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April 4, 2011

The Honorable Jerry Hill
California State Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 459 - SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Hill:

California Common Cause is pleased to support AB 459, your bill to have California join the National Popular Vote (NPV) plan for presidential elections.

The current Electoral College system is thought to accurately reflect the will of the voters. We now know better. A shift in a handful of votes in one or two states would have elected a second-place candidate in 5 of the last 13 presidential elections (including 2004).

The state-by-state method in which the winner takes all is clearly not “one person, one vote.” In California, we have 55 electoral votes that go to the winner and yet voters of all political parties in California are ignored by presidential candidates who spend all their time and political capital courting votes in battleground states such as Ohio and Florida

It is time for a system that makes every citizen vote equally important. One person, one vote.

In four of 56 presidential elections, we have elected a president who came in second place. Without the clear support of the nation, the presidency becomes a weaker institution. Polls show that more than 70% of Americans support a move to use the national popular vote for presidential elections. It is time for California to move this process one big step forward by adding it to the list of states that have already enacted National Popular Vote. When the electoral vote tally for states that sign onto NPV reaches 270, a plan begins whereby states agree to allocate all of their electoral votes to the candidate who receives the most votes in all 50 states.

In so called “battleground states,” citizens are heard more clearly by the candidates thereby making these voters “more equal” than those in states with safe majorities. Apathy and cynicism result from a system like this. It is time for a change.

Sincerely,

Katie Fleming
Policy Advocate

cc: California State Assembly Committee on Elections and Redistricting