

Pamela Glazier

Professor Olfer

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The Electoral College

Recently the Electoral College has gotten a lot of attention in the American media. People have been arguing over who “really” won the 2000 election. The nation’s system of voting has been called into question, and people all over America are wondering if the Electoral College should remain. I believe it should.

Before you can make a decision on this topic, you must understand what it is. The Electoral College is a group of people chosen, by each state, to vote for President and Vice President. The electors are chosen to represent the states during a national election. The Electoral College was written in to the Constitution as a workable compromise over two hundred years ago. The College prevented Congress from gaining too much power over the nation. The College also checked the opportunity of having a purely popular election, which was frowned on by the nation’s politicians (World Book 88). When that is understood, a lot of things become clear. The general public does not directly vote for the President or the Vice President of the United States. When one votes for *Candidate B*, they are

actually voting for that candidate's representative who will vote for the candidate he wants.

People who oppose the Electoral College system argue that the representatives chosen to elect our nation's leader may be *Faithless Electors*-those chosen to vote who, after pledging allegiance to a particular candidate, vote for their pledge's opponent (Kimberling). This has been a major issue for people who don't want their votes going to "turncoats." People have put their faith into the Electors chosen, and they expect a typical vote.

People in favor of the Electoral College point out that Faithless Electors have never changed the outcome of an election. They also believe that the College enhances the status of minority groups, since minorities can influence state decisions more easily than national decisions. This is because the number of conflicting viewpoints is smaller. If the Electoral College were to be abolished, the nation's minorities would have a harder time being heard. The presidency tends to be more sensitive to ethnic minorities and other special interest groups than does Congress. This is because minorities and interest groups *can* make a difference in how a state representative will vote in the national election. "Changing to a direct election of the president would damage minority interests since their votes would be overwhelmed by a national popular majority" (Kimberling).

The Electoral College is not democratic. It has been specially designed so

that each state has a way of being heard in an election no matter how large or small it is. Many people argue that the national elections should be run the same way as state elections, but Thomas Jefferson brings an interesting point to light: "A democracy [is] the only pure republic, but impracticable beyond the limits of a town" (par. 2). America is an intensely diverse nation, and it is also widely populated. A pure democracy is out of the question for the national elections, because the minority neglected would consist of millions of people. I feel that a representative leadership is best for this country. With this type, our leaders will work to accommodate all, instead of neglecting any group that is 49% or less than the population.

The Electoral College was created over two hundred years ago. It serves us today by making informed decisions for us, the citizens within this representative democracy. The public views are taken into account in the popular vote, but the experts we have chosen make the final decision. Some would like to see the Electoral College abolished, but until it is challenged with suitable alternatives, which are less problematic than the College itself, it will most likely be here to stay.

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