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Chair Roblan and members of the committee,

I am submitting this testimony to lend my support to the National Popular Vote and to HB 2588, which would bring Oregon into the Interstate Compact. My interest comes not only from my charge as chief elections official for Oregon - overseeing federal elections - but also from my experience as an Oregonian

In the 2008 Primary we saw first hand the difference it makes when voters believe that their vote affects the outcome of an election or moreover, when they feel their vote matters. In the 2008 primary we had almost 150,000 more voters register to vote than in 2004 or in 2000 and voter participation increased by almost 12% for the primary alone. Additionally Oregon had the 3rd highest voter turnout in the country for the general election, showing that these primary voters stayed engaged.

We have all had the opportunity to see not only how voters react when they believe their individual vote matters, we have also seen how it shapes the debate. In 2008, I had an opportunity to attend both Presidential Candidates' speaking engagements, something many Oregonians have never had the opportunity to do. Having Presidential candidates speak directly to you about the relevant issues in your state is extremely powerful. A national popular vote will encourage candidates to spend more time in the states speaking directly to voters.

Currently as a part of the National Association of Secretaries of State, we are working on revising the Presidential Primary timeline. We are looking at rotating regional primaries to bring parity among the states in the selection process. Secretaries of State from both parties around the nation take heart that we need to have election methods that are reflective of the time and most importantly we must address the voter apathy inspired by the reality that one's personal vote, while counted in a Presidential Election, sometimes doesn't really count.

I have supported National Popular Vote in my role as an Elections Chair and now as your Secretary of State. After witnessing the voter engagement that was spurred by just one election in which people believing for maybe the first time that their voice was heard, I feel Oregon can and should play a vital role by joining this Interstate Compact and lead in advocating for national reform.

I thank you very much for your dedication and time.

Kate Brown
Secretary of State