

85 PERRY STREET
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Dear Colleague:

Something happened in the 2000 presidential election that should never be permitted to happen again. The candidate who failed to win the popular vote became the president of the United States. Something just as unacceptable almost happened four years later. If John Kerry had won Ohio by a single vote, he would have become president even though George Bush would have won the popular vote.

I think it is high time we got rid of the Electoral College and elected our presidents the way we elect every other elected official in the country-- by a vote of the people. The overwhelming majority of the American people do, too. In fact, when President Nixon tried to abolish the Electoral College in 1969, he won an overwhelming majority in the House of Representatives only to be thwarted by a filibustering minority in the Senate.

Fortunately, we now have a way to eliminate it without going through the long and tedious process of amending the Constitution. That is what passing the National Popular Vote bill will do, and it is critically important that Massachusetts join Maryland, New Jersey, Illinois, and Hawaii in approving the bill and providing the momentum for its adoption in the required number of states.

Why is it important to get rid of the Electoral College system? Because under the current system, running for president means just one thing: focus on the so-called swing states. I did it. Al Gore did it. John Kerry did it, and our Republican opponents did it, too. A big turnout in Massachusetts and many other states is irrelevant to winning the election. Only winning the swing states matters, and presidential candidates are under tremendous pressure to embrace issues and positions that will resonate in those few states. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say that in the past several presidential elections, candidates have spent almost all of their time between Labor Day and Election Day in about six states. That's not healthy, and it's not right.

Here is what the bill will not do. It will not result in a proliferation of third party candidates. It is not unconstitutional. It will not continue to effectively disenfranchise millions of American voters whose vote isn't counted as part of a popular majority. On the contrary, it will help increase voter participation and put a premium on strong and effective grassroots organizing in all states-- something I think you all know happens to be a particular passion of mine.

We have a historic opportunity to join with other state legislatures to fix the electoral college system once and for all by passing the national popular vote bill, and I hope you will join me and the Speaker by voting for this very important bill.

It's the right thing to do for the country-- and it will put the Commonwealth on a level playing field with the voters in the swing states-- where we belong.

Sincerely,



Governor Michael S. Dukakis