



IS THERE AN OFFICIAL NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE COUNT?

The National Popular Vote interstate compact (NPV) would award the electoral votes of member states to the presidential candidate deemed to have won the most individual votes nationally. However, there is no official “national popular vote” count. The attempt to mimic one would run into a host of serious problems and could fail.

The book *Every Vote Equal*, self-published by the organization behind the NPV compact, claims vote totals can be obtained from each state’s “Certificate of Ascertainment” and then added together to determine the winner.

These certificates are not designed to provide a national popular vote count, however, only to ascertain which slate of electors have won the state. They sometimes contain errors that do not matter under the current system but would have a significant effect under NPV, such as the 415,000 votes missing on New York’s 2012 certificate. In a close national election under NPV, that many missing votes could change the winner.

The certificates also will not be available from every state in time to be used under NPV because they are often only publicly available after the Electoral College meets. Final, certified vote results from every state may not be available either – New York did not complete and certify its 2012 vote until after the Electoral College had met.

States have significant freedom in how they run their elections and report results, creating opportunities to manipulate vote totals. States that are not members of the NPV compact are under no obligation to cooperate and provide uniform, complete, accurate vote totals to NPV states.

NPV cannot assure that the candidate deemed the winner under the compact actually received the most popular votes because there is no official, timely, or reliable national popular vote count.

KEY POINTS

- The source of vote totals for NPV can be inaccurate, such as the 415,000 missing votes on New York’s 2012 “Certificate of Ascertainment.”
- Complete, certified vote totals may not be available from all states by the time the Electoral College meets, making it impossible to know the winner under NPV.
- States that are not members of the compact can easily undermine or manipulate the compact, or simply not cooperate.