

# The National Popular Plan: The Case for Presidential Election Equality

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# FairVote

- Researches and develops innovative reform policies
  - Instant runoff voting to replace non-majority elections and two-round runoff elections
    - Ballot measure and legislative victories in 2006 in Minneapolis, Oakland, North Carolina, South Carolina
  - Universal voter registration to establish full and accurate rolls
    - Minnesota automatic registration proposal
    - Advance youth voter registration gaining support
  - Proportional voting for legislative elections
    - Illinois model of three-seat districts -- at least 75% of voters sure of winning strong representation
    - Michigan proposal to add accountability seats

# What's Wrong with Our Current Presidential Election System?

- Candidate with most votes can lose
  - \* 2000, but also 2004, 1976, 1948, etc
- Shrinking number of states receive meaningful campaign attention
  - \* Effects of inequality on turnout
  - \* Likely impact on policy

# U.S. Constitution: The States Are Responsible for Fair System

## Article II, Section 1, Clause 2

“Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress: but no Senator or Representative, or Person holding an Office of Trust or Profit under the United States, shall be appointed an Elector.”

# State Rules on Allocating Electors: Slow Evolution toward Current System

## Example of 1796 Election

- 8 States: Electors elected by state legislature
- 5 States: Electors elected from districts
- 2 States: Electors elected statewide
- 1 State: Electors elected indirectly by state legislature

# Statewide Winner-Take-All Rule

## Why Dominant Model by 1830s

- Maximizes Boost to Majority Party
- Increases Clout by “Swinging” More Electors

But.... It's Time for a Re-Examination

# Sharp Decline in Number of Battlegrounds 1960-2004

Year	Swing States	Electoral Votes	Uncompetitive States	Electoral Votes
2004	13	159	20	163
2000	16	167	20	166
1996	13	206	13	90
1992	22	207	5	20
1988	21	272	8	40
1984	21	260	9	44
1980	15	221	13	58
1976	24	345	9	46
1972	22	235	9	46
1968	19	273	11	57
1964	17	204	13	100
1960	23	319	9	64

# All Categories of States Hurt

## States Within 9% Partisan Division

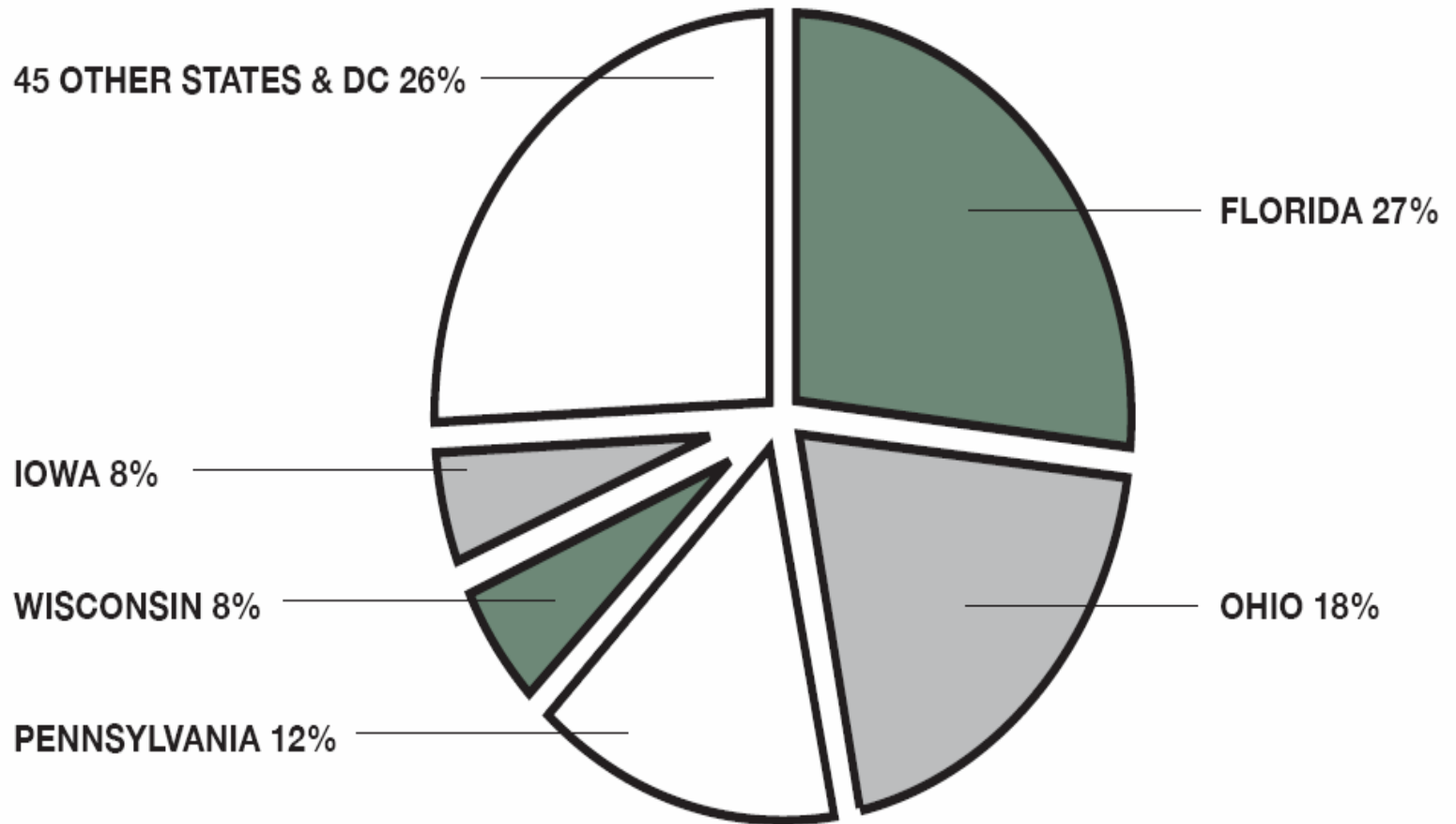
### Large Population States

- 10 of 11 biggest states in 1960 (all but Georgia)
- 10 of 11 biggest states in 1976 (all but Georgia)
- 4 of 11 biggest states in 2004

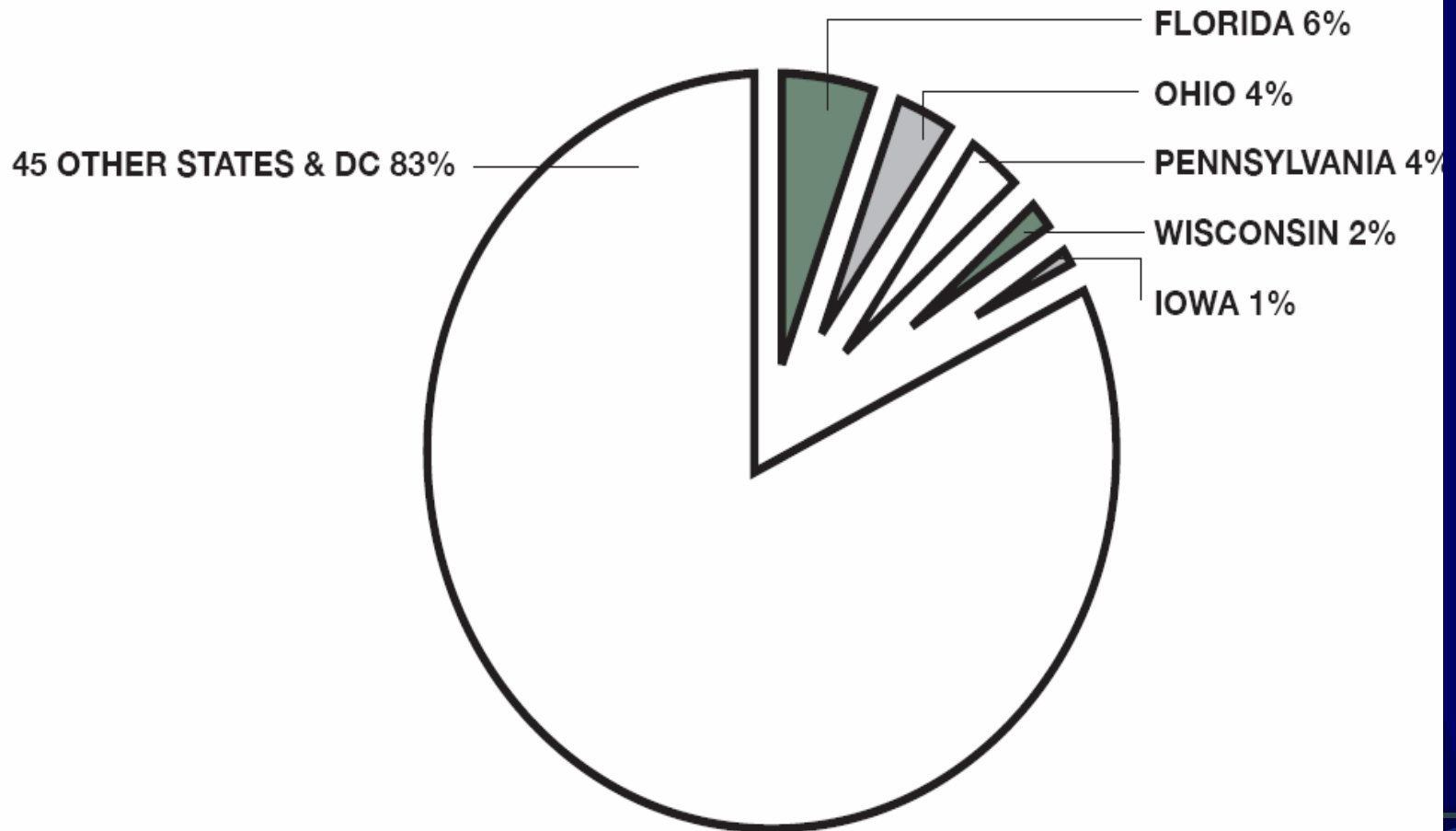
### Small Population States

- 6 of 13 smallest states in 1960
- 5 of 13 smallest states in 1976
- 1 of 13 smallest states in 2004

# 2004 Peak Season Campaign Attention Top 5 States vs. Rest of Nation



# Top 5 States' % of US Population

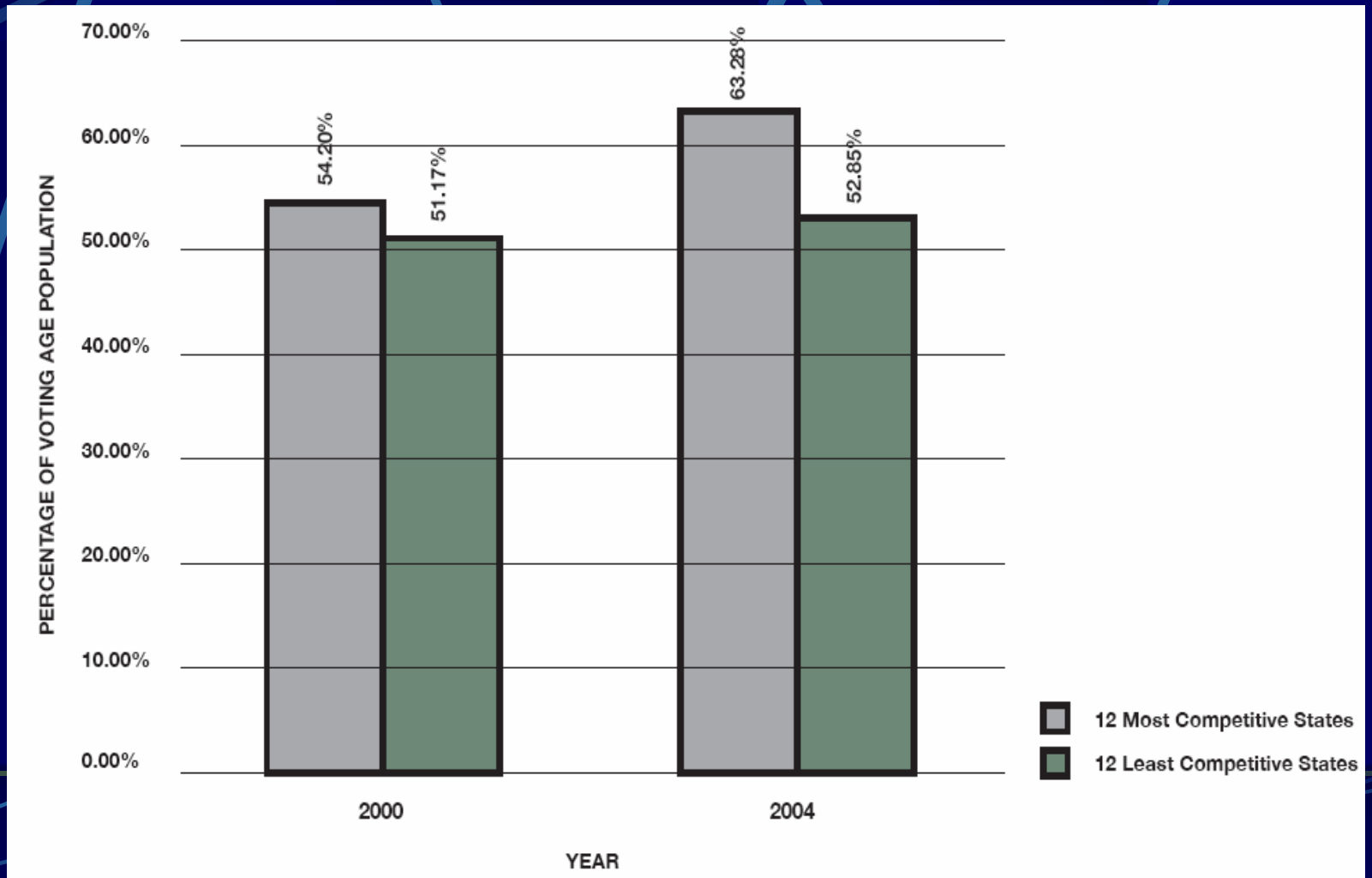


# Number of TV ads

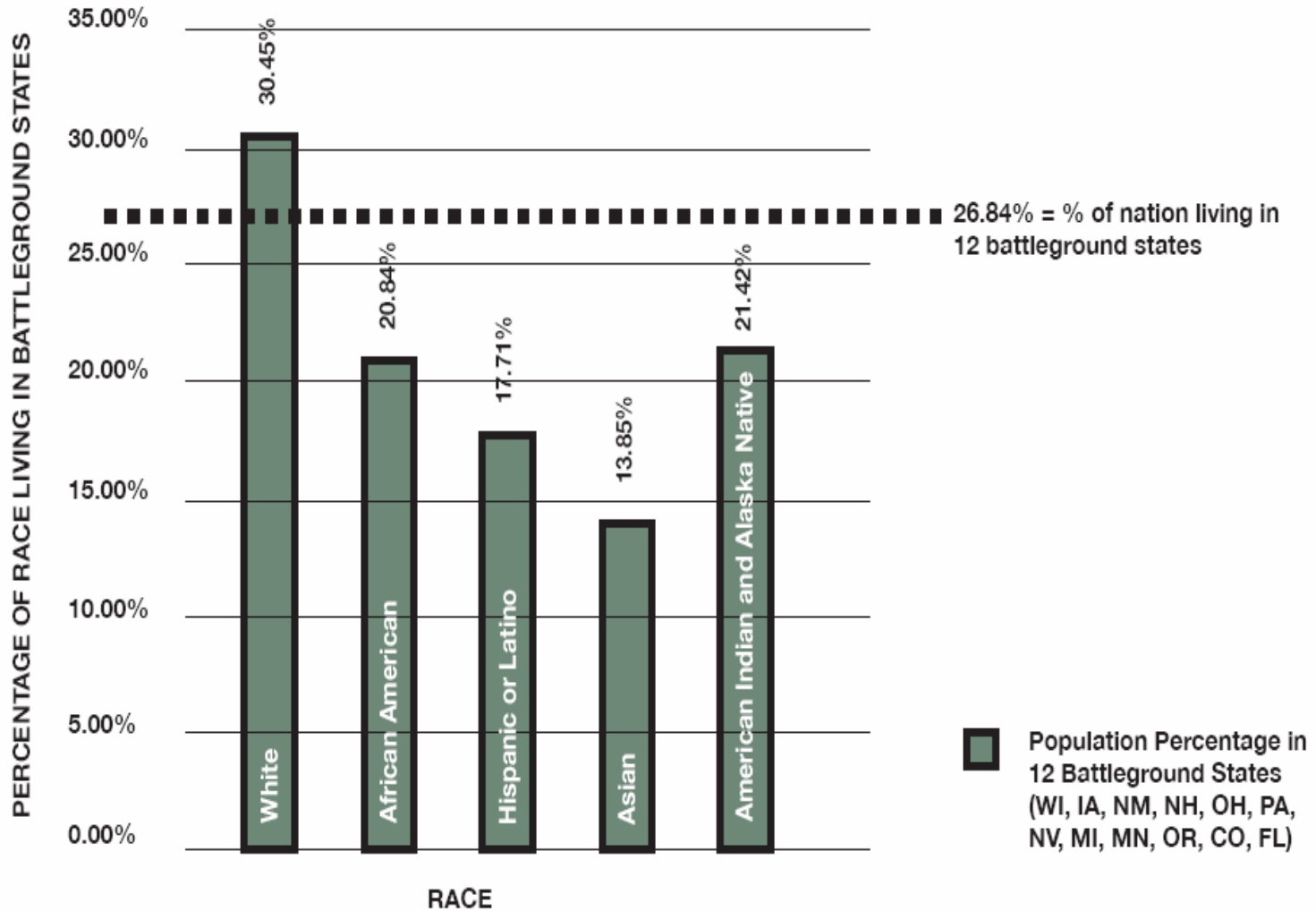
<i>State</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>% of Total US Ads</i>
Florida	55,477	22.25%
Ohio	44,131	17.70%
Pennsylvania	30,228	12.12%
Wisconsin	24,152	9.69%
Iowa	17,935	7.19%
Michigan	13,328	5.35%
New Mexico	12,141	4.87%
Colorado	9,751	3.91%
Nevada	8,252	3.31%
Minnesota	6,108	2.45%
New Hampshire	5,929	2.38%
West Virginia	5,923	2.38%
Maine	4,515	1.81%
Oregon	3,400	1.36%
Washington	1,763	0.71%
Missouri	1,687	0.68%
Hawaii	1,307	0.52%
North Carolina	703	0.28%
Louisiana	682	0.27%
Arkansas	615	0.25%
Oklahoma	575	0.23%
Tennessee	541	0.22%
Alabama	254	0.10%
South Carolina	96	0.04%
Arizona	95	0.04%
D. C.	13	0.01%
New York	6	0.00%

Texas	1	0.00%
Alaska	0	0.00%
California	0	0.00%
Connecticut	0	0.00%
Delaware	0	0.00%
Georgia	0	0.00%
Idaho	0	0.00%
Illinois	0	0.00%
Indiana	0	0.00%
Kansas	0	0.00%
Kentucky	0	0.00%
Maryland	0	0.00%
Massachusetts	0	0.00%
Mississippi	0	0.00%
Montana	0	0.00%
Nebraska	0	0.00%
New Jersey	0	0.00%
North Dakota	0	0.00%
Rhode Island	0	0.00%
South Dakota	0	0.00%
Utah	0	0.00%
Vermont	0	0.00%
Virginia	0	0.00%
Wyoming	0	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>249,354</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

# Voter Turnout Boost for 2004 Battlegrounds



# Inequality By Race



# State Options for Reform

- Problems with Congressional District System
- Problems with Proportional Allocation System
- Best Solution: National Popular Vote

# A National Popular Vote

- Every vote equal no matter where it is cast
- The national popular vote wins the election
- No state / no citizen to be ignored
- Consistent support by two-thirds of Americans

## Examples of Myths

- Current system doesn't help small states
  - 12 of 13 smallest states ignored
  - Close big states mean more than any small state
- With national popular vote, campaigns would not ignore most of nation
  - When every vote is equal, every political act in every state is equally meaningful
  - Building networks for participation over time

# National Popular Vote Proposal

- State legislature votes to join interstate compact, a power protected under the U.S. Constitution
- Key compact details
  - State agrees to award electoral votes to electoral slate of the national popular vote winner
  - Only comes into effect only when decisive:  
(Contingent on the number of states voting to join the compact representing a majority of Electoral College)
  - Blackout period for withdrawal from compact
  - ***Bottom-line***: National popular vote or current system

# Editorial Support

- *New York Times*
- *Los Angeles Times* and *Sacramento Bee*
- *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*

## *Chicago Sun Times*

“Now a bipartisan commission, whose members include former Rep. John Anderson (R-Ill.) and former Sen. Birch Bayh (D-Ind.), has proposed an idea to retain the Electoral College while still ensuring it reflects the will of the majority of voters. The *Sun-Times* backs the concept and applauds the National Popular Vote group for thinking outside the box.”

- Editorial, March 1, 2006

# Organization Support

- Common Cause
- Asian Action Action Fund
- National Latino Congreso

## National Black Caucus of State Legislators

“Be it therefore resolved that the National Conference of Black State Legislators endorses and supports the concept of the NPV and urges its membership to work in their respective states to pass such legislation to create an Interstate Compact which would take effect when the requisite number of states pass legislation adopting it whose combined electoral college votes is a majority (270).”

*- Resolution approved, December. 2006*

## • States Taking Action

- The National Popular Vote bill proposed or committed in 47 states
- Action in 2007
  - Colorado: Passed Senate
  - Hawaii: Passed Senate
  - Maryland: Unanimous black caucus vote
  - Several states may act in March-April 2007

## For More Information

National Popular Vote

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