



## **Committee on Electoral Reform**

Respectfully Submitted by Abigail King, Alexandra Curtu, Avery Carlson, Beatrice Kaskie, Jeffrey Fuchs, Jennika Lentz, Jillian Manternach, Joanne Lee, Katie Paulson, Kevin Lu, Savannah Sexton, Shay Doyle, and Sofia Steele

### **Adopting the Congressional District Method**

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#### **Position Statement:**

The Iowa Youth Congress supports legislation that the State of Iowa adopt the Congressional District Method as the main method for delegating electoral votes.

#### **Position:**

The Congressional District System would provide a more proportional way to delegate electoral votes in the US Presidential election. It would ensure that each district is represented while still awarding two electoral votes for the statewide winner.

#### **Current Situation:**

The constitution allows for states to choose how they delegate their electoral votes; Iowa currently utilizes a winner-take-all system in which only one candidate is delegated votes, which means a winner can win every single electoral vote as long as they are the leading candidate in the state (McCarthy, 2012). The winner-take-all system declares the whole state either a Republican or Democratic state, even when the margins of victory are extremely close.

The current system undermines rural and sparsely populated areas, according to Kaylee McGhee. In 2016 the state of Michigan leaned Republican in state elections but historically has been Democrat in presidential elections. This is explained by the winner-take-all system. Since the population of Detroit is 670,000, it impacts the outcome of presidential delegates greatly. This is a problem within Iowa; if one was to look at the distribution of voters in the districts of Iowa, they would see that the state is not entirely Republican or Democrat. The state of Iowa's political views vary depending on region; for instance District Four tends to lean more towards Republican representation, while District One tends to lean more towards Democratic representation.

#### **Rationale:**

While the chances of abolishing the electoral college are slim, rebuilding the integrity of American elections can be done through the Congressional District method. The winner-take-all system allows for many states to be ignored solely because they are not a swing state. "The swing states' dominance is a consequence of the fact that almost every state chooses to allot all its electoral votes to whoever comes in first place statewide, regardless of his or her margin of victory" (Prokop, 2016). Due to the winner-take-all system, we often see candidates have small margins of victory, since the states aren't split up proportionally.

In 2016, the state of Iowa delegated all six votes to Donald J. Trump even though District One- which includes highly populated counties like Linn- chose Clinton. 800,000 people voted for Trump and 653,000 people voted for Clinton, yet all of the delegates went to one party (New York Times, 2016). The winner-take-all system only represents big cities, while the state's congressional district method forces candidates to campaign to each district as a whole, rather



than just the big cities of the states. This also halts the power that swing states have during elections.

The winner-take-all system also allows for the continuation of the two party hold on the U.S. By replacing the system, we can allow for third party candidates to gather more delegates. Many people don't vote in elections because they feel their voices are not heard. Iowa has a fairly good voter turnout record of 63.4%, but the state of Maine which has the system implemented has a turnout rate of 72.7% (USAfacts.org, 2020).

### **Recommended Action:**

If adopted by the Iowa Congress, this issue statement would be further developed into a complete Presidential Election Reform Act, similar to those of Nebraska and Maine. This act would reform the distribution of Iowa's Electoral delegates to one that accurately reflects the values of Iowans. It would do this through delegates given to the popular votes of each district, along with the overall state popular vote. This act would be presented as legislation to the Iowa Congress so that it can be implemented using LSA's 2021 Congressional Districts for the upcoming 2024 election and all Presidential elections to follow.

### **Sources**

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