

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

1. To be elected president = a candidate needs to win at least 270 of the 538 electoral votes.

- A candidate who wins the greatest number of popular votes in a state usually receives all of the electoral votes for the state.

2. A state's electoral votes = total number of representatives in the U.S. Congress.

- House of Representatives plus Senators.

- MICHIGAN = 14 HOUSE MEMBERS PLUS 2 SENATORS = 16 ELECTORAL VOTES.

3. The larger a state's population = the more electoral votes.

4. THE BIG 12 STATES = California (55), New York (29), Florida (29), Pennsylvania (20), Illinois (20), Ohio (18), Michigan (16), New Jersey (14), North Carolina (15), Georgia (16), Virginia (13), Texas (38)
= 283 electoral votes.

5. Campaign efforts are directed toward these states.

6. If the big 12 become divided, then the smaller states become very important. (usually become divided)

ELECTORAL COLLEGE THE ORIGINAL SYSTEM

- A. Each state had electors.
 - 1. Each state would cast votes for two presidential candidates.
 - 2. Candidate with the majority = president
 - 3. Candidate with the second highest, also a majority = vice president.
 - 4. If there was a tie or no majority = House of Representatives would choose.

- B. ELECTION OF 1800 WOULD CHANGE THINGS
 - 1. The Democratic-Republicans won a majority of electoral votes.
 - 2. Each Democratic-Republican elector cast one vote each of the party's candidates. (Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr)
 - 3. Most electors wanted Jefferson as president, although Jefferson and Burr wound up with 73 electoral votes each.
 - 4. Tie = Decision goes to the House of Representatives.
 - 5. The Federalist, the opposing party controlled the House of Rep.
 - 6. Popular opinion favored Jefferson, the Federalist supported Burr.

7. The House debated for six days on who should be president.
8. Thirty-six ballots were taken before Jefferson was finally elected President and Burr Vice-President.
9. The 1800 election demonstrated that there was a need for change.

C. THE 12TH AMENDMENT WAS ADDED TO THE CONSTITUTION IN 1804.

1. Electors cast separate ballots for president and vice-president.
2. If no one receives a majority for the president =
The House chooses from the three candidates who have the largest number of electoral votes.
3. If no one receives a majority for the vice-president the Senate chooses from the top two candidates.

ELECTORAL COLLEGE PROCESS

1. Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

- Voters cast ballots for all the electors representing a particular party in each state.

2. Monday after the second Wednesday in December.

- Electors of the party winning the popular vote in each state cast ballots for president and vice-president.

3. January 6th of the next year, odd years.

- Ballots cast by the electors are counted by congress.

4. January 20th of the next year, odd years.

- Candidate receiving the majority of electoral votes becomes president.
Inauguration Day.

WHY DOES THE UNITED STATES USE THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM?

1. THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE SYSTEM WAS ESTABLISHED IN ARTICLE II OF THE CONSTITUTION AND AMENDED BY THE 12TH AMENDMENT IN 1804.

-IT WOULD TAKE A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO CHANGE THIS.

2. THE FOUNDING FATHERS DID NOT TRUST THE PUBLIC TO ELECT THE PRESIDENT DIRECTLY. THEY SET UP AN INDIRECT SYSTEM.

-WE ARE A REPUBLIC – NOT A DIRECT DEMOCRACY.

3. THE FOUNDING FATHERS WANTED TO GIVE MORE OR SOME EQUAL POWER TO THE SMALLER STATES.

-THE UNITED STATES IS A FEDERALIST COUNTRY – STATES HAVE RIGHTS.

-USING THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM THE SMALLER STATES HAVE MORE SAY THAN BY USING JUST THE POPULAR VOTE.

-WHEN THE CONSTITUTION WAS WRITTEN AND THE COUNTRY ESTABLISHED SMALLER STATES WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR ISSUES NOT BEING ADDRESSED.

4. FOR THE FIRST SEVERAL PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS THERE WAS NOT A POPULAR VOTE AND THE STATE GOVERNMENTS CHOSE THE ELECTORS.

-ELECTION OF 1800 LED TO THE 12TH AMENDMENT AND THE POPULAR VOTE.

5. STATES HAVE THE RIGHT TO DECIDE HOW TO DIVIDE THEIR ELECTORAL VOTES.

-STATES DO NOT HAVE TO USE A WINNER-TAKE-ALL SYSTEM.

-MAINE AND NEBRASKA = GIVE TWO ELECTORAL VOTES TO THE WINNER OF THE POPULAR VOTE. THE REMAINDER ARE GIVEN TO THE WINNER OF EACH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT.

-ONE ELECTORAL VOTE FOR EACH DISTRICT WON BY THE POPULAR VOTE.

REFORM FOR VOTING

1. Choose electors from congressional districts.

-Each state has two electoral votes (senators), plus one vote for each congressional district (house of reps.).

-The candidate with the most votes in a district receives the districts electoral vote.

-The candidate who wins the most districts receives the two state electoral votes.

PRO: eliminates the winner take all system.

NEGATIVE: A candidate could still lose the popular vote and win the election.

2. A presidential candidate would win the same share of a state's electoral votes as the states popular votes.

-If a candidate won 75% of the popular vote that candidate would win 75% of the electoral votes. (Michigan = 13 electoral votes)

PRO: Cures the winner take all system.

NEGATIVE: Could make a Third Party stronger and force the election into the House of Representative. (A candidate does not receive 270 electoral votes)

3. Do away with the Electoral College system. The people would directly vote for president and vice-president.

ISSUES: The states would lose their role in selecting the president. It would take away the concept of FEDERALISM.

-Large cities would have a greater chance of controlling the elections.

ISSUES IN THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

1. A vote cast for a losing candidate in a state counts for nothing.
2. Candidate who lost the popular vote won the electoral vote.
 - John Quincy Adams in 1824
 - Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876
 - Benjamin Harrison in 1888
 - George W. Bush in 2000
3. A third-party candidate can win enough votes to keep a major candidate from receiving a majority.
 - The third-party candidate can release the electoral votes to one of the other candidates.
 - The election can be forced into the House of Reps.
4. If the election goes to the House:
 - a. Each state casts one vote, candidate with 26 is the winner.
 - b. If the state can't agree on a candidate the state loses its vote.
 - c. In the House a state with a small population has as much power/influence as a state with a large population.