

Thank you for having me today. I want to thank Majority Chairman McIlhinney and Minority Chairman member Williams for the invitation to appear at today's hearing.

I look forward to sharing my thoughts on the proposal to change the way Pennsylvania awards its electoral votes. Several Republicans including Gov. Corbett and Sen. Pileggi have offered a plan to award electoral votes by Congressional district rather than awarding all of the votes to the winner of the popular vote – the way 48 states award their votes. Along with Pennsylvania Republican Party Chairman Rob Gleason, most of the Republican Congressional delegation, at least ten members of the state house and National Republican Congressional Campaign chairman Pete Sessions do not support this plan.

First, this is a distraction from more pressing issues facing our commonwealth including job creation and economic development.

Pennsylvanians want their leaders to focus on the problems they were sent there to solve the state's problems – like jobs, schools, job-training and improving roads and bridges.

Pennsylvanians want politicians in Harrisburg to focus on them, not focusing on ways to elect members of their political party. This isn't what they said they were going to do during the last campaign – and it is not the work the people of Pennsylvania need done. We need you to focus on creating jobs.

And Republicans agree, when asked about the electoral vote proposal, Congressman Charlie Dent complained that Republicans should focus on other matters – like jobs. He said:

"We're spending a heck of a lot of time on this when we should be focused on more important matters."

Second, the proposal will cede Pennsylvania's influence as part of a power grab. If this bill is passed, Pennsylvania will unilaterally disarm, giving up its influence on the presidential level and making the state less important. Currently, Pennsylvania awards 20 electoral votes – a large portion that draws candidates and campaigns to our state. Under the Congressional district proposal, far fewer electoral votes will be available, perhaps 7 to 10 votes, maybe fewer. Presidential candidates will spend less time in the state, and they will become less acquainted with Pennsylvania, including its people and needs. We have been very lucky to get significant attention from the last several presidential candidates, but if this legislation passes our state will become much less meaningful in presidential elections.

Pennsylvania Republican Party Chairman Gleason agrees that the proposal would hurt Pennsylvania as a battleground state saying:

“We would no longer be a battleground state with all the benefits that come with that.”

He realizes our current system gives a strong voice to Pennsylvania – but only when we speak with one voice.

Third, this proposal is meant to silent voices, not make more voices heard. Instead of creating a fairer process, this proposal actually diminishes voter's influence because of the state's extreme gerrymandering. If achieving a more fair result is the goal, the proposed plan does not make sense. Several academics and newspapers have argued that the proposed plan would take congressional gerrymandering one step further.

Even Republicans agree that the political nature of the proposal is unsavory.

State representative Justin Simmons said, “I think the Electoral College works just fine the way it is. It should not be adjusted for political purposes, whether you're a Republican or a Democrat.”

Finally, the people of Pennsylvania do not support the proposal – with 52 percent opposing the proposal according to a recent Quinnipiac (Quinn-a-pee-ack) University poll. Voters ought to have a say before we scrap a 220 year old system

There are too many questions about this and Pennsylvania voters ought to have a chance to consider this before we radically alter how Pennsylvania has been casting votes for our nation's President for over 200 years.

The Governor and state legislature in Harrisburg are trying to change the rules on how we elect the President. It's up to voters to decide at the ballot box who is President -- not the Governor or the state legislature in Harrisburg. And they oppose this proposal.

For hundreds of years, Pennsylvania has decided elections through the Electoral College – the process is certainly not perfect, but it has worked. But while Pennsylvania families are struggling to make ends meet and keep their heads above water, we should not waste time on radical, partisan proposal to change the way Pennsylvania casts its votes. Republicans see an opportunity, not to improve the system but simply to win elections, and they have proposed a radical plan that is not even supported by their own party. It is wrong, and it will ultimately hurt voters in Pennsylvania.