

**Appendix I**

## Reforming the System?

The Electoral College is a controversial mechanism of presidential elections that was created by the Framers of the *Constitution* as a compromise for the presidential election process. At the time, some politicians believed a purely popular election was too reckless, as they had little faith in the voters, while others objected to giving Congress the power to select the president, and all agreed that a nationwide popular vote would be next to impossible to administer and verify, given the technology and communication systems at the time. The compromise was to set up an Electoral College system that allowed voters to vote for electors, who would then cast their votes for candidates.

Proponents of the Electoral College say that the system served its purpose in most elections. The Electoral College is a block, or weighed, voting system that gives more power to states by allowing them to cast all their votes for one candidate and some advocates claim it empowers smaller states in that they can swing an election, as happened in 1876 because they get to cast their few votes as one block.

Opponents note that the larger states carry disproportionate influence. Also, because states cast all their electoral votes as a block rather than to split the vote proportionately, in states that are overwhelmingly biased toward one party those members of the other party might be discouraged from voting because they know their candidate has no chance of winning.

Accordingly, there are reforms that have been proposed:

**(1) Popular vote**

All voters simply cast a vote for their candidate and the one with the most votes wins. This is similar to how other elected offices are decided.

**(2) Proportional representation**

The state's electoral votes are divided proportional to the way the people of that state voted, so that if candidate A gets 40 percent of the vote and candidate B gets 60 percent

of the vote, then candidate A receives 40 percent of the state's electoral votes.

**(3) District plan**

The state's electoral votes (the number depends on how many representatives and senators the state sends to Congress) are awarded based on each congressional district. So, if candidate A wins district 1, then candidate A gets one electoral vote. But, if candidate B wins district 2, then candidate B gets that one electoral vote. Whichever candidate wins the popular vote in the state gets the state's two Senate votes.

**(4) Automatic plan**

The Electoral College stays exactly the same but, instead of having the electors gather in mid-December in state capitals to cast their votes, the state's electoral votes are automatically cast according to the Electoral College vote.

## Electoral College Results (2008)

State	Electors	Obama	McCain	Obama %	McCain %
Alabama	9	813,479	1,266,546	39	60
Alaska	3	123,594	193,841	38	59
Arizona	10	1,034,707	1,230,111	45	54
Arkansas	6	422,310	638,017	39	59
California	55	8,274,473	5,011,781	61	37
Colorado	9	1,288,576	1,073,589	54	45
Connecticut	7	997,772	629,428	61	38
Delaware	3	255,459	152,374	62	37
DC	3	245,800	17,367	92	7
Florida	27	4,282,074	4,045,624	51	48
Georgia	15	1,844,137	2,048,744	47	52
Hawaii	4	325,871	120,566	72	27
Idaho	4	236,440	403,012	36	62
Illinois	21	3,419,673	2,031,527	62	37
Indiana	11	1,374,039	1,345,648	50	49
Iowa	7	828,940	682,379	54	44
Kansas	6	514,765	699,655	42	57
Kentucky	8	751,985	1,048,462	41	57
Louisiana	9	782,989	1,148,275	40	59
Maine	4	421,923	295,273	58	40
Maryland	10	1,629,467	959,862	62	36
Massachusetts	12	1,904,097	1,108,854	62	36
Michigan	17	2,872,579	2,048,639	57	41
Minnesota	10	1,573,354	1,275,409	54	44
Mississippi	6	554,662	724,597	43	56
Missouri	11	1,441,911	1,445,814	49	49
Montana	3	231,667	242,763	47	50
Nebraska	5	333,319	452,979	42	57
Nevada	5	533,736	412,827	55	43
New Hampshire	4	384,826	316,534	54	45
New Jersey	15	2,215,422	1,613,207	57	42
New Mex.	5	472,422	346,832	57	42
New York	31	4,769,700	2,742,298	63	36
N. Carolina	15	2,142,651	2,128,474	50	49
N. Dakota	3	141,278	168,601	45	53
Ohio	20	2,933,388	2,674,491	51	47
Oklahoma	7	502,496	960,165	34	66
Oregon	7	1,037,291	738,475	57	40
Pennsylvania	21	3,276,363	2,655,885	55	44
Rhode Isl.	4	296,571	165,391	63	35
S. Carolina	8	862,449	1,034,896	45	54
S. Dakota	3	170,924	203,054	45	53
Tennessee	11	1,087,437	1,479,178	42	57
Texas	34	3,528,633	4,479,328	44	55
Utah	5	327,670	596,030	34	63
Vermont	3	219,262	98,974	67	30
Virginia	13	1,959,532	1,725,005	53	46
Washington	11	1,750,848	1,229,216	58	40

W. Virginia	5	303,857	397,466	43	56
Wisconsin	10	1,677,211	1,262,393	56	42
Wyoming	3	82,868	164,958	33	65
<b>Total</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>69,456,897</b>	<b>59,934,814</b>		