

ABSURD AND RISKY OUTCOMES

made possible by John Koza's
NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE INTERSTATE COMPACT

Regional politics. Right now, the Electoral College pushes campaigns to expand the “map,” reaching out to build a geographically broad coalition. This is why the Trump campaign strategy of outreach defeated the Clinton campaign strategy of sitting on its presumed lead. Clinton received more popular votes, but Trump built a broader national coalition—which the Electoral College rewards. Without this incentive, NPV would set the United States drifting toward more regional politics and would exacerbate existing divides.

Plurality winners. The current Electoral College system pushes people together into large coalitions (our political parties) where they have the best chance of winning. It also requires a majority, not just a plurality, of electoral votes. Under NPV, any popular vote plurality no matter how small would be good enough. This would make it easier to run “spoiler” candidates, increasing the risk of campaigns gaming the system and of small plurality winners.

Recounts? NPV is incompatible with existing state recount laws and includes no provision for recounts. In a close national election with concerns about mistakes or fraud, NPV provides no legal framework for a recount. The margin could be razor-thin nationwide, but not close enough in any state to trigger a recount.

Election insecurity. NPV gives more power to states with lax election laws. Consider that Vermont allows felons to vote from prison. Cities in California and Maryland have begun to allow non-citizens and even illegal aliens to vote in local elections. With NPV, every ballot that can find its way into the ballot box means more power for that state. States are forced to trust—without any power to verify—the honesty of other states’ elections.

State upsets. Under NPV, a state could be required to appoint Electors for a candidate who received a tiny percentage of support in that state, or even to a candidate who was not on that state’s ballot.

State dropouts. NPV claims states cannot drop out of the compact close to an election, which would upend the campaigns and could manipulate the outcome. But whether this clause is enforceable, and who would enforce it against a state, is uncertain. Because of slow population growth in NPV states, it would be possible for reapportionment following a census to deactivate the NPV compact with no legislative action.