



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 98-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 2, 2018

To: Senate Committee on Rules
Senator Ginny Burdick, Chair

Re: SB 1512, Referral of National Popular Vote Interstate Compact – Oppose

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is in an unusual position today. We strongly believe in the “one person, one vote” concept and testified in support of a National Popular Vote (NPV) Interstate Compact bill during four recent sessions. League studies on voting methods and the presidential election have persuaded us that NPV offers a much better way to elect the President than the complex and badly flawed “winner take all” Electoral College system. However, we must oppose SB 1512, because it includes a referral clause that we find unacceptable.

Why is the League of Women Voters against handing this decision over to voters? Our reasons for opposing a referral are many, and we hope you will carefully consider them before casting your vote to send this bill to the floor.

- The U.S Constitution specifically assigns to state legislatures the task of deciding how electors are appointed. The eleven jurisdictions that have already joined the NPV Compact have done so legislatively, and the question of whether a referral on this issue would pass constitutional muster has not yet been decided. It is highly likely that a referral would invite a court challenge, and taxpayers would then have to foot the bill to defend it.
- Passage of NPV legislation requires an in-depth understanding of the Electoral College—how it works, its historical beginnings, and its impact on presidential campaigns and voting patterns. Legislative hearings, not media campaigns, provide a much fairer and more appropriate way to evaluate such complex information.
- If recent ballot measure campaigns are any guide, it would take millions of dollars to run an effective NPV ballot measure campaign. Good government organizations do not have resources to combat an infusion of money from vested interests intent on maintaining the status quo.
- Political polarization is at an all-time high in this country. A National Popular Vote referral campaign could easily become a political battlefield that would only increase the level of polarization in Oregon.
- A referral sends a negative signal about NPV to voters. It implies a lack of legislative support as well as a lack of political courage. If you, as representatives of the people, believe that the “winner take all” Electoral College system needs to be replaced and that

every vote in every state should matter, then the right thing to do is pass a clean bill this session. The onus will then be on NPV opponents to use the referendum process to overturn it.

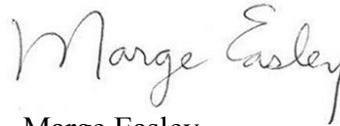
The League reiterates our support for the National Popular Vote (NPV) Interstate Compact, an agreement among the states to guarantee the Presidency to the candidate who receives the most votes in all 50 states and D.C. It has already been enacted into law in 10 states and D.C., representing 165 electoral votes, and will become effective when the total electoral votes of the compacting states reach 270, the minimum required to win the presidency.

We believe it is past time for Oregon to join the Compact. This is why it is so unfortunate that we must ask for a no vote on SB 1512. We hope we have convinced you that a referral campaign would not only be costly and unnecessarily divisive but possibly unconstitutional. We urge you to remove the referral clause and vote yes on a clean bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.



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LWVOR President



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