

Keep Our 50 States

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Roberta Schlechter

“As for your neighbor, North Dakota; Does it have less right to exist as a state than Minnesota?”

I'd like to respond to **Community Voices** (SW News Media) contributor Beth Anderson's letter* (link is below) congratulating Minnesota on giving away the control of their Electoral Votes to NON-Minnesotans ("Minnesota Joins National Popular Vote Compact" July 15, 2023).

First, what is it that really builds "community"? Is it raw numbers? Under the Electoral College system, the successful presidential candidate builds support from multiple groupings of states and regions. People self-identify by neighborhood values and constituencies. We "vote" with our feet and pocketbooks and dreams for our children.

While America conducts all elections via a "one-person/one vote" process—with every state conducting two popular elections each cycle--America is not a pure democracy; we don't have a "peoples' president." Rather, we are a Constitutional Republic wrapped around a federation of sovereign states (US Constitution, Article IV, and Section 4: "The United States shall guarantee *to every State in this Union* a Republican Form of Government..." POTUS stands for "President of the United STATES," i.e., the Executive of the federation.

Disclaimers are Needed

Whenever there is mention of presidents being elected who "did not win the popular vote," it needs to come with a disclaimer: No American president has ever been elected by popular vote. Election by Electoral College is not an "inversion." Rather, it is exclusively built into the American electoral infrastructure.

As for your neighbor, North Dakota; does it have less right to exist as a state than Minnesota? Are their 3 electors less than Minnesota's 10? So how is a Minnesota voter disadvantaged by the 3 electoral votes of its neighbor, or any other sparsely populated state? (By the way, North Dakota's

legislature has repeatedly said No to the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact.) And could the average New Yorker even find the City of Savage on a map?

But now that Minnesota legislators have pulled the state into the Compact, voters need to learn about the potential downside. If the Compact ever takes effect (having survived Constitutional challenges—*spoiler alert*), Minnesota voters may get to watch the candidate they rejected, win the national vote and then swallow up Minnesota’s 10 electoral votes. Does that sound like a way to build “community”?

State Lines Matter

Finally, Anderson speaks of “blurring the lines” between states as being a good thing. But state “lines” matter. They define everything about how/where we live our lives: neighborhoods, taxes, and education standards, just to name a few. How many North Dakotans would trade places with their deep blue neighbors? A few might look longingly in your direction (and vice versa) on election night. If desire and opportunity are strong enough, people can and do relocate. California used to be red and Texas used to be blue.

Regardless, every election the Electoral College strengthens the walls around each state and keeps election irregularities in one state from polluting the process in any other.



Speaking of irregularities ... allowing Minnesota’s electoral votes to be controlled by the actions of out-of-state voters probably runs afoul of Article VII of your own state Constitution.

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Roberta Schlechter is a former legislative staffer (Oregon) and NW Region Director of the Michigan-based KEEP OUR 50 STATES. She has advocated against the National Popular Vote since 2008.

* https://www.swnewsmedia.com/savage_pacer/news/opinion/columnists/community-voices-minnesota-joins-the-national-popular-vote-interstate-compact/article_b188f798-20bb-11ee-9114-671947af9d2f.html

