



# The Electoral College



Do we the people really elect the President and Vice President? Technically, no.

The president is elected by the states (and DC) not a national tally of voters. The constitutional theory is that congress is elected by the people, while the president and vice president are elected by the states. When we as Americans are casting our votes for president we are actually voting for electors who will cast their vote for the candidate, this is called the Electoral College.

- The electoral college was created by the framers of the U.S. Constitution.
- It is intended to dilute the votes of population centers that may have different concerns from the majority of the country.
- The system is designed so that the presidential candidates appeal to many different interests, rather than those of a specific region or state.
- Each state is allocated a number of Electors equal to the number of its U.S. Representatives plus its two senators (in CA the total is 55). A total of 538 electoral votes.
- It is a weighted system designed to give more power to the states with more votes, but allows for the smaller states to swing an election. The state's power is representative of its population.
- A candidates goal is to put together the right combination of states that will give him/her the majority of votes.
- In most cases the candidate with the most popular votes also wins the Electoral College, but there are no guarantees.
- Whichever presidential candidate gets the most popular votes in a state wins all of the electors for that state (except for Maine and Nebraska which award electoral votes proportionally).
- The candidate with the most electoral votes (270 or more—over one half of the total vote of 538) is declared president.
- If no one candidate receives the majority of votes, the U.S. House of Representatives selects the President from the top three vote-getters.
- On January 20, 2009, at noon, the elected president and vice president are sworn into office.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Is my vote for President and Vice President meaningful in the Electoral College system?** Yes, within your state your vote has a great deal of significance. It is possible that an elector could ignore the results of the popular vote, but that occurs rarely. Your votes helps decide which candidate receives your states electoral votes.

**Must electors vote for the candidate who won their states popular vote?** There is no Constitutional provision or Federal Law that requires electors to vote according to the results of the popular vote. However, some states require electors to cast their votes according to the popular vote.

**Why do we still have the Electoral College?** The process is part of the original design of the U.S. Constitution. It would be necessary to pass a Constitutional amendment to change this system. Many different proposals have been offered over the years, but none have passed by Congress and State for ratification.

<p>How many electoral votes does each state have?  AL: 9, AK: 3, AZ: 11, AR: 6, CA: 55, CO: 9, CT: 7, DE: 3, DC: 3, FL: 29, GA: 16, HI: 4, ID: 4, IL: 20, IN: 11, IA: 6, KS: 6, KY: 8, LA: 8, ME: 4, MD: 10, MA: 11, MI: 16, MN: 10, MS: 6, MO: 10, MT: 3, NE: 5, NV: 6, NH: 4, NJ: 14, NM: 5, NY: 29, NC: 15, ND: 3, OH: 18, OK: 7, OR: 7, PA: 20, RI: 4, SC: 9, SD: 3, TN: 11, TX: 38, UT: 6, VT: 3, VA: 13, WA: 12, WV: 5, WI: 10, WY: 3  <b>TOTAL: 538</b></p>
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