

# PRO/CON: Is it time to do away with the Electoral College?

By Don Kusler and Merrill Matthews, Tribune News Service, adapted by Newsela staff on 04.26.19

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View of U.S. presidential poll votes at the Empire State Building on November 9, 2016, in New York City. Republican Donald Trump defeated Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton to become the 45th president of the United States. Photo by: William Volcov/Brazil Photo Press/LatinContent/Getty Images

## **PRO: A popular vote gives power to the people**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The time has come to change or end the Electoral College system of selecting the U.S. president.

Each state has a certain number of votes in the Electoral College, depending on the size of its population. For example, Wyoming has 585,000 people, so it gets three votes. California has 39,000,000 people. It gets 55 votes. The candidate who gets 270 electoral votes wins the presidency. In almost every state, a candidate who wins 50.1 percent of the popular vote is awarded 100 percent of its electoral votes.

## **From A Different Time**

The Electoral College is an outdated result of a constitutional compromise from a different America. There were fewer states back then. And the popular vote counting all American votes didn't exist.

The Electoral College's original goal was to make sure smaller states have enough power. It protected them from the majority forcing their will on them.

The legislative branch already balances power among states with different populations. The U.S. Senate allows each state two senators. The House of Representatives, however, gives electoral votes based on population. The House and the Senate are the two lawmaking bodies.

### **Balancing Effect**

Another balancing effect is the Senate's enormous power beyond shaping laws. It also shapes the judicial branch and approves key executive branch leaders. This gives smaller states more voice in government.

However, the Electoral College system can produce a government that is unbalanced.

Imagine if a president didn't receive a majority of the popular vote. Also, imagine the Senate is controlled by the president's allies. These senators' states could have smaller populations than other states.

In this situation, states with fewer people have enormous governing power.

The current system also encourages presidential candidates to hunt for votes from a small number of states. These states have larger numbers of electoral votes.

### **Efforts For Change**

There are several efforts to correct this. One is changing the Constitution. Another effort is the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact. This agreement says states would award their Electoral College votes to the popular vote's winner. It wouldn't matter who won their state.

The Electoral College system can create an imbalance. It could negatively affect your life. The system must change.

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### **CON: The Electoral College protects the few from the many**

DALLAS, Texas — The Electoral College helps create a stable government. Changing the Electoral College would be wrong.

The American system is unlike others. States, not people, are the original source of power. The 13 original states created the country's government.

Less populated states were concerned they would be overshadowed. They demanded protections within the Constitution. Giving every state two senators was one protection. The Electoral College

was another.

## **Protection From Majority Rule**

Both compromises protected smaller states against the majority.

Because states created the government, the Constitution gives states, not people, the right to choose the president. The Electoral College helps make sure every state matters.

For example, California has 55 electoral votes. That's because it has more people than the 21 smallest states combined. Yet those 21 states have a total of 92 electoral votes. That's more than one-third of the votes needed to win.

Under a majority-wins election, candidates would spend most of their time in the most populated states and cities. They'd hardly travel to areas with less people.

## **Recent Election Results**

The Electoral College vote has usually reflected the popular vote. Since 1900, only the 2000 and 2016 elections resulted in the winner having fewer overall votes than the loser.

Democrats lost both times, which is why they want to change the system.

Democrats are trying to create the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC). If passed, the NPVIC law would mean a state's electors vote for whoever wins the national popular vote.

If my state votes in favor of a candidate, I want my state's electors supporting that candidate. I don't want them voting for someone who won another state.

The U.S. Constitution and government have served as a model for stable government. Do we really want to reverse that success story just so Democrats can win an election?

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