**Handout 4-** *What are the Pros and Cons of the Electoral College process?*

In its over 200 year history, the Electoral College has received its share of criticism and praise. The following is a list of the most frequently made comments about the Electoral College.

**Pros:**

* Requires a distribution of popular support to be elected president.
* The winning candidate must demonstrate both a sufficient popular support to govern as well as a sufficient distribution (among the states) of that support.
* Strengthens the status of minority groups- the votes of small minorities within a state may make the difference between winning all of a state’s electoral votes or none of them.
* Enhances the political stability of the nation by promoting a two-party system- protects that presidency from impassioned but transitory third party movements and forces the major parties to absorb the interests of minorities.
* Maintains the federal system of government and representation

**Cons:**

• There is a possibility of electing a minority president- one way for this to happen would be if the country was so deeply divided politically that three or more presidential candidates split the vote and no one obtained a necessary majority

• There is a risk of having "faithless" Electors- Electors who won’t be loyal to their party or candidate

• The Electoral College may depress voter turnout- because each state is only entitled to so many electoral votes regardless of voter turnout, there is no incentive for states to encourage voter participation

• Does not accurately reflect the national popular vote because it does not elect a candidate by a direct popular vote

**How many electoral votes does each state have?**

**(Updated to reflect the 2010 census)**

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| **AL: 9**  **AK: 3**  **AZ: 11**  **AR: 6**  **CA: 55**  **CO: 9**  **CT: 7**  **DE: 3**  **DC: 3**  **FL: 29**  **GA: 16**  **HI: 4**  **ID: 4**  **IL: 20**  **IN: 11**  **IA: 6**  **KS: 6**  **KY: 8**  **LA: 8** | **ME: 4**  **MD: 10**  **MA: 11**  **MI: 16**  **MN: 10**  **MS: 6**  **MO: 10**  **MT: 3**  **NE: 5**  **NV: 6**  **NH: 4**  **NJ: 14**  **NM: 5**  **NY: 29**  **NC: 15**  **ND: 3**  **OH: 18**  **OK: 7**  **OR: 7** | **PA: 20**  **RI: 4**  **SC: 9**  **SD: 3**  **TN: 11**  **TX: 38**  **UT: 6**  **VT: 3**  **VA: 13**  **WA: 12**  **WV: 5**  **WI: 10**  **WY: 3**  **TOTAL: 538** |

Source: Database of Educational Resources K-12,(n.d) .North Carolina Education Consortium The Electoral College  Retrieved from:  http://civics.sites.unc.edu/files/2012/05/ElectoralCollege1.pdf