

# FOREWORD

By Christopher Pearson

By the time I became familiar with the National Popular Vote bill I already liked the idea of a popular vote for president. There is something so basic about one person, one vote. I didn't need much convincing.

As I learned more about this proposal for state action I began to appreciate how far-reaching the impacts of this bill would be. Living in Vermont, we are all familiar with the organized treks of campaign volunteers to the swing state of New Hampshire. This occurs at the time of the New Hampshire primary and then, because New Hampshire has been a battleground state for several cycles, the trek occurs again in the fall campaign. As somebody who has worked on Vermont campaigns, it is frustrating to lose good volunteers to our neighbor to the east.

There is nothing special about New Hampshire's voters. They just happen to be evenly divided. They aren't solid blue or solid red. The end result in New Hampshire is up for grabs, and so the candidates and their teams do everything they can to get the four electoral votes New Hampshire offers. Candidates do next to nothing to earn the three votes we hold here in Vermont.

Our three electoral votes get completely taken for granted because we are a reliably blue state. Thirty-four other states are similarly reliable for one party or the other. Examining election results makes it obvious that more and more Americans are effectively left out of our process. This isn't some fluke of the last few cycles—it's a trend that's been continuing for 50 years. It's obvious to most Americans that our electoral system is broken.

Vermont isn't ignored because we're a small state. And we don't get any meaningful bonus because we're little, despite what we learned in high-school civics. The bottom line is candidates either care about earning your votes or they don't. Because we're a safe "blue" state, Democrats running for the White House know they have us, and Republicans know they couldn't possibly win us. Therefore, nobody polls us, nobody visits us, and campaigns are organized to get our people on the phone to Ohio or knock on the doors in New Hampshire.

But the impact of National Popular Vote goes way beyond the basic fairness of every vote counting equally; that only scratches the surface.

Does anybody really believe a sitting president doesn't consider his re-election when his administration hands out stimulus money? Or makes trade policy? Or energy policy? Is it a coincidence that President Bush, a free trader, put a tariff on steel—an industry that just happens to be important in Pennsylvania? I doubt it.

A close examination of everything from policy decisions to travel schedules of a president reveals a strong bias to the states that happen to be up for grabs in the Electoral College. While most states wrestle with budget deficits and soaring costs I hope you might take a bit of time and right a fundamental flaw in American politics. The impact will be far-reaching and positive for generations to come.