

The Electoral College

Members of the Constitutional Convention explored many possible methods of choosing a president. One suggestion was to have the Congress choose the president. A second suggestion was to have the State Legislatures select the president. A third suggestion was to elect the president by a direct popular vote.

The first suggestion was voted down due to suspicion of corruption, fears of irrevocably dividing the Congress and concerns of upsetting the balance of power between the executive and the legislative branches. The second idea was voted down because the Framers felt that federal authority would be compromised in exchange for votes. And the third idea was rejected out of concern that the voters would only select candidates from their state without adequate information about candidates outside of the state. The prevailing suggestion was to have a College of Electors select a president through an indirect election.

The Facts:

- The Electoral College is comprised of 538 electors
- Each state is allotted a number of electors equal to the number of its U.S. Representatives plus its two senators (Washington, D.C. has three electors)
- The political parties of each state submit a list of individuals pledged to their candidates for president that is equal in number to the number of electoral votes for the state to the State's chief election official
- Whichever presidential candidate gets the most popular votes in a State wins all of the Electors (known as "*winner takes all*") for that state except for the states of Maine and Nebraska which award electoral votes proportionately
- Electors are not required to vote for the candidate they pledged to vote for
- Changing the system would require amending the Constitution

Assignment:

Use the information provided in addition to your knowledge to write a persuasive essay in which you argue whether the Electoral College is the best method of electing a President. In your essay be sure to include the following:

- I. Historical perspective of the Electoral College
- II. Pros and Cons of the system
- III. Your argument for or against the Electoral College?
 - If you support it, explain why
 - If you oppose it, propose an alternative

Sources:

http://www.votescount.com/books/elec_coll.htm

As you write, consider the following:

- Positive effects
- Audience
- Organization
- Supporting details
- Clarity
- Grammar and Style