

FOREWORD

By James L. Brulte

California voters recently joined other states in stripping the state legislature of its power to draw legislative and congressional districts and allowing a citizen's commission to redraw these lines. Voters did this in part because they knew that with politicians creating safe legislative seats, competition would be diminished, and as a result politicians of both major parties could ignore their communities with impunity. Unfortunately, our nation's Electoral College provides on the national level what many citizens are trying to eliminate on our state level.

Most states in the union are not in play in presidential elections. California, for example, has not voted for a Republican nominee for President since George H. W. Bush carried the state in 1988. Texas has been reliably Republican since 1980. In fact only 16 states have been considered swing states in recent presidential elections, while the remainder are relegated to spectator status.

While this might be fine for the partisans who actually run presidential elections (shrinking the number of states in which their candidates need to compete), it is not good for the citizens of most of the states in the nation.

For example, in 2008, after both parties chose their presidential candidates, all 300 of the campaign events with major-party nominees took place in just 19 states. And from September 24, two days before the first general election debate until election day, 99.74% of all advertising took place in just 18 states.

While this might be great for the states involved, the rest of the nation suffers as candidates of both major political parties ignore them during the general election. Why is this a problem? Because during the course of campaigns, political candidates are educated about local, regional, and state issues and they take this knowledge with them once they are elected. And with a nation as large and diverse as ours, it is critical that presidential candidates be educated about all our states, not just the lucky 16 swing states.

Fortunately, our Founding Fathers anticipated the dynamic nature of our country and provided for each state to choose how its presidential electors are chosen. The National Popular Vote provides the necessary incentives to encourage presidential candidates of both major parties to campaign in every state in the union. This is better than the current approach for electing the President. It is better for the candidates, it is better for the citizens of the individual states, and it is better for the nation as a whole.