Testimony for SB19-042 National Popular Vote Compact
Ralph E Burns, P.E.

Thank you Chair Senator Foote and Vice Chair Senator Court, and members of the Committee. I am here today in support of the National Popular Vote Agreement, because it harnesses the existing Electoral College to work better for voters.

I am Ralph Burns, live in unincorporated Boulder County, a 4th generation lifelong Coloradoan, a Colorado professional engineer and a rural firefighter - EMT. Given the current partisan political climate, I'll also add that although I've been both a registered Republican and Democrat at different times, I am currently a unaffiliated voter.

When considering Colorado's electoral vote rules, consider changes against the backdrop of the current status quo; the winner-take-all rules. A shortcoming of state winner-take-all rules is that presidential candidates cannot afford to pay attention to the concerns of voters in states where they are safely ahead or hopelessly behind. **Winner-take-all rules create battleground and fly-over states and the results are staggering:**

- In 2016, 94% of general campaign events were concentrated to 12 states, and 57% in just four of those states. [1]

- In 2012, 100% of general campaign events were concentrated to 12 states, rendering 3 out of 4 Americans and 3 out of 4 states politically irrelevant. [2]

Those numbers might seem great if you live in a battleground state, and Colorado indeed has enjoyed swing state attention. A question is will Colorado continue to enjoy that status when it has voted for the same party outcome during the last three presidential elections, and in 2018 voted the same outcome for State House, State Senate and Governor, and is no longer considered a swing state by political analysts like the Cook Political Report? **Colorado's political relevancy is poised to be marginalized.**[3]

What we see with winner-take-all rules is that the presidential campaign conversation ignores national issues in favor of swing state issues, while spectator states receive less federal grant money but still bear the tax burden. Today the United States is $21 trillion in debt yet the conversation largely escapes attention during presidential elections. **The National Popular Vote will end incentive for pork barrel grants** such as these examples:

- In 2003, Medicare Part D drug coverage, the largest entitlement program since welfare, was passed by a President to ensure the senior vote in Florida.

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[1] nationalpopularvote.com/campaign-events-2016
[2] nationalpopularvote.com/written-explanation
[3] cookpolitical.com/sites/default/files/2019-01/EC.pdf

- Steel tariffs were passed in 2002 to secure votes in Pennsylvania. The tariffs worked adversely for the country and were reversed.

- A 2005 corn ethanol fuel mandate exists largely to entice Iowa voters.

- In 2010 the President granted billions in railway grants to the swing states Florida and Ohio, where they were refused.

- 2001 No Child Left Behind targeted mothers in Ohio and was largely repealed by 2015.

Winner-take-all rules reduces down-ballet voter participation, and this is something that affects every state legislator running for office. Voters living in spectator states have a correct perspective that their vote doesn't "count" per se, and so naturally they vote in fewer numbers, and that of course means down-ballet elections get ignored too.[4][5]

Under National Popular Vote, California's influence for one single candidate will be reduced by about 28% when compared to today's winner-take-all rules because, although it is the most populated state, naturally not all Californians cast their vote like-mindedly.[6][7][8]

A beauty of the National Popular Vote agreement is that it is not cast in stone; the Colorado Legislature can enact a new statue if a better system comes along.

When considering the National Popular Vote, don't consider it in a vacuum but agree it is leaps and bounds better than the current winner-take-all rule. The winner-take-all method of awarding electoral votes was not a Founding Fathers' choice. It was used by only three states in the 1789 presidential election, and repealed by all three the next year. Winner-take-all was never debated at the **Constitutional Convention** or mentioned in the ***Federalist Papers***.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you,

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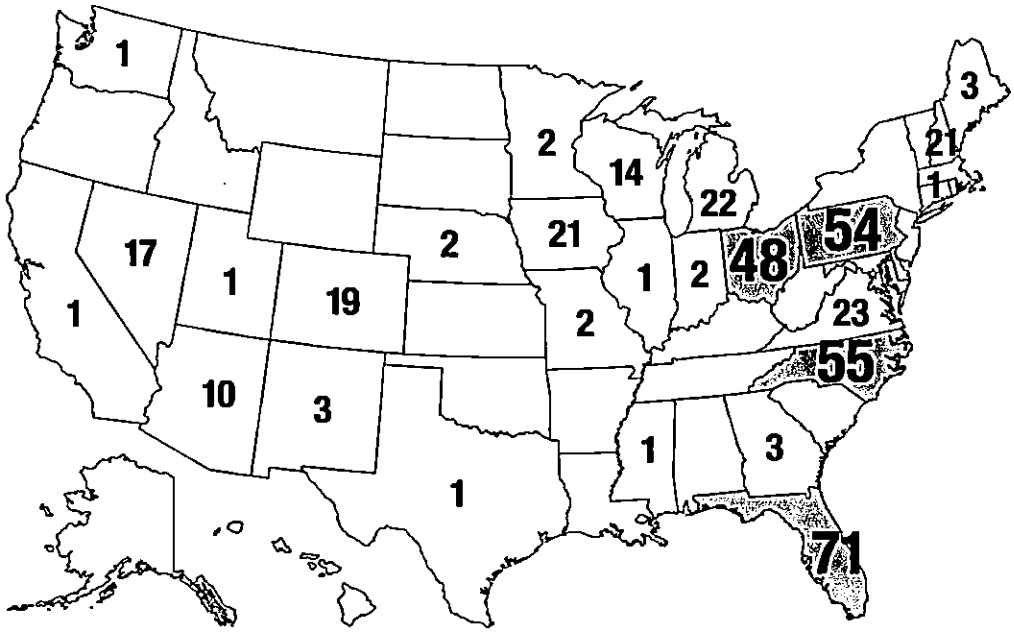
[4] electproject.org/2016g
[5] pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/08/02/u-s-voter-turnout-trails-most-developed-countries/
[6] en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:State_population_per_electoral_vote.png
[7] Longley, Lawrence D.; Peirce, Neal (1999). Electoral College Primer 2000. Yale University Press.
[8] ballotpedia.org/Presidential_election_in_California,_2016

2016 General presidential campaign event activity:



2012 General presidential campaign event activity: