

How Small States Lose When They Abandon the Electoral College

Calls for the abolition of the Electoral College have persisted in the three years since President Donald Trump won the 2016 presidential election without winning the popular vote.

But abolishing the Electoral College in the normal way – via amending the Constitution – is a bit more arduous than proponents like. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg called amending the Constitution to change or eliminate the Electoral College “more theoretical than real” according to the [*Chicago Sun-Times*](#).

“It’s largely a dream because the Constitution is... hard to amend,” Ginsburg said. “I know that from the experience.”

Since it is hard to amend the Constitution, some states are trying to circumvent the process by pushing for popular vote presidential elections.

Since Trump’s election, five states have joined the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC.) States who participate in this pledge [agree to award](#) all of their electoral votes to the winner of the national popular vote, but only if the participating states account for an absolute majority of electoral votes.

The shocking thing is not the fact that this compact exists – it was founded in 2006 – but that so many small states have joined. The Electoral College is meant to ensure that states with small populations are able to have some say in who is president and what the president focuses on. The issues affecting these states stay in play precisely because

candidates *do* need to worry about how these smaller states vote. It is curious then to see small states disregard this safeguard placed in the Constitution.

One might expect larger states like California and New York to work toward a national popular vote, for doing so would allow presidential candidates to focus on them more. It only takes 11 heavily populated states to reach the 270 electoral vote threshold to win the presidency after all.

Currently 15 states and the District of Columbia have five or less electoral votes. Five of those states and D.C. are [pledged to the NPVIC](#), with Delaware and New Mexico having joined since the end of the 2016 election. Four total states have joined just this year. Why would small states like these choose something that reduces the influence of their citizenry?

September 17th marks the birthday of America's Constitution. Given states' behavior on the NPVIC, one wonders just how much our elected leaders know about the Constitution, its origins, and those who wrote it. While all NPVIC states happened to vote for Hillary Clinton in 2016, this phenomenon cannot be merely a case of sour grapes in the wake of Trump, for states have been joining the NPVIC for more than a decade now.

The question then is this: Will there ever be a coalition of 270 so that America loses the electoral college?

And what happens to the American republic if that does come to pass?

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