

# Reason for abolishing the electoral college politics essay



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The Electoral College has the job of officially electing the United States President. After the popular vote is counted by each state, the “electors” will then cast their vote. Electors are apportioned to each state and the District of Columbia. The number of electors in each state is equal to the number of members of Congress to which the state is entitled. The biggest controversy over this system is that it does not represent the democratic system as it should. There have been elections in which the nation’s popular vote did not win because of the Electoral College. Although this system has served the United State since 1787, it has become unfair in many ways and it is time to develop a new process.

The Electoral College system was established in the constitution by the Founding Fathers. This system forms the very beginning and basis of the United States’ national elections and is; therefore, important to this country’s history. It is made up of 538 members and a candidate must receive a majority of 270 electoral votes to win the election. Electors usually become pledged to one of the presidential candidates running. When people go to the ballot on voting day and pick their favorite candidate, they are really choosing the electors for their state, this is also known as “state by state bias.” The president and vice president are being directly voted on by the electors and indirectly voted by the people. Although this system is a major part of this country’s history it has also developed a dislike by many for important reasons and it is time for a change in the United States election process.

The Electoral College was great when it was first introduced because voters did not have the advanced technology that we have today. They were not

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able to learn enough about the candidates to truly know which one to vote for. The electors on the other hand were slightly more educated than the average American and their job was to learn about these candidates so they could make the smart decision and represent their state well when it came time. Voters now have the access to education, television, radio, the internet, and newspapers to learn about their potential president. This clearly shows that the Electoral College is less useful to our nation than it used to be. The people in our world today want to be well represented and have their vote actually count, but with this system still in use they are not getting their full representation.

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This chart shows the majority of the United States can agree that the Electoral College should be abolished. The Republicans tend to lean more to keeping the system, but for the most part it is unflavored. There are several reasons the Electoral College may be called "unfair," but three of those reasons stand out over the rest.

The first reason is the fact that this system gives more weight to votes cast in small states. The Senate delegates two electors to each state; therefore, there is no need to further protect the small states. The government feels that if the smaller states were not given more electors then the candidates would focus all their time on the most populous states. The government requires candidates to appeal to all fifty states, so this problem should not be an issue. If every state was given an equal number of electors then every

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state would have the same appeal. The Electoral College is creating the problem that it was supposed to fix, but just reversed. The candidates focus their attention on the states that have the largest number of electors which is no different than focusing their attention on the most populous states. The more electors a state is represented by the more powerful it is in the Electoral College system. New Jersey, although quite small, is represented by fourteen electors, but Minnesota, a state much larger than New Jersey, is only represented by three electors. This cannot be fair to the people of Minnesota, and this is not the only state that has this problem.

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It is easy to see in this Electoral College map that several states are underrepresented for their size while many of the smaller states are overrepresented. This does not settle well for many people in the states that have a small number of electoral votes. The Electoral College is supposed to make the system of voting fair and representative of all the people in the nation, but it fails to do that job. In his novel, *Election Reform*, Alan Marzilli stated, “ Despite the passage of voter rights laws, many people feel that these laws on the books do not do enough to protect the rights of every eligible citizen to vote” (Marzilli 23). This is quite unfair to all large states that have a huge population. The Electoral College system is choosing the smaller states over them because they feel they need to be protected. The smallness of a state should not be considered if the system delegates an equal number of electors to each state.

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This bar graph shows each state's population weight on one electoral vote. It is also easy to see which states have the highest number of electors. This is not based on the size or

population of the state, but more or less its electoral power. File: State population per electoral vote. png

In 2004, California had a total of fifty-five electoral votes for its population of 34 million people, but Wyoming who has a population of 50 million people was only given three electoral votes. The difference in the two states population and electoral power is clearly unfair to the people

The Electoral College also creates an issue with its "winner take all" method. The winner take all system basically means exactly what it says. The candidate who receives the majority of the votes is the winner of the election; therefore, the people who disagree with the majority of their state will not be represented. Although this system of voting is great for ensuring the popular candidate wins the election, it frequently underrepresents the minority. This becomes a major issue in the elections that will have a large effect on the United States because people want to feel that they are having a say in who leads our country. The winner take all system also discourages candidates from campaigning in every state. If a candidate knows they already have a state's vote or if they know the state is already going to vote for their opponent then they will make no effort to visit that state. "

Democratic candidates have little incentive to spend time in strictly Republican states, like Texas, even if many Democrats live there" (Concerns with the Electoral College). This is unfair to states because it bluntly leaves

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them out of the presidential campaigning. Each state is supposed to be equally involved in the election, but they are not because of the Electoral College.

Lastly, this system also allows a candidate, who does not have the popular vote, to win the election. If candidate A gets the vote from the majority of the states, but those states are ones with a small elector number while the candidate B wins over the biggest elector states then that candidate B will win the election. This situation has occurred several times in our nation. In 1876, Rutherford B. Hayes lost the popular vote to Samuel J. Tilden by 250, 000, but he won in the electoral vote by one making him the next president. In 1888, Benjamin Harrison lost the popular vote by more than 90, 000 votes, but he won by sixty-five votes in the Electoral College which made him the winner of that election. In 2000, George W. Bush won the presidential election by five electoral votes, but lost to Al Gore in the popular vote by 540, 000 votes. This instance made it hard for the people of the nation to feel that they actually had a say in the presidential election. Their popular vote was being discarded because of this Electoral College system. If a state has a majority of Democratic voters then the Republicans do not have a chance in winning the electoral vote for their state. This makes the system unfair because Republicans are not being represented in this state's vote. The republicans still have a slight chance because " there is no constitution provision or federal law that requires electors to vote according to the results of the popular vote in their state" (U. S. Electoral College: Who are the Electors? How do They Vote?). It is very rare for an elector to vote differently than the state they represent because they usually hold a

leadership position in the state's majority political party. In U. S. history 99% of the time electors do choose the states popular vote. In other words, the minority in a state is not being represented and there is not anything they can do about it.

The Electoral College has many reasons it's considered a bad system, but it still has a good side as well. One reason why the U. S. should keep this method in use is the fact that it " contributes to the political stability of the nation by encouraging a two-party system" (Kimberling). This system makes it very difficult if not impossible for any other smaller parties to emerge and win the popular vote. It also makes the two political parties eager to find these " minor" parties and persuade them to join their parties, so they have a better chance in winning. Small parties are usually forced to compromise their " radical" beliefs because otherwise they do not stand a chance. If the government eventually decides to abolish the Electoral College, the small parties that have grown over the years will emerge quickly. This could be an issue that affects the U. S. worse than people being underrepresented. This is a major reason it has not been abolished because people are afraid of what the results will be in the next election. It could lead to no majority vote because of all the small parties, but it could also lead to great results and an improvement this country desperately needed.

The Electoral College is a system that has been with this country for many, many generations and just like anything it has its pros and cons. The system was wonderful when it was first created because the people of the U. S. did not have the ability to make a smart decision when casting their vote. People were able to decide which party they represented and would just vote for the <https://assignbuster.com/reason-for-abolishing-the-electoral-college-politics-essay/>

candidate that represented them, but that does not mean it was a good choice. If the people had no access to listen to the candidate's plans for their country they could not make a decision between the two. They might vote for the candidate of their party, but he could turn out to be a terrible president. The Electoral College was great in this way because electors knew which candidates were going to best represent the country and could then give this information to the people. People could trust electors to guide them to the right vote.

The Electoral College also had intentions to make their system fair to all states. They would make sure the candidates campaigned to every state including the ones with the smallest population. At the time this sounded great because obviously candidates are not going to give all their time if any to the small states. As the U. S. improved and states became more permanent in which political party they would define themselves as, this system got worse. Candidates running for president knew which state would vote for them as well as which state had the most electoral power. This resulted in candidates focusing their attention on the states they needed most and less on the states that had hardly any electoral votes or were guaranteed to vote for them. The states candidates pay attention to are what we call swing states. Swing states never have a set party or candidate they will vote for, so the nominees running will do everything they can to win them over. This leaves out all the states who already have an assured vote and the ones who have hardly any electoral votes. Over time, the Electoral College has created the same problem it tried to fix when it was established.



The system also used the winner take all system, which would ensure the candidate with the majority of votes to win the election. This was another reason it was going to be a good addition to the elections. The winner take all method is still a great one today, but people have that it does not represent the minority in each state. A state that has a majority of republicans and a minority of democrats then the democrats in that state are not going to be represented. For example, Texas is a republican state which makes the democrats in that state the minority. This may discourage many of the democrats to vote in Texas because the republicans will win no matter what. Every citizen is supposed to feel that they are being represented in the election and have the need to go cast their vote on voting day, but this is not the case for the minority party in the state. One of the main reasons for creating the Electoral College was to make voting fair and representative of every citizen in the U. S., but that is not the case.

Although the Electoral College proves to have many bad qualities that could eventually lead it to being abolished, it still has some that may keep it in use for a while longer. The Electoral College has always ensured the United States to have two specific parties. This is a very important reason to keep the system going. If the U. S. government decided to abolish this then they will most likely experience an emergence of several smaller parties. Each party having a slightly different view on the nation would not result in a clear popular vote. The elections have had many close calls over the years between just two candidates so it would be hard to imagine the results if there were several nominees running. The Electoral College makes it almost impossible for a third party to have a chance because they do not have the

ability to get the most electoral votes. Usually parties will try to compromise with them so they will vote for their candidate. The third parties have to agree to this because otherwise their vote will not be represented.

Abolishing the Electoral College could be worse for the U. S. than keeping it. Some people strongly agree with getting rid of the poor system, but others feel it is a great way to run the U. S. elections and it would be a bad decision to abolish it.

Clearly, it is a tough call as to whether or not abolish the Electoral College, but the system has done more bad than good in the recent years. It had a great start and helped the U. S. get on the right track, but not every system is perfect forever and it is time to establish a new one. People are afraid about what will happen if the government does take it out, but that should not stop them from trying it. The United States has grown in almost every way and handled millions of new developments and there should be no doubt that it can handle a new voting system.