**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