

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: ...to two-party competition. It is great. It is super, and it is good for the process.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Schimek.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Yes, thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. I would like to address at least briefly Senator Maurstad's comments about this isn't a partisan issue, it really shouldn't be a partisan issue. And, as a matter of fact, if you look back at the record and some of the people who have come in to testify in favor of the district system, you will find people on both sides of the aisle who came in to testify on it. In fact, the bill, the original bill was sponsored by two Republican senators and three Democratic senators, if you want to get party labels into this. There was definitely a bipartisan support for the bill in the very beginning. I would like to just quote from Bob Sittig, who is a professor at the University of Nebraska and has been well known in Republican circles for a long time, but his remarks were that the winner-take-all practice of states casting presidential electoral votes is over a century old. This bill, LB 1206, would give Nebraska an at large district system and a split vote would be possible. He says, I support this approach and can recommend it to you for the reasons below. Above all, our election procedures need to provide citizens with the widest opportunity to review alternatives and express their preferences. However, the winner-take-all electoral vote practice discourages the trailing party's candidate from seriously campaigning in states where a win is unlikely and these voters are hampered accordingly. Instead, the contenders concentrate their efforts in the "competitive" large population states, since losses there are much more costly. A split of the electoral vote in a state would reduce the advantage of the leader and encourage the trailing candidate. For example, Dukakis's 39 percent of the Nebraska popular vote in 1988, and Bush's 45 percent of the Iowa popular vote should have gotten them more than the political goose eggs they actually received in the electoral vote. The system should reward credible efforts such as these. Secondly, the electoral college is now under quite a dark cloud. One reason is that a national popular vote winner could lose the electoral votes and the presidency by a fluke. This kind of misfire has not happened recently but there were close calls in 1948, 1960, and 1968, and in 1976, a shift of less than 10,000 popular votes in two states would have made Ford the winner even though Carter had a nearly 2 million