

Socrates Café

Wednesday, April 17, 2019

*Our Socrates Café is an opportunity to exchange thoughtful ideas and experiences
All political, economic, and social points of view are welcomed and encouraged.
The only ground rule is that we will be polite to those opinions that differ from our own.*

Should the Electoral College Be Abolished?

Article II Section I of the Constitution determines how our President and Vice-President are elected:

Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress: but no Senator or Representative, or Person holding an Office of Trust or Profit under the United States, shall be appointed an Elector.

The Senate has 100 senators and the House 435 Representatives. Additionally, the 23rd amendment, which was ratified in 1961, gives three electors to the District of Columbia. Therefore, there are 538 electoral votes. A majority, 270, of the *Electoral College* are needed for election.

Under Article II Section I the rules for naming electors are left to the individual states. Only two states, Nebraska (5) and Maine (4) do not have winner-take-all for Electoral College votes. They give the state-wide winner two and the winner of each Congressional District one.

In most elections the person who has won the popular vote has received the majority of the Electoral College votes and been elected president. However, in five elections (1824 Adams v. Jackson; 1876 Hayes v. Tilden; 1888 Harrison v. Tilden, 2000 Bush v. Gore, and most recently 2016 Trump v. Clinton, the person winning the popular vote was not elected president.

Should the Electoral College remain, or any of these frequently mentioned alternatives be adopted?

1. Pass a Constitution Amendment
2. Nationwide adoption of the Nebraska and Maine system
3. The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact

What are additional facts support or refute the desirability of each above alternative?

What advantage and disadvantage is there to leaving the Electoral College in place, as is?

What do you think the best system above (or any other) is for the country?

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|  Iowa | 3,123,899 | New York ²⁸¹ | 8,550,405 |
|  Utah | 2,995,919 | | |
|  Mississippi | 2,992,333 | Los Angeles | 3,971,883 |
|  Arkansas | 2,978,204 | | |
|  Kansas | 2,911,641 | Chicago | 2,720,546 |
|  Nevada | 2,890,845 | | |
|  New Mexico | 2,085,109 | Houston ¹⁷¹ | 2,296,224 |
|  Nebraska | 1,896,190 | | |
|  West Virginia | 1,844,128 | Philadelphia ¹¹ | 1,567,442 |
|  Idaho | 1,654,930 | | |
|  Hawaii | 1,431,603 | Phoenix | 1,563,025 |
|  New Hampshire | 1,330,608 | | |
|  Maine | 1,329,328 | San Antonio | 1,469,845 |
|  Rhode Island | 1,056,298 | | |
|  Montana | 1,032,949 | San Diego | 1,394,928 |
|  Delaware | 945,934 | | |
|  South Dakota | 858,469 | Dallas | 1,300,092 |
|  North Dakota | 756,927 | | |
|  Alaska | 738,432 | San Jose | 1,026,908 |
|  District of Columbia | 672,228 | | |
|  Vermont | 626,042 | Austin | 931,830 |
|  Wyoming | 586,107 | | |

Wyoming through Montana has 3 electoral votes each.

Rhode Island has 4 electoral votes. Nebraska and New Mexico have 5

The rest of the states listed above have 6

Top 5 cities have more population in aggregate than total population of the 12 lowest states and the District of Columbia

New York City, alone, has more population than the total population of the 9 lowest states and the District of Columbia.

Hillary Clinton won a plurality (not the majority) of the popular vote by 2,868,686 votes.

NYC and LA together voted 3,786,391 more for Mrs. Clinton. That is 917,705 more than her national plurality

NYC, Chicago, and LA voted collectively 4,730,895 more for Mrs. Clinton

NYC: Clinton 4,556,124 Trump 2,819,534 Delta = 1,736,590

Los Angeles: Clinton 2,464,534 Trump 769,743 Delta = 2,049,791

Chicago: Clinton 3,090,729 Trump 2,146,015 Delta = 944,514

The National Popular Vote bill would guarantee the Presidency to the candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. It has been enacted into law in 12 states plus the District of Columbia with 181 electoral votes (CA, CO CT, DC, HI, IL, MA, MD, NJ, NY, RI, VT, WA) or 67 percent of the number needed. The bill will take effect when enacted by states with 98 more electoral votes. It has passed at least one house in 11 additional states with 89 electoral votes (AR, AZ, DE, ME, MI, NC, NM, NV, OK, OR)