

Should We Abolish the Electoral College?

And How to Do It



League of Women Voters
Roseville Area
February 18, 2020

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LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®

Nonpartisan political organization.

Informed and active participation in government.

Increase understanding of public policy issues.

Education and advocacy.

2



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®

The League of Women Voters believes that the Electoral College should be abolished in favor of a direct popular vote.

3

What is the Electoral College?

A process where electors in each state vote to elect the president of the United States (U.S. Constitution, Article II, Section I).

4

Who selects the Electors?

“Each state shall appoint [in a manner of their choosing]...a number of Electors [2 for each Senator and 1 for each Representative]...”

5

How do the Electors vote?

- In their own state capitol
- Cast ballots for President, Vice President
- First Monday after the second Wednesday in December

6

Who wins?

The person with the greatest number of electoral votes, provided s/he receives a majority (270).

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Electors: Faithless or Faithful?

Do they vote their conscience or according to the party that selected them? (What did the Framers intend?)

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Why did the framers of the Constitution create the Electoral College?

They did not want Congress selecting the president.

They wanted:

- To prevent cabals and corruption.
- To keep the Executive branch independent from the Legislative.

9

Why not direct election by the people?

- Public largely uninformed.
- Might not choose the best person.

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Are the framers' concerns relevant today?

- Information is widely available to citizens.
- Congressional selection of the President is not under consideration.
- The people do not want electors exercising their own discretion (and electors almost never do).

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Why Abolish the Electoral College?

One-person, one-vote is fundamental to democracy.

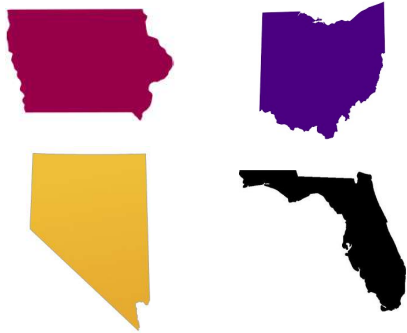


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Recognize These States?



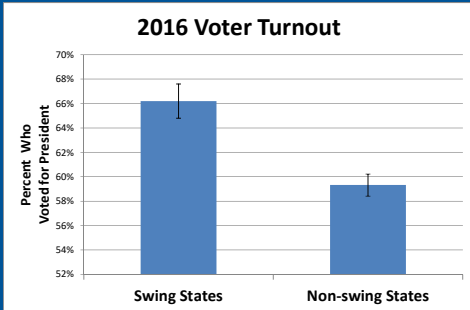
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Why Bother Voting?



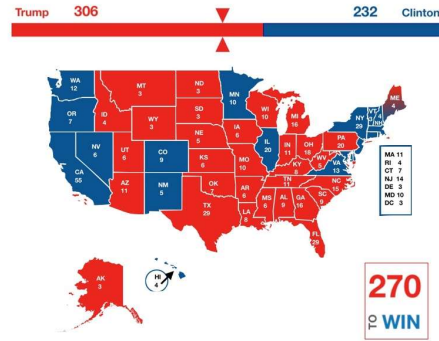
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The Electoral College Decreases Voter Turnout



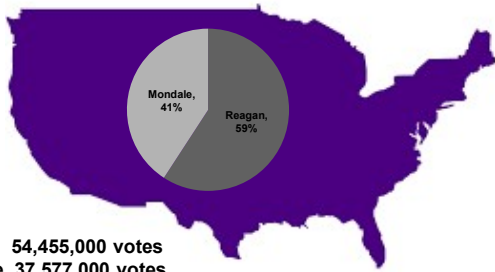
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The Electoral College Polarizes Us



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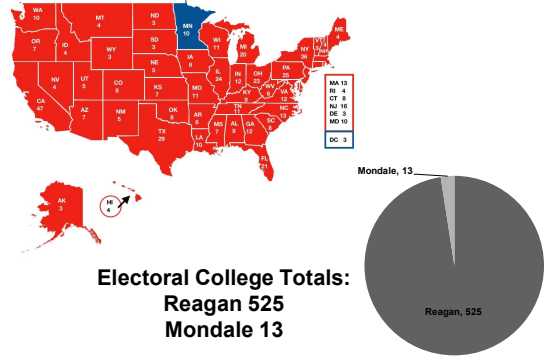
A United Vote: 1984



Reagan 54,455,000 votes
Mondale 37,577,000 votes

17

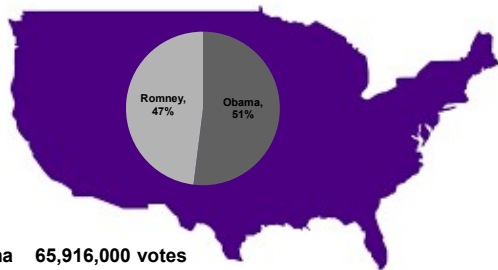
A Divided Vote: 1984



Electoral College Totals:
Reagan 525
Mondale 13

18

A United Vote: 2012



Obama 65,916,000 votes
Romney 60,934,000 votes

19

Popular Vote vs. Electoral Vote in the 58 Presidential Elections since 1789

- 19 where the winner did not win the popular vote.
- 5 where the opponent won the popular vote by absolute majority.

20

- 1824 Adams over Jackson
- 1876 Hayes over Tilden
- 1888 Harrison over Cleveland
- 2000 Bush over Gore
- 2016 Trump over Clinton

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What are
some of the
arguments?

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Argument #1

Without the Electoral College, our presidents would all be chosen by a couple of big states like California, New York, and Texas.

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Response:

Election by popular vote means all votes count.

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32% of California Voters Chose Trump in 2016



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But the Electoral College Erased Them from the Total



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Argument #2

Smaller, less populated states need the protection of the Electoral College to ensure their interests are represented by the President.

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Response:

There is no coherent "small state" or "large state" interest that needs protecting.

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Candidates focus their time in "swing states," not small states.




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Response:


Residents of LARGER states lose their rightful representation under the Electoral College.

30

Virginia has 9x more voters than Delaware...




Virginia has 6,027,262 voters



Delaware has 689,125 voters

31

...but only gets 4x as many electors.



Virginia gets 13 electors



Delaware gets 3 electors

Is this fair?

32

Argument #3

Abolishing the Electoral College will mostly benefit Democratic candidates.

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Response:

The Electoral College can, and has, hurt Republicans as well as Democrats.

This is a non-partisan issue.

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How could the Electoral College be abolished?

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Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to abolish the electoral college and to provide for the direct popular election of the President and Vice President of the United States.

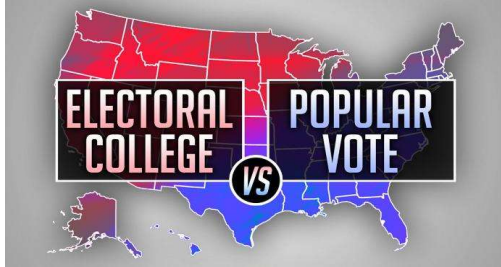
Senate Joint Resolution 41
INTRODUCED BY SEN. BARBARA BOXER OF CALIFORNIA NOV 15, 2016

House Joint Resolution 103
INTRODUCED BY REP. CHARLES RANGLE OF NEW YORK NOV 17, 2016

Introduced, referred to Committee, no action taken.

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The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact



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States may apportion their electors however they see fit. "Winner take all" is NOT directed by the Constitution.



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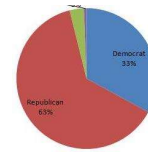
16 jurisdictions with 196 electoral votes have enacted the NPVI Compact. 74 more votes to get to 270.



Additional to the map: Colorado, Connecticut, New Mexico and Oregon.

39

What about proportional representation by state?



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Proportional Allotment of Electoral Votes

	Total Electoral Votes	Percent For Clinton	Percent For Trump	Percent For Other	Electoral Votes for Clinton	Electoral Votes for Trump	Electoral Votes for Other
AZ	11	45%	50%	5%	5.0	5.5	0.5
CO	9	47%	44%	9%	4.2	4.0	0.8
All	538				257	253	27

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What's next?



Start a conversation.
Build awareness.

For a copy of tonight's PowerPoint go to
LWVRosevillearea.org