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## Chapter 1 : Electoral College | Wex Legal Dictionary / Encyclopedia | LII / Legal Information Institute

*At the Intersection of Politics, Science, Faith, and Reason. (A website by Trevor Grant Thomas designed to inform the world from a Christian conservative worldview, and to make new and better disciples of Jesus Christ.)*

Technically, this is not the case, due to the existence of the electoral college, a constitutional relic of the 18th century. The electoral college is the name given a group of "electors" who are nominated by political activists and party members within the states. On election day these electors, pledged to one or another candidate, are popularly elected. In December following the presidential vote the electors meet in their respective state capitals and cast ballots for president and vice president. To be elected, a president requires electoral votes. In recent history, the electors have never cast their ballots against the winner of the popular vote. For all intents and purposes, the electoral college vote, which for technical reasons is weighted in favor of whoever wins the popular election, increases the apparent majority of the winning candidate and lends legitimacy to the popular choice. It is still possible, however, that in a close race or a multiparty race the electoral college might not cast votes in favor of any candidate - in that event, the House of Representatives would choose the next president. While it has been the subject of mild controversy in recent years, it is also seen as a stabilizing force in the electoral system. Registered voters in the 50 states and the District of Columbia cast ballots for president and vice president on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November in a presidential election year. Technically, all the electors pledged to those candidates are elected. The District of Columbia, which has no voting representation in Congress, has three electoral votes. The electors meet and officially vote for president and vice president on the first Monday following the second Wednesday in December in a presidential election year. A majority of the vote is required for a candidate to be elected. Since there are electors, a minimum of is necessary to win the electoral college. If no candidate for president receives a majority of the electoral votes, the House of Representatives must determine the winner from among the top three vote-getters in the electoral college. In doing so, members of the House vote by states, with each state delegation casting one vote. If no candidate for vice president receives a majority of the electoral vote, the Senate must determine the winner from among the top two vote-getters in the electoral college. The president and vice president take their oath and assume office on the next January 20, following the election. Under the Constitution, each state is authorized to choose electors for president and vice president, the number always being the same as the combined number of U. With senators and representatives in the United States, plus three electors for the District of Columbia provided by the Twenty-third Amendment, the total electoral college vote is The following list shows how it stacks up in year

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## Chapter 2 : Congress for Kids: [Elections]: The Electoral College

*The Electoral College is a voting system that was devised when our first Congress failed to elect a President on its own, in After direct voting was deemed way too chaotic, our Founding Fathers created the electoral system.*

Many a time, passionate feelings are drawn up from pugnacious partisans. The months leading up to the election end up being the most politically charged of the last four years. For the general public, whether their interests lie in the candidates personally, or the issues at hand, polls show that a surprising majority of the public does not know how the election process truly works. Why is this a big deal? In order to have more people go to the poll, we need an informed electorate. Voters need to understand what is the Electoral College? Why does it exist? Who really chooses our President? How does the popular vote matter? Yet, to add confusion to the process, many states list only the Presidential contenders on the ballot and not the electors. Cracks in this system have led to some of the biggest presidential upsets in American history more on this later. I believe that the Electoral College is, now more than ever, necessary to ensure a proper election. Here is a brief introduction to the what the Electoral College is and how it plays in to the Presidential election process. What is the Electoral College? The Electoral College is a voting system that was devised when our first Congress failed to elect a President on its own, in After direct voting was deemed way too chaotic, our Founding Fathers created the electoral system. This is how it works: The body is as large as the Senate and House combined, plus three representatives from DC. It is their votes that truly matter, and the Electoral College originally intended for electors to pledge their allegiance more toward a party and not a candidate. However, like all things in government, it began to show flaws. Why do we even use it? When it comes to voting, one of the most important tenets is accurate representation of the people. The big problem with the Electoral College is that the electors do not always reflect the popular vote, most famously in the Bush v. This happened other times, too, such as in the case of Andrew Jackson v. John Quincy Adams election. However in this instance, Jackson won both categories, but the minimum votes for a majority in the Electoral College was not met. The decision went to Congress, who declared Adams the winner. Situations like these make it pretty clear to see why it angers some, because through the direct system of voting, the leader in the popular vote is intended to always win. Since they are partisan voters, the electors will take into account the interests of the party over that of the citizen. Previously, only some states held direct popular elections for the electors, and in other states, the state legislature decided on the electors. That was subsequently changed and now every state holds statewide popular elections for electors. Maine and Nebraska were the last two states to fold into this system. This was in and respectively. Forty-eight states and Washington, D. This means that one elector in each congressional district is selected by popular vote. The remaining two are selected by a statewide popular vote. Most interestingly, the electors who form the Electoral College never meet as one body, but cast their votes for the President and Vice President in their state capitals or district capitals Is there really a flawless voting system? To me the answer is probably not. In all honesty the Electoral College may have its faults, but I think the simplicity of it outweighs the rare cases where it fails. The candidate with the popular vote has only ever lost 4 times in 46 presidential elections. Whether you love it or hate it, I have a feeling it is here to stay. Maybe this is the election that will inform the public about the Electoral College. The upcoming election year will definitely be an interesting one to observe. Shaunak Vaidya is a high school student in the Bay Area. More people are reading India Currents than ever but advertising revenues across the media are falling fast. So you can see why we need to ask for your help. Our independent, community journalism takes a lot of time, money and hard work to produce. But we do it because we believe our perspective matters â€” because it might well be your perspective, too. If everyone who reads our reporting, who likes it, helps fund it, our future would be much more secure.

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## Chapter 3 : The Electoral College - A clear explanation

*In this complete guide to the electoral college, Longley and Peirce explain how the U.S. electoral college was created, how it has evolved, how it has influenced various "crisis" elections (including ), how it works today, and how it might affect future elections.*

United States congressional apportionment State population per electoral vote for the 50 states and Washington D. Each representative represents on average , persons. The least populous state which is Wyoming , according to the census has three electors; thus, D. This is because each of these states is entitled to one representative and two senators. Nomination[ edit ] The custom of allowing recognized political parties to select a slate of prospective electors developed early. In contemporary practice, each presidential-vice presidential ticket has an associated slate of potential electors. Then on Election Day, the voters select a ticket and thereby select the associated electors. In some states, the electors are nominated by voters in primaries, the same way other presidential candidates are nominated. In some states, such as Oklahoma , Virginia and North Carolina , electors are nominated in party conventions. In Pennsylvania , the campaign committee of each candidate names their respective electoral college candidates an attempt to discourage faithless electors. Varying by state, electors may also be elected by state legislatures, or appointed by the parties themselves. However, the Congress may remove this disqualification by a two-thirds vote in each House. Since the Civil War , all states have chosen presidential electors by popular vote. This process has been normalized to the point the names of the electors appear on the ballot in only eight states: Maine and Nebraska use the "congressional district method", selecting one elector within each congressional district by popular vote and selecting the remaining two electors by a statewide popular vote. This method has been used in Maine since and in Nebraska since In most states, voters choose a slate of electors, and only a few states list on the ballot the names of proposed electors. In some states, if a voter wants to write in a candidate for president, the voter is also required to write in the names of proposed electors. After the election, each state prepares seven Certificates of Ascertainment, each listing the candidates for president and vice president, their pledged electors, and the total votes each candidacy received. The Certificates of Ascertainment are mandated to carry the State Seal, and the signature of the Governor in the case of the District of Columbia, the Certificate is signed by the Mayor of the District of Columbia. Hayes and William A. Wheeler for the State of Louisiana The Electoral College never meets as one body. Electors meet in their respective state capitals electors for the District of Columbia meet within the District on the Monday after the second Wednesday in December, at which time they cast their electoral votes on separate ballots for president and vice president. This document sets forth who was chosen to cast the electoral votes. The attendance of the electors is taken and any vacancies are noted in writing. The next step is the selection of a president or chairman of the meeting, sometimes also with a vice chairman. The electors sometimes choose a secretary, often not himself an elector, to take the minutes of the meeting. In many states, political officials give short speeches at this point in the proceedings. When the time for balloting arrives, the electors choose one or two people to act as tellers. Some states provide for the placing in nomination of a candidate to receive the electoral votes the candidate for president of the political party of the electors. Each elector submits a written ballot with the name of a candidate for president. In New Jersey , the electors cast ballots by checking the name of the candidate on a pre-printed card; in North Carolina , the electors write the name of the candidate on a blank card. The tellers count the ballots and announce the result. The next step is the casting of the vote for vice president, which follows a similar pattern. Each Certificate of Vote must be signed by all of the electors and a Certificate of Ascertainment must be attached to each of the Certificates of Vote. Each Certificate of Vote must include the names of those who received an electoral vote for either the office of president or of vice president. The electors certify the Certificates of Vote and copies of the Certificates are then sent in the following fashion: A staff member of the President of the Senate collects the Certificates of Vote as they arrive and prepares them for the joint session

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of the Congress. The Certificates are arranged " unopened " in alphabetical order and placed in two special mahogany boxes. Alabama through Missouri including the District of Columbia are placed in one box and Montana through Wyoming are placed in the other box. Faithless elector An elector may vote for whomever he or she wishes for each office provided that at least one of their votes president or vice president is for a person who is not a resident of the same state as themselves. Twenty-nine states plus the District of Columbia have passed laws to punish faithless electors, although none have ever been enforced. Many constitutional scholars claim that state restrictions would be struck down if challenged based on Article II and the Twelfth Amendment. Blair , U. Electors who break their pledge are called " faithless electors. Over the course of 58 presidential elections since , only 0. As stated in the ruling, electors are acting as a functionary of the state, not the federal government. Therefore, states have the right to govern the process of choosing electors. The constitutionality of state laws punishing electors for actually casting a faithless vote, rather than refusing to pledge, has never been decided by the Supreme Court. However, in his dissent in Ray v. Blair, Justice Robert Jackson wrote: Faithless electors have never changed the outcome of any presidential election.

Contingent election The Twelfth Amendment mandates Congress assemble in joint session to count the electoral votes and declare the winners of the election. The vice president and the Speaker of the House sit at the podium, with the vice president in the seat of the Speaker of the House. Each house appoints two tellers to count the vote normally one member of each political party. Relevant portions of the Certificate of Vote are read for each state, in alphabetical order. An objection supported by at least one senator and one representative will be followed by the suspension of the joint session and by separate debates and votes in each House of Congress; after both Houses deliberate on the objection, the joint session is resumed. In that case, the votes from the State in question are simply ignored. The votes of Arkansas and Louisiana were rejected in the presidential election of Gore, who as vice president was required to preside over his own Electoral College defeat by five electoral votes , denied the objections, all of which were raised by only several representatives and would have favored his candidacy, after no senators would agree to jointly object. Objections were again raised in the vote count of the elections, and on that occasion the document was presented by one representative and one senator. Although the joint session was suspended, the objections were quickly disposed of and rejected by both Houses of Congress. After the certificates from all states are read and the respective votes are counted, the presiding officer simply announces the final result of the vote and, provided the required absolute majority of votes was achieved, declares the names of the persons elected president and vice president. This announcement concludes the joint session and formalizes the recognition of the president-elect and of the vice president-elect. The senators then depart from the House Chamber. The final tally is printed in the Senate and House journals.

Contingent presidential election by House[ edit ] The Twelfth Amendment requires the House of Representatives to go into session immediately to vote for a president if no candidate for president receives a majority of the electoral votes since , of the electoral votes. In this event, the House of Representatives is limited to choosing from among the three candidates who received the most electoral votes for president. Each state delegation votes en bloc"each delegation having a single vote; the District of Columbia does not receive a vote. A candidate must receive an absolute majority of state delegation votes i. Additionally, delegations from at least two thirds of all the states must be present for voting to take place. The House continues balloting until it elects a president. The House of Representatives has chosen the president only twice: Contingent vice presidential election by Senate[ edit ] In a contingent presidential election, the House of Representatives, voting by state, elects the president, choosing from among the three candidates who received the most electoral votes. In a contingent vice presidential election, the Senate elects the vice president, choosing between the two candidates who received the largest number of electoral votes. In this election, each senator casts an individual vote. In both elections, an absolute majority is required to win: The District of Columbia would not participate in a contingent election for president or vice president as it is not a state. The Senate is limited to choosing from the two candidates who received the most electoral votes for vice president. Normally this would mean two candidates, one less than the number of candidates available

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in the House vote. However, the text is written in such a way that all candidates with the most and second most electoral votes are eligible for the Senate election – this number could theoretically be larger than two. The Senate votes in the normal manner in this case. However, two-thirds of the senators must be present for voting to take place. Additionally, the Twelfth Amendment states a "majority of the whole number" of senators currently 51 of is necessary for election. In that instance, the Senate adopted an alphabetical roll call and voting aloud. The rules further stated, "[I]f a majority of the number of senators shall vote for either the said Richard M. Johnson or Francis Granger, he shall be declared by the presiding officer of the Senate constitutionally elected Vice President of the United States"; the Senate chose Johnson. Section 3 also specifies Congress may statutorily provide for who will be acting president if there is neither a president-elect nor a vice president-elect in time for the inauguration. Under the Presidential Succession Act of 1947, the Speaker of the House would become acting president until either the House selects a president or the Senate selects a vice president. Neither of these situations has ever occurred. Current electoral vote distribution [ edit ]

Electoral votes EV allocations for the , and presidential elections.

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### Chapter 4 : How the Electoral College Can Turn a Definite Presidential Winner Into a Loser | The Fiscal Times

*In the brief but comprehensive Electoral College Primer , Lawrence D. Longley and Neal R. Peirce show why Jefferson's assessment was right on target. They have a keen understanding of the electoral college's vulnerabilities.*

Join Our Mailing List! How is it possible for the electoral vote to produce a different result than the nation-wide popular vote? How did the terms "Electors" and "Electoral College" come into usage? Should the Electoral College be reformed? Have you considered that the Electoral College creates political stability by encouraging the two-party system? People actually vote for a group of electors when they go to the polls on Election Day. In many states the ballot lists only the names of the nominees and not the names of the electors, so many people believe they are voting for the president. In 1787, the delegates to the Constitutional Convention decided on this system of indirect election of the president. Long debates took place about how to make sure the best candidate would be chosen as president. Some delegates supported a direct election by citizens. Others favored having Congress choose the president. Still others thought that state legislatures should make the choice. The delegates finally agreed on a compromise. Electors chosen by each state would elect the president. Ordinary citizens in each state would have a say this way, but the final decision would be made by people who were better informed about the candidates and the issues. The Electoral College, this system of presidential electors, is still in effect today, although some adjustments have been made over the years. The electors voted for two candidates at first. The one with the highest number of votes became president. The one with the second-highest number became vice president. In 1796, political foes were chosen for the two posts -- Federalist John Adams for president and Democratic-Republican Thomas Jefferson for vice president. There was a tie between Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr in the next election. The House of Representatives had to decide who would be president. The fact that the system needed to be adjusted was clear. The 12th Amendment to the Constitution was passed in 1804. Candidates are now nominated to run only for president or only for vice president. Electors vote for president and vice president separately. How the states elect electors has changed, too. Some states held direct popular elections for the electors in the beginning. The state legislatures made the choice in other states. All the states gradually adopted direct popular elections for electors. There were no political parties when the Constitution was written. Voters no longer choose individual electors. Voters choose between party slates. Political parties want winner-take-all elections for electors. All the states except Maine use this winner-take-all system today.

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## Chapter 5 : The Electoral College Debate

*"The Electoral College has never worked the way it was supposed to work," Alex Keyssar, professor of history and social policy at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, told Florida Weekly.*

With a few slight edits, I wrote: Frustrated with the outcome of the last presidential election, especially since Al Gore won the popular vote, some in our country have cast a wary eye at the method by which we choose our president. Murmurings against the Electoral College began even before George W. Bush was sworn in and they have picked up recently as we approach the presidential election. Significant members of Congress have even suggested abolishing the electoral college. Like-minded editorialists and media elites have joined in the fray. Upon being elected to the U. Senate, Hillary Clinton promised to introduce in the Senate a constitutional amendment to abolish the Electoral College. Most of those calling for a change offer no real alternatives other than allowing the popular vote to determine the winner. Within the last few weeks editorialists from The New York Times and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution also called for the abolition of the electoral college. Interestingly, those three proposals were rejected. Additionally, a nationwide election would encourage regionalism since the more populous areas of the country could form coalitions to elect president after president from their own region. With such regional preferentialism, lasting national unity would be nearly impossible. The Electoral College was the result of this investigation. Consequently, Alaska, the third least populous state, has only a single vote in the House, where California, the most populous state, has Therefore Alaska, a very important state in our union with all of its natural resources , has almost no power in the House to affect legislation. However, it has equal power in the Senate and there must be significant agreement or compromise for legislation to become law. Using the Electoral College system to determine the head of the Executive branch of our government maintains the same kind of balance reflected in the Legislative branch. The will of the people is taken into account, but the will of the states is also. So, while a very slight majority of the people chose Gore, a much more significant majority of states and regions chose Bush. The result, therefore, was a slight electoral victory for Bush. But both are founded in the principle of majority; and the effort of the Constitution is to preserve this principle in relation both to the people and the States, so that neither species of sovereignty or independence should be able to destroy the other. With final results still to come in or simple be counted--see the U. In other words, in spite of Hillary perhaps having a larger popular vote win that Gore, her electoral performance was much worse, and that is what matters in our constitutional republic. The counties won by Donald Trump make the U.

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## Chapter 6 : Choose Your Own Adventure: Presidential Edition | The Cook Political Report

*The electoral college is the name given a group of "electors" who are nominated by political activists and party members within the states. On election day these electors, pledged to one or another candidate, are popularly elected.*

Location of the Inauguration Ceremonies Democratic and Republican National Party Conventions: Growth of National Convention Delegations: Keynote Speakers at National Conventions: Nationally Televised General Election Debates: Polling Hours in the States and District of Columbia Electoral Votes by State: A Primer

This report explains the presidential election process in the United States. It provides general information about Presidential candidates and their campaigns and it reviews the laws, activities, and customs that govern each of the four stages of the process—the primary campaign, the national nominating conventions, the general election, and the electoral college. Chapter one discusses the candidates themselves—their qualifications for office, the procedure for gaining ballot access, the stages of their campaigns, and the protection accorded them by the federal government. Chapter two focuses on the nomination process, describing the evolution of the current system of primaries and caucuses, the basic structure, methods and rules governing selection of delegates to the nominating conventions, and the major characteristics of the contemporary process. Chapter three examines the national party conventions, including both their evolution and traditions, and contemporary structure and procedures. It offers general comments on widely used campaign methods during this period, examines the important role played by television—through advertising, news coverage, and debates—and provides information on election day itself how it was selected, polling hours in the states, etc. Chapter five provides information on the electoral college, the process by which the President and Vice President are officially elected. It follows the steps in the process of convening the electors and counting their votes, and offers information on past discrepancies between electoral and popular vote leaders. It also discusses possible scenarios for contingent election, in which no candidate receives an electoral majority or when a candidate dies at some stage of the process. One aspect of the process not examined in this discussion is treated in a companion CRS report on the funding of presidential elections, in particular the system of public financing available since Background and Current Issues. Qualifications for the Office of President Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution specifies that, to be President or Vice President, a person must be a natural-born citizen of the United States, at least 35 years of age, and a resident of the United States for at least 14 years. Prior Occupations of Presidents American voters have chosen men of varied backgrounds on the 53 occasions they have gone to the polls to elect a President. All 41 Presidents served the country previously either in government or the military. Of the 24 Presidents who served prior to , seven had been Vice Presidents three of whom were elected to the Presidency, while four succeeded a deceased incumbent , four were Members of Congress, four were governors, and nine previously held an appointive federal position. The trend in 20th century presidential elections has favored former Vice Presidents, Governors, and Senators. Of 17 20th century Presidents, several served in more than one of these positions. At the time of their inauguration, one Eisenhower had served as a career Army officer; two Taft and Hoover had most recently served as cabinet officers; five Wilson, F. Five of the seven Vice Presidents T. Roosevelt, Coolidge, Truman, Johnson, and Ford succeeded on the death or resignation of the incumbent; two Vice Presidents were elected—one Nixon as a former and one Bush as an incumbent. The Candidate Field Before the primaries and conventions, the candidates determine the presidential field. The decline of party leader dominance over the nominating process has resulted in a system whereby self-selected candidates compete in the states for the delegates needed for nomination. The democratization of the nominating process has meant 1 Defined as including the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Residence in Puerto Rico and U. According to the Federal Election Commission, individuals had filed statements of candidacy or had committees file statements of organization for the presidential election as of January 31, In reality, only a small number of these are considered by the media as serious candidates seeking the nomination of the two major parties. Likely

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candidates may form exploratory committees to gauge popular support and to begin developing a base of supporters and contributors, while avoiding some of the legal requirements such as contribution limits and disclosure of receipts and disbursements of the FECA. As unofficial candidates who are not technically campaigning for office, persons may raise and spend unlimited amounts of money without registering as candidates with the Federal Election Commission FEC. Upon declaration of candidacy, however, the individual must register with the FEC and report all financial activity while testing the waters; these amounts become retroactively subject to all FECA regulations. Such other committees which the candidate authorizes may raise and spend funds, but they must report such activity through the principal committee. The timing of the formal announcement is crucial because of its political impact, and also because of the legal and tactical implications. Once a public declaration of candidacy is made, candidates are subject to state and national spending limits if they qualify for and choose to accept public matching funds, and they are subject to the broadcasting provisions of the equal-time rule 47 U. Nominations today are usually won during the primary campaign rather than at the convention, and primaries have proliferated and been scheduled earlier in the election year. Because of these developments, competitors are pressed to announce their candidacies much earlier than in years past. Whereas in , Franklin Roosevelt formally announced for the Presidency days before the convention, Michael Dukakis formally announced his candidacy days prior to the Democratic National Convention. The trend toward earlier, longer campaigns is a hallmark of modern presidential elections.

**Qualifying for the Primaries and Caucuses** The guidelines that candidates follow to qualify for primaries and caucuses differ from state to state. In primary states, the Secretary of State or other chief elections officer is the authority for listing candidate names on the ballot; in caucus states, the parties oversee the procedures for candidates to gain ballot access they do not always have to file to be eligible for delegates in caucus states, however. Candidates generally file a statement of candidacy with the Secretary of State or the party chair at the state level. In some primary states, the Secretary of State may automatically certify for the ballot the names of all major party candidates, those submitted by the party, candidates who have qualified in other states, or candidates who have applied with the FEC or are eligible for federal matching funds. Presidential candidates may also be required to pay a filing fee, submit petitions, or both. Signatures may be required from a requisite number of voters in each congressional district or from a requisite number of voters statewide.

**Party Nominations** The primary season gradually reduces the field of major party candidates. The accelerated pace of the present system winnows out those who fall short of expectations, and hence, find it difficult to raise the money needed to sustain their candidacies. Furthermore, the reforms of the past 30 years have changed the dynamics of the nominating process by closely tying the allocation of delegates to electoral performance. The days when a candidate could compete in a select number of primaries to demonstrate popular appeal have passed: Party conventions have largely become ratifying bodies that confer the nomination on the candidate who won it in state contests.

**The General Election Ballot** The names of the major party nominees for President and Vice President are automatically placed on the general election ballot. Some states also list the names of presidential electors adjacent to the presidential and vice presidential candidates whom they support. Minor party and independent candidates are also listed on the ballot, if they qualify according to provisions of the state codes, and several such candidates are usually on the ballot in different states.

**Secret Service Protection**<sup>3</sup> In the aftermath of the assassination of Senator Robert Kennedy while he was seeking the Democratic presidential nomination, Congress passed legislation which, for the first time, authorized Secret Service protection of presidential and vice presidential candidates. Spouses of such candidates are also entitled to protection, within days of the general election. On occasion, candidates have declined protection offered to them. While the law provides protection for major party presidential and vice presidential nominees in the general election, it does not specify the criteria for determining major candidates in the primary season. Secret Service protection for primary candidates generally begins shortly after January 1 of the election year. On occasion, the Secretary of the Treasury has accorded protection to certain candidates earlier than the election year.

Department of the Treasury, Washington, The Nomination Process Primaries and caucuses are the initial

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testing ground for the next President. The primary season plays an essential role in presidential elections by narrowing the field of major party candidates. The nomination is conferred on the candidate who holds a majority of delegates at the party convention, but under the present system for choosing delegates one candidate is likely to emerge with a majority by the end of the primary season, if not sooner, and well before the convention meets.

**The Development of the Nominating System** The emergence of the national nominating convention in , in place of the congressional caucus method of choosing nominees, gave the political parties a more democratic means of bestowing nominations, based more closely on popular sentiment. See Chapter III for detailed information on national nominating conventions. Delegates to the early conventions were either appointed by a party leader or were chosen under a party-run caucus system. Delegates were chosen in this manner until the beginning of the 20th century when members of the Progressive Party, whose aim was to reform the structure and processes of government, introduced an innovative device called the primary. In , Florida became the first state to adopt the primary as a means of choosing delegates to the nominating conventions, and many states followed within the decade. By , 20 Democratic and Republican parties selected delegates in primaries. The primary took democratization of the nominating process a step further by enabling party members to choose the delegates. It was the first large-scale innovation in the process since the introduction of the party convention about 80 years earlier. Hailed as a triumph of democracy upon its debut, the primary failed to attract many voters, and, in the first half of this century, it never became the principal route to the nomination. The primary movement made little progress in the years following the first World War, and some states abandoned it as the method for choosing delegates. The number of state party primaries in which delegates were chosen stood at around 14 for the next four decades. Many candidates avoided primaries altogether or ran in a select few, simply to demonstrate their popular appeal. In , Democratic contender Estes Kefauver entered and won 12 of 15 primaries held, only to see the convention turn to Adlai Stevenson, who had not entered any primaries. In , John F. Kennedy demonstrated electability by winning a few selected primaries, but his delegate totals were amassed more by his cultivation of key party leaders and state delegations.

**Reform and Revival of the Primary.** The violence that marred the Democratic Convention in Chicago underscored growing discontent in that party with the dominant role played by party leaders in the nomination of candidates. The Commission, in , proposed a series of reforms that addressed most aspects of delegate selection, the principal aim of which was to increase popular participation and link it more directly to the selection of delegates. The Commission recommended a series of sweeping changes that addressed nearly every major aspect of delegate selection. It established guidelines for translating public support for candidates into delegate votes and eliminated automatic ex-officio delegate slots by calling for the election of all of the delegates to the convention. Guidelines for equal representation of women and minorities were adopted, and devices that vested considerable power in the party leadership e. The McGovern-Fraser recommendations, as subsequently modified, changed the process for the Democrats, and had an impact as well on the system used by the Republicans, who made changes to respond to perceived public pressure for greater democratization. Perhaps the principal effect of the reform movement was the revitalization of the primary in determining the choice of party nominees: By , the Democrats held primaries in 30 states which selected The percentage of delegates chosen in states holding primaries has been higher in recent cycles. Under the present schedule for , The resurgence of the primary was accompanied by changes in other aspects of the political landscape which reinforced the importance of primary elections. The media became a full-fledged participant in the nominating process through their extensive coverage of primaries and their role in publicizing primary results. Candidates are now likely to pick and choose which primaries to contest because delegates are at stake in virtually all of them. Early primaries are especially vigorously contested, particularly by lesser known candidates who seek to gain crucial media coverage and establish campaign momentum; the pace of the entire season has quickened. The nominating process in the post era thus focused attention once again on the primaries, where nominations today are won or lost. Each party has its own method for assigning delegates and alternates to the different states and jurisdictions.

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## Chapter 7 : The Electoral College Debate - Dangerous Ignorance

*The Electoral College method of choosing the president and vice president guarantees that each state, whether large or small in area or population, has some voice in selecting the nation's leaders.*

In , prominent Democratic voices Bill Galston and Elaine Kamarck concluded that the party, which had lost three straight presidential elections, was seen as "unacceptably liberal" and needed to move the center if their party was to win in . This year, however, there are multiple theories as to how Democrats should run in . Meanwhile, the president continues to snub his nose at the advice to expand his base with an appeal to younger and non-white voters. His approval ratings among all but white, non-college educated voters are underwater. Can he really expect to win another election with this same strategy? In this scenario, the Democratic nominee would not do any better among white, non-college voters than Hillary Clinton did in . But, if the black turnout or margin or both are similar to , a Democrat would win the popular vote by four to five points and the Electoral College with votes. However, it does assume that a Democrat not named Barack Obama can hit Obama-like numbers among black voters. Despite all the attention lavished on the influence of white, college-educated voters, white voters without a college degree comprise a bigger share of the electorate than the exit polls captured. The authors estimate that 44 percent of the electorate in was in this demographic group, compared to the 34 percent in the national exits. Even if they did no better among black and Hispanic voters than Clinton, Democrats could still easily capture the popular and Electoral College vote by either: In scenario 1, hitting levels of support, a Democrat would carry the popular vote by 6 points and win the Electoral College . In scenario 2, where white non-college support shifts 10 points in Democrats favor, a Democrat wins the Electoral College with Electoral votes, including states like Georgia and Florida. However, can a candidate who could appeal to these voters "especially on social and cultural issues" win a Democratic party where the center of gravity on those issues has shifted even farther to the left since ? The Suburban Mom Scenario: If is, as my colleague David Wasserman has predicted, the year of the angry, white, college graduate , perhaps can be as well. Trump won white college-educated voters, according to exit polls, by just three points. Among college-educated white women, 72 percent disapprove of Trump. If these votes swung five points toward the Democrats and five points away from Republicans in , a Democrat would win the popular vote by more than 6 points and win the Electoral College , including Georgia and Florida. However, what if in winning more college-educated voters, a Democrat would turn off an equal number of non-college white voters? In one example that the authors of the report offered, Democrats improve with college-educated whites, while Republicans improve their performance among non-college educated whites by a similar amount. Under that scenario, Republicans would still narrowly win the Electoral College, while losing the popular vote by a little more than a point. And, here are some of the potential GOP strategies: But, is this a politically sustainable path for ? In one simulation, the answer is no. Holding performance constant, demographic changes alone would tip the Electoral College away from Trump, with a Democrat carrying Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin by less than a point each. If, however, you re-allocate the third party vote of to a partisan choice ie, move Jill Stein voters to Democrats and Gary Johnson voters to Republicans , Democrats would still win the popular vote, but the Electoral College would be tied at . This is not a sustainable strategy for Trump. It has zero room for error. But, what if Trump does even better among those white, working class voters? However, under this scenario, would serve as the last time a Republican would win the popular vote. And, that, says Democratic pollster Anna Greenberg, is a huge red flag. To the future of the GOP or the rise of a serious third party? Maybe another candidate will pursue this path in the future. These scenarios are fun to play with, but not particularly realistic. After all, we know that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Campaigns, said one consultant to the project, are like balloons. If you push down on one side, the other side is going to get bigger. After all, these were the two most disliked candidates in modern American history. Their performance "especially on the margins" can have as much to do with them as

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with the party. However, it is also apparent that no matter which way you slice and dice the data, Republicans have a demographics problem. Of the sixteen different electorate simulations run, only one gave Republicans a popular vote victory.

### Chapter 8 : The Electoral College: A Primer on Selecting the President of the United States | The Red Shirts

*V. Electoral College and Inauguration Electoral College When voters go to the polls on election day, they actually cast their votes for a slate of electors, who are entrusted by the Constitution with election of the President 15 and Vice President. The electors are known collectively as the electoral college.*

### Chapter 9 : PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES: A PRIMER

*ELECTORAL COLLEGE historical feel. The three perennial proposals are for direct election, for proportional distribution of electoral votes, and for a districting.*