



NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE AND RURAL AMERICA

Under the National Popular Vote interstate compact (NPV), Americans who live in small towns and rural areas would largely be ignored while candidates focus on population-dense major metropolitan areas.

The Electoral College forces candidates to pay attention to voters outside of big cities and nearby suburbs in order to win a state. And they must win a lot of states to win the White House.

The 2016 campaign included stops by the candidates in Durango, Colorado (approximate population, 19,000), Farmville, Virginia (7,900), Holderness, New Hampshire (2,100) and Traverse City, Michigan (15,700), as well as plenty of stops in major metropolitan areas like Las Vegas, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, and Phoenix.

More important than visits is the policy agenda presidential candidates adopt and focus on. In order to win states, candidates have to address issues important to a broad cross-section of Americans. Without the state-by-state process of electing the president, a candidate could simply ignore farmers and agriculture policy, or other small-town and rural interests.

There are more than 184 million Americans in just the nation's 53 largest metropolitan areas, each with more than one million people, and tens of millions more in areas with half a million or more people. Campaigns under NPV would need to focus on big cities and nearby suburbs where they can leverage advertising, policy, and visits with voter turnout operations to maximize the raw number of votes they receive.

There is no system for electing the president that would force candidates literally to give equal attention to every voter – campaigns will always have to make tough decisions on where to focus. The state-by-state process of electing the president ensures that campaigns must take small-town and rural Americans into account.

KEY POINTS

- The interests of small-town and rural Americans have to be taken into account when trying to win statewide elections under the Electoral College.
- There are 223 million Americans in just those metropolitan areas with more than half a million people.
- Under NPV, campaigns would be able to maximize their votes by focusing on major metropolitan areas while ignoring small-town and rural voters.