



**Testimony in Opposition of H. 596 and H. 652**  
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**Joint Committee on Election Laws**  
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Two bills, H. 596 and H. 652, propose altering the allocation of Massachusetts' electoral votes in the 2016 presidential election and beyond. Currently Massachusetts has a "winner-take-all system", meaning the candidate who receives the most votes in the state wins all 11 of our state's electoral votes. H. 596 and H. 652 would change this system to a congressional district allocation of electors, meaning that the winner of each congressional district gets one electoral vote and the winner of the entire state receives two electoral votes. Maine and Nebraska are the only two states that have congressional district allocation of voting the other 48 have the "winner-take-all" system.

Congressional District allocation of electors is a poor public policy for several reasons. First, it does not make elections more competitive. Because of gerrymandering and natural population concentrations, there are very few competitive congressional districts in the entire country or in our state. Candidates would thus exchange focusing on a few battleground states for focusing on a few congressional districts--leaving the vast majority of the population without real opportunities to participate in the election.

Secondly, Congressional District allocation of electors would not ensure that the candidate with the most votes wins the election, or reflect the vote of the people any more accurately than the current system. In fact, it makes anti-democratic results far more frequent. For example, if every state had adopted Congressional District allocation of electors in the 2012 election, Mitt Romney would have won the presidency by 276 electors to Obama's 262, even though Obama received 5 million more votes. If Pennsylvania had instated congressional district allocation before the 2012 election, Romney would have received 12 electors and Obama only 8 even though Obama won the state by 52%. Here in Massachusetts, there would have been no change in the actual allocation of electors. In fact, in Maine and Nebraska, electors have only been split between candidates one time in over 30 years. In 2008, the congressional district comprising Omaha, Nebraska voted for President Obama over John McCain and he received one electoral vote while McCain received 4.

Congressional district allocation of electors is a bad idea for our state and a bad idea for our nation and we hope you will give these bills a negative report.