% of Americans.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS. It's endorsed by 1,181 state legislators and many public officials nationwide.

"A big turnout in Massachusetts and many other states is irrelevant to winning the election. Only winning the swing states matter, and presidential candidates are under tremendous pressure to embrace issues and positions that will resonate in those few states."

—GOV. MICHAEL DUKAKIS

NEWSPAPERS. It's endorsed by the Boston Globe, the Metro Daily News, the Cape Cod Times, the Patriot Ledger, the Berkshire Eagle, Brockton Enterprise, and many others. Nationally, it has been praised by the New York Times, the Chicago Sun-Times, the Minneapolis Star Tribune, the Los Angeles Times, the Hartford Courant.

"The Electoral College is more than just an antiquated institution: it actively disenfranchises voters and occasionally (think 2000) makes the candidate with fewer popular votes president. American democracy would be stronger without it."

—NEW YORK TIMES

"One clever way to fix this problem is a proposal called National Popular Vote."

—BOSTON GLOBE

Where it stands.

IN LAW. New Jersey, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Washington—representing 61 electoral votes.

PASSED BOTH HOUSES. California, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont. **PASSED ONE HOUSE.** Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Maine, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon.