

While these proponents of the bill claim a national popular vote superior to the current system, this bill would actually maintain the same weaknesses as the Electoral College because the weaknesses of both of these systems lie in the underlying first-past-the-post voting method.

First-Past-The-Post

The first-past-the-post method (also called a plurality vote) is a voting method that elects the candidate with the most first place votes (2011).

Both the a national popular vote, as proposed by the bill, and the Electoral College use the first-past-the-post method. The proposed system uses a first-past-the-post method because it wants to elect the candidate that wins the most first place votes. The Electoral College utilizes the first-past-the-post voting method at two different points in the election. Initially, a state chooses its electoral representatives based on its state first-past-the-post popular vote (). Then the electoral representatives vote for their candidate choice with first-past-the-post method (2016).

There are two main weaknesses to the first-past-the-post voting method. The first weakness is that it does not require an actual majority. The other weakness is that it does not necessarily elect the most preferred candidate.

Plurality Requirement

One faulty assumption is that a national popular vote would produce a candidate that the majority of voters want. However, the first-past-the-post voting method does not require a majority when there are more than two candidates, only a plurality.

Nations that use a first-past-the-post national popular vote exemplify this. The UK, one of the few developed nations that still uses first-past-the-post voting method, has not had a prime

minister win the majority of the votes since before 1945 (;
; McGuinness 2012). In fact, the 2005 election resulted in a three way
split between the Conservative Party (thirty-two percent of the votes), the Labour Party
(thirty-five percent of the votes), and Liberal Democrats (twenty-two percent of the votes
(Rallings & Thrasher). This system did not encourage a representation of the majority of the UK
voting population. Instead it represented thirty-five percent of the population.

It cannot be assumed that the US would elect candidates who represent a majority
voting bloc. In fact, one proponent of the bill, State Representative Tom Brower, argues that a
first-past-the-post national popular vote would encourage more third-party candidates to run
(Brower 2008). If more people began voting for third-party candidates, the largest voting blocs
would reduce in size. The candidate winning the largest voting bloc would then represent an
even smaller proportion of the population.

Condorcet Inconsistent

While voting systems based on first-past-the-post do not necessarily represent the
majority of voters, first-past-the-post voting systems do not always elect the most preferred
candidate either. This voting inconsistency, called a Condorcet inconsistency, occurs when the
candidate that is favored by the largest voting bloc is not actually the most preferred candidate
(2011). This can then result in a candidate who most of the society deems unfizoo

In this scenario, candidate A would win under the bill. However, the majority of the population does not prefer candidate A. In fact, the majority of the population (sixty-five percent) would have elected any other candidate over candidate A.

While this scenario shows that the winning candidate need not be the most preferred candidate, this bill relies on a faulty a

winner (B with forty-six percent of the votes). Considering the previously discussed Condorcet inconsistency, assume candidate C was actually the most preferred candidate.

Under the current system, candidate A would win. Under the bill, candidate B would win. However, neither candidate won the majority of the votes. On top of that, neither candidate was the most preferred candidate. Both voting methods fall victim to these weaknesses as

References

