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**Opinion Editorial**  
**By Representative Gene Ward**

**Hawaii to Become More Marginalized with Continued Romance with  
'National Popular Vote' Bill**

The Electoral College has been serving American politics for more than 200 years. But recently, due to a close election for the U.S. Presidency, some people at both the local and national level have been advocating a change in the way we elect our Presidents.

So here we go again! House leadership has again introduced a bill (HB 3013) that will take away the advantage that a small state like Hawaii has over big states. It was introduced by the same person who chairs the Judiciary Committee (Rep. Tommy Waters). It has already passed a second reading with the Republican caucus voting "no," but it has one more floor vote before it goes over to the Senate and Governor Lingle for signature.

This bill is another misinformed attempt to enable the winner of the presidential election to be determined by national popular vote rather than the Electoral College. The bill adds a new section to Chapter 14, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to enact agreement that allows member states to determine the winner of a presidential election by "national popular vote." (HB3013 HD1)

Our founding fathers knew better. They understood the nuances of political contests, particularly the importance of small states and the possible tyranny of large states overwhelming national presidential elections. They understood especially how small states could be affected if only the popular voted counted. For example if one voted in Hawaii's 2004 presidential election, it was a likely vote for John Kerry, but under the proposed new system, your vote would have gone to George W. Bush.

Likewise if someone in Hawaii's 1988 presidential election voted for Michael Dukakis the vote would have only counted for Bush (Senior), and in Hawaii 1968 presidential election between Hubert Humphrey and Richard Nixon, a vote for Humphrey would have become a vote for Nixon. Is this the kind of 'kapakahi' results we want in Hawaii?

The best description in understanding the Electoral College is a sports analogy. In baseball's World Series, for example, the team that scores the most runs overall is like a candidate who gets the most votes. But to become the World Series champion, it is the team that wins the most games who becomes the winner of the series. So no matter how many runs (votes) you get, you still have to win the most games (state ballots). No one calls the World Series unfair just because the team that got the most runs loses, right? It is all about the games, just like in politics it is all about the states.

Another downside for our nation with a proposed plurality ballot would be that "urban America," particularly the large states on the east coast (e.g. New York) and west coast (e.g. California) will be the dominant player at the expense of "rural America." Stated differently, imagine the urban core of Honolulu deciding for the entire state of Hawaii who should be our next governor and you can see how this allows a national advantage of large states and large cities to dominate. I believe the values of farmers and small town Americans are just as important (if not more important) as big city values and voters, so the Electoral College is the best way to filter for these differences.

The current Electoral College strengthens the status of minority groups, because the votes of small minorities within a state may make the difference between winning all of a state's electoral votes or none of them. It enhances the political stability of the nation by promoting a two-party system that protects that presidency from impassioned but transitory third party movements, and forces the major parties to absorb the interests of small states and minorities; and it maintains the federal system of government and representation. Each state is allocated a number of Electors equal to the number of its U.S. Representatives, plus its two senators, so Hawai'i has four electoral votes. All states have at least three electoral votes, no matter how small they are.

Hawaii needs more tax relief for our over-burdened families, expanding access to quality healthcare while reversing the financial problems plaguing our doctors and hospitals, developing more transitional shelters and affordable housing while fixing potholes, harbors and airports; we do not need some national agenda about a grudge match to distract us from the tasks at hand.

As the smallest state in the nation, it does not seem strategically wise to give up our comparative advantage offered us by the Electoral College. House Bill 3013 HD1 asks us to do this. Last year a similar bill was vetoed by Governor Lingle. The only thing left to say about this bill is: "Mahalo for your veto, Governor, get your pen ready for this year too.