

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)

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