

Electing the President

The Electoral College System

Founders' Concerns

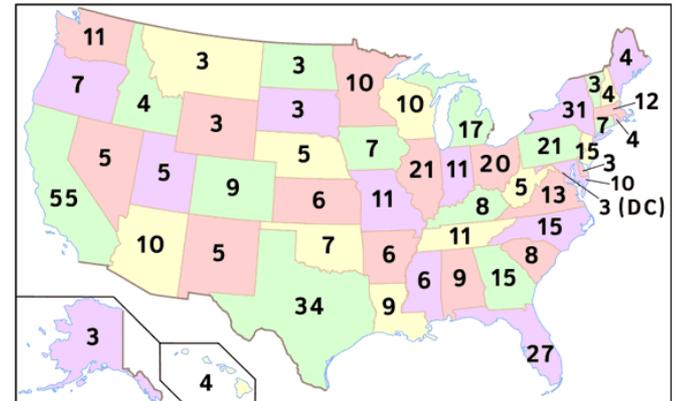
- ▶ Fear of Congressional Election– *why?*
- ▶ Fear of Direct Popular Vote– *why?*



States & their Electors

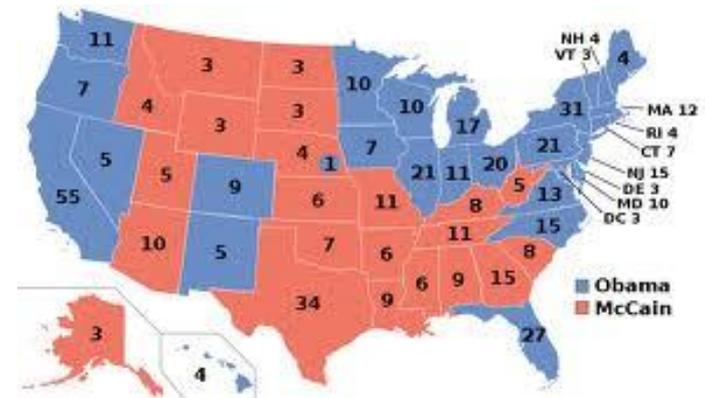
- ▶ *Electors: members of a party chosen in each state who officially elect the President*
- ▶ Each state:
 - * 2 Senators + # Representatives = Electoral Votes
 - * State legislatures decide how electors are chosen

*What's the total number of electors in the Electoral College?
(Hint: There are 3 extra for D.C.!)*



“Winner–Take–All” System

- ▶ Majority of popular vote = ALL of electoral votes!
- Party whose candidate wins the largest amount of popular votes wins all of the electoral votes for that state
- (EXCEPT Maine and Nebraska–divide proportionally!)



If no clear majority... the House decides the election

Election Timeline

- ▶ Presidential Election every 4 years

November: voters cast ballots

December: electors meet in state capitals to vote
(Send tallies to Congress)

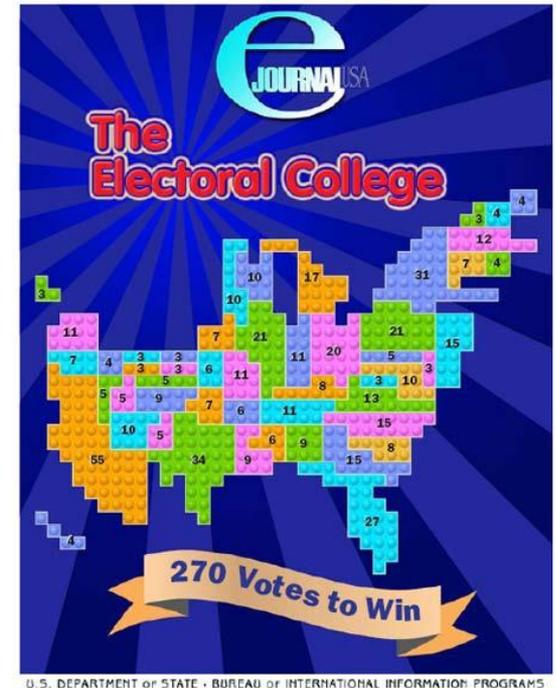
January: Congress counts electoral votes

Jan 20: Candidate who won majority is “sworn in”



Benefits of Electoral College System

- ▶ 1) Candidate must have broad appeal
 - Not simply regional or local appeal
 - *If directly elected by popular vote, where do you think candidates would spend most of their time campaigning?*
- ▶ 2) Promotes federalism
 - Keeping states involved!
- ▶ 3) Discourages voter fraud
 - No benefit to it– same amount of electoral votes regardless



Issues with Electoral College System

- ▶ 1) Winner–Take–All is unfair
 - Makes it possible for someone to lose the popular vote but still win the electoral vote

2) Third Party Candidates

Can change or prevent majority

3) Election by the House

All states counted equally (1 vote)

2000

■ George W. Bush (R) ✓

Electoral 271

Popular 50,456,062

■ Albert Gore, Jr. (D)

Electoral 266

Popular 50,996,582

(R) = Republican

(D) = Democratic