

**VOTE FOR THE NON-RECOMMENDED STUDY:** “The Advisability of Using the National Popular Vote Compact among the States as a Method for Electing the President.”  
**38 Leagues recommended the study – the most of any non-recommended item.**

## **National Popular Vote Compact**

The National Popular Vote bill would guarantee the Presidency to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states (and the District of Columbia). Under the NPV bill, all of the state’s electoral votes would be awarded to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The bill would take effect only when enacted, in identical form, by states possessing a majority of the electoral votes—that is, enough electoral votes to elect a President – meaning 270 of 538.

As of May 30<sup>th</sup> the National Popular Vote bill has been enacted by Hawaii, Illinois, New Jersey, and Maryland. These four states possess 50 electoral votes—19% of the 270 necessary to bring the law into effect. The bill has passed 18 state legislative chambers (one-sixth of the total), including one house in Arkansas, Colorado, Maine, North Carolina, Rhode Island, and Washington, and both houses in California, Hawaii, Illinois, New Jersey, Maryland, and Vermont

Clearly, the time is ripe to study this issue so that we know whether we support using a compact as a method for electing the President by National Popular Vote.

## **NY State Delegates Embraced Study of Compact for NPV**

After lobbying and caucusing, delegates attending the NY State Convention in May 2007 enthusiastically adopted the non-recommended study: *Should NYS Join the Compact for a National Popular Vote?* By the time of the final vote at the Sunday morning plenary session there was only one “no” vote. The motion to adopt the study more than met the requirement of support from 3/5 of the voting delegates.

In June, the NPV State Study Committee began its research. For four months, local Leagues held education sessions, published articles, and educated ourselves about the NPV compact. Leagues reported that the study was generating a lot of interest from current, as well as potential new members. The NPV study guide was near completion when on October 25<sup>th</sup>, LWNYS was notified by our LWVUS liaison that LWNYS could not adopt a position on the NPV because a State cannot adopt a position on a National issue.

**So that the LWVUS can build on the foundation of our work, we ask Delegates to:**

- Attend the **National Popular Vote for President Caucus** on Saturday at 8:30-10:00 pm  
*Sponsored by LWV Arizona, LWV New York, LWV El Dorado County, CA*
- Vote for consideration of the NPV study at the Sunday Plenary
- Vote for the NPV study at the Monday Plenary
- Help us spread the word to other Delegates at convention

**In order to see the LWNYS study guide, go to:** <http://www.lwvny.org/npv.html> or go to <http://www.nationalpopularvote.com/index.php>.

**Thank you for considering our request.**

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**Martha Kennedy**, LWNYS President and **Joann Ross**, LWNYS Director, Citizen Education

# Selection of the President <sup>1</sup>

## The League's History

A League Study of the presidential electoral process culminated in a 1970 position supporting direct election of the President by popular vote as essential to representative government. The League testified and lobbied for legislation to amend the Constitution to replace the Electoral College with direct election of the President, including provisions for a national run-off election in the event no candidates (President or Vice-President) received 40 percent of the vote. The measure, which passed the House and nearly passed the Senate in 1971, has been revived in each Congress without success. In 1997, the LWVUS again called for abolition of the Electoral College and for direct election of the President and Vice-President in testimony before the House Subcommittee on the Constitution.

The League has supported national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections to ensure equity for voters from all states and to facilitate the electoral process.

In February 2001, a memo was sent to the state and local Leagues outlining the League's position on the Electoral College under the LWVUS position on Selection of the President.

The League believes strongly that the Electoral College should be abolished and not merely "reformed." One "reform" which the League specifically rejects is the voting by electors based on proportional representation in lieu of the present "winner-takes-all" method. Such a system would apportion the electoral votes of a state based on the popular vote in that state. Instead of making the Electoral College more representative, such proportional voting would increase the chance that no candidate would receive a majority in the Electoral College, thereby sending the election of the President to the House of Representatives where each state, regardless of population, would receive only one vote. Election of the President by the House further removes the decision from the people and is contrary to the "one person, one vote" principle. The League also does not support reform of the Electoral College on a state-by-state basis because the League believes there should be uniformity across the nation in the systems used to elect the President.

At the 2002 Convention, the League voted to expand and update the position. The League came to concurrence on a new position in June 2004. Our new position takes into account the entire presidential selection process and supports a process that produces the best possible candidates, informed voters and optimum voter participation.

## The League's Position

*Statement of Position on Selection of the President, as Announced by National Board, January 1970, Revised March 1982 and Updated June 2004:*

**The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice-President is essential to representative government. The League of Women Voters believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished. The League also supports uniform voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. The League supports changes in the presidential election system – from the candidate selection process to the general election. We support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates and their positions, public policy issues and the selection process itself. The League supports action to ensure that the media, political parties, candidates, and all levels of government achieve these goals and provide that information.**

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<sup>1</sup> League of Women Voters of the United States of America "Impact on Issues 2006-2008" (ONLINE), Washington, D.C.: LWVUS, publication #386, [http://www.lwv.org/Content/ContentGroups/ImpactIssues/2006\\_Impact\\_web.pdf](http://www.lwv.org/Content/ContentGroups/ImpactIssues/2006_Impact_web.pdf) , August 10, 2007.