

League Consensus on National Popular Vote

Leagues around the nation are taking up a fast track study of the National Popular Vote Compact as a method of electing the President of the United States. The State Voter of August 2008 gave some background, and much more information is available online at www.lwv.org/npv. The full text of the compact is given after this article. A summary of pro and con arguments follows the text.

At the January 2009 meeting of the State Board, we decided to hold consensus meetings in three regions of the state – Portland, Brunswick Area, and Downeast. Look for a notice of a meeting in your region soon. The deadline for consensus is May 1, 2009. In the meantime, all those who plan to participate can find the materials they need at www.lwv.org/npv. The League resources include a background paper as well as pro and con arguments. League members may also participate in LWVUS online discussion of the NPV study. (Contact Martha at marthad@gwi.net if you need help with this.) The latest information on the status of the compact can be found at www.nationalpopularvote.com. If you do not have access to these resources, please contact your local League League or call or e-mail the State office at 622-0256, lwvme@gwi.net.

In brief, the national popular vote compact is a method of electing the President of the United States by a majority of voters nation-wide. This goal has been stated policy of the League since 1970 (search for “Impact on Issues” at www.lwv.org). However, controversy exists over whether the objective of choosing the president by nation-wide majority should be achieved by a compact among the states rather than via a constitutional amendment abolishing the Electoral College.

In April of 2008, the Maine State Senate approved the National Popular Vote Compact by one vote, but the bill failed to pass in the House, ending its chances in the 123rd Legislature. In the new 124th Legislature, the measure has been reintroduced and is now on the legislative agenda as LD 56 or HP 49. As we go to press, a public hearing before the Legal and Veterans Affairs Committee is scheduled for February 4.