



The Pros and Cons of Using the Electoral College to Elect the President and Vice President

The Electoral College is the system the United States uses to elect the president and vice president. Instead of a direct popular vote where every individual's vote is counted equally across the country, the Electoral College system assigns a certain number of electoral votes to each state, based on the size of its population. Candidates must win the majority of these electoral votes to become president. Let's look at some pros and cons of this system.

PROS OF THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

1. Balances Power Between Large and Small States

- The Electoral College ensures that smaller states still have a significant voice in presidential elections. Without it, candidates might only focus on the most populated states like California, Texas, or Florida, ignoring the needs of smaller or less populated regions. The system helps distribute attention across the entire country.

2. Promotes a Two-Party System

- By making it difficult for smaller parties to win electoral votes, the Electoral College encourages the formation of two major political parties. This simplifies the election process and makes it easier for voters to understand their options, reducing the complexity of having many candidates to choose from.

3. Prevents Regional Candidates From Dominating

- The system requires candidates to gain support across many states, not just one particular region. This forces candidates to appeal to a broad range of people, rather than focusing only on one area of the country. It prevents extreme regional interests from having too much power.

4. Historically Stable

- The Electoral College has been in use for over 200 years and has produced a peaceful transition of power through many elections. The system is familiar, and changing it could lead to confusion or unintended consequences.

CONS OF THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

1. Possibility of Winning the Popular Vote but Losing the Election

- One of the biggest criticisms of the Electoral College is that it can result in a candidate winning the national popular vote (getting more overall votes from people across the country) but still losing the election because they didn't win enough electoral votes. This happened in several elections, most recently in 2016.

2. Focus on Swing States

- Because of the way the system is set up, candidates tend to focus their campaigns on "swing states," or states that could go either way in the election, like Ohio or Pennsylvania. This means that other states, especially those that consistently vote for one party, get less attention, and voters in those states may feel ignored.

3. Overrepresentation of Smaller States

- While the Electoral College was designed to give smaller states a voice, some critics argue that it gives too much power to states with smaller populations. For example, voters in Wyoming have more electoral vote influence than voters in California when you look at the number of voters per electoral vote.

4. Discourages Voter Turnout

- In states that are firmly one party or the other (like heavily Republican or Democratic states), some people feel their votes don't matter because the outcome is predictable. This can lead to lower voter turnout since people may think their vote won't make a difference.

CONCLUSION

The Electoral College has its advantages, such as giving smaller states influence and promoting national unity, but it also has drawbacks, like the possibility of the popular vote not aligning with the electoral outcome. Some people believe it ensures a more balanced, stable system, while others argue that it's outdated and undemocratic. Debate continues about whether the U.S. should keep the Electoral College or switch to a system where the president is chosen by a direct popular vote.



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INSTRUCTIONS: After reading the article above, answer the following questions.

1. What is the purpose of the Electoral College in U.S. presidential elections?
2. What is one “pro” argument you found most impactful? Why?
3. What is one “con” argument you found most impactful? Why?

“Should the U.S. continue to use the Electoral College System to elect its President and Vice President?”

Write a persuasive essay convincing others to keep or get rid of the Electoral College system.
Use evidence, examples, and reason to support your claims.