

September 14, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: JOHN KOZA
FROM: MICHAEL SELDIN
RE: FOUR STATE SURVEY ON ELECTORAL COLLEGE

This memorandum provides you with an overview of the findings from voter surveys in four states – Arkansas, Missouri, Maine and Michigan – regarding attitudes towards the Electoral College and to a proposal for states to give their electoral votes to the candidate who receives the most votes nationwide rather than on a state-by-state basis. A total of 275 voters were surveyed in each of the four target states, yielding data that is statistically precise for the whole to within ± 5.0 percent at the 90 percent confidence level. Given the remarkable consistency of responses across the four states, many of the findings reported upon here are offered in aggregate, based on the total of 1,100 interviews. Those findings are precise for the whole to within ± 1.3 at the 95 percent level of confidence. All interviews were conducted by telephone during the period from August 25 to September 9, 2005.

Proposal for Agreement Between the States

Respondents were read the following description of the proposal:

There is a proposal that may appear on the [STATE] ballot to change the way we elect the president. The current system elects a president based on the state-by-state vote totals. The new proposal would switch to a system that elects the president according to the vote total in all 50 states. Would you generally support or oppose switching to a system that counts the votes in all 50 states combined?

Following a series of intervening questions which tested arguments both in favor of and in opposition to the proposal, respondents were asked again whether they would support or oppose the proposal as presented to them. Below is a chart showing responses to the first and second tests, by state:

Response to Proposal, by State

		<u>Missouri</u>	<u>Arkansas</u>	<u>Maine</u>	<u>Michigan</u>
1st Test	Strongly support	54.7	57.7	54.7	50.0
	Somewhat support	11.7	16.1	16.5	20.3
	Somewhat oppose	10.2	5.8	9.4	4.3
	Strongly oppose	20.4	18.2	14.4	21.7
	Net support	66.4	73.7	71.2	70.3
	Net oppose	30.6	24.1	23.8	26.0
2nd Test	Strongly support	47.4	56.2	52.5	54.3
	Somewhat support	19.0	16.8	20.9	15.9
	Somewhat oppose	7.3	7.3	7.9	6.5
	Strongly oppose	19.7	16.1	11.5	19.6
	Net support	66.4	73.0	73.4	70.2
	Net oppose	27.0	23.4	19.4	26.1

Support for the proposal was very strong and very consistent across the four states surveyed.

Voter attitudes underlying support for the proposal were found in many places throughout the survey:

- 61.9 percent of all voters surveyed favored switching to a system where the winner of presidential elections would be the candidate who gets the most popular votes, as opposed to only 32.2 percent who favored keeping the current system.
- Fully 73.5 percent of all voters surveyed agreed with the statement, “The presidential candidate who gets the most votes always should be the winner,” while only 24.5 percent disagreed.
- 71.5 percent of respondents agreed with the statement, “All elections in this country other than for president are won by the candidate who gets the most votes. Elections for president should be, too.” Only 25.5 percent disagreed.
- 64.8 percent of respondents agreed with the statement, “By switching to a system that elects the president based on the vote total in all 50 states, this proposal levels the playing field and means that all 50 states will get attention instead of just a few battleground states.” 29.7 percent disagreed.
- Fully 66.9 percent disagreed with the statement, “The system works well. We shouldn’t change a thing.”

- Respondents also saw a broader benefit to passing the proposal, as fully 63.9 percent of those surveyed agreed with the statement, “Knowing that the candidate who gets the most votes always would be elected president would help restore my trust in the system,” with 42.5 percent agreeing strongly. Only 31.9 percent of respondents disagreed with this statement.
- Further overall benefit was reflected in the 73 percent of all respondents who agreed with the statement, “This proposal would make every vote count equally,” with a majority of 51.5 percent agreeing strongly with this statement. Only 22 percent disagreed.

Further analysis of the state-by-state results will become available in the coming weeks.