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## BLOGGYTOWN

# Floridians favor the popular vote over the Electoral College, poll says

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A new poll finds that more than two-thirds of voters in Florida think presidential elections should be decided by who wins the popular vote.

The poll, conducted by Florida Atlantic University and commissioned by the League of Women Voters of Florida, surveyed 1,000 registered voters across the Sunshine State on how they thought the U.S. should elect its commander-in-chief. The results: 68 percent of registered voters said the winner should be the candidate who wins the popular vote across all 50 states and the District of Columbia, while less than a third said the current Electoral College works fine as is.

"Despite the fact that Florida is the third largest state, Floridians' voices are not equal to those of residents of other states," Pamela Goodman, president of the League of Women Voters of Florida, says. "Floridians' voices are further diminished by the 'winner-take-all' rule, common to 47 other states, which awards all of a state's electoral votes to the candidate who wins in that state,

no matter how slim the margin."

The survey goes on to say that although independents and Democrats favored the national popular vote more than anything else, so did nearly half of Republican respondents – the political party that has arguably benefitted most from the Electoral College in the past 20 years. The 2000 and 2016 presidential elections are prime examples: In both, a Republican candidate won the Electoral College, thus winning the presidency, while simultaneously losing the popular vote.

For Democrats, the support for the measure was overwhelming, with nearly 90 percent polling in favor. Seventy percent of independents said the same, with 46 percent of Republicans also in favor.

On a regional level: voters in North Florida favored the Electoral College 74-26. Elsewhere, Central Florida voters (63-37) as well as South Florida voters (68-32) favored the popular vote.

"The findings of this survey are consistent with other polls conducted over the past 50 years which have found the majority of Americans believe the president and vice president should be chosen directly by the American people. This is not the case today under our current system," notes Dr. Kevin Wager, an associate professor of political science at Florida Atlantic University, in a news release from the League of Women Voters.

On a similar note, Rep. Joseph Geller, D-Aventura, and state Sen. Victor Torres, D-Orlando, have introduced HB 367 and SB 1374 to their respective chambers – legislation that, if passed, would bring Florida into the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact.

According to the news release, states that enact the Compact can award their electors to the presidential candidate who wins the national popular vote, ensuring the universal equality of all American voters, no matter where they live. States accounting for 165 of the 270 electoral voters needed to activate the Compact have passed such legislation, with more on the cusp of doing the same.

"We're really pleased that Rep. Geller and Rep. Torres are sponsoring this bill, and we hope that it gets a hearing," Goodman says. "We certainly aren't optimistic that this has a chance of passing succession, but we think it begins a

good discourse and a good conversation – and more importantly, it's just kind of an education for the voters about what the national popular vote is, as opposed to the Electoral College."

Goodman adds, "I don't have a crystal ball. As I've said, this is not something that's going to happen immediately. It's going to take education and knowledge for voters to really understand it and get their heads wrapped around it. But other states have moved towards it."