Is the Electoral College fair or unfair?

- Based on the information conducted, we found that the Electoral College is unfair. It is disproportionate to the votes from the states.
- Smaller states benefit from the Electoral College because of the size of their population, giving electoral votes per person. For example, the less populated a state is, the more their votes are divided and counted in the Electoral College.
- Larger states do not benefit from the Electoral College because the greater the state’s population, the more electoral votes they have, and the less each vote matters. This means that the state’s votes will not be equally divided throughout the Electoral College.
- The Electoral College also encourages their candidates to focus more on getting the votes from swing states instead of safe states. This results in lack of interest in politics from many citizens and a low voter turnout in those states.

Electoral System

There are different types of electoral systems used to calculate the number of elected positions in the government.

1. Plurality electoral system: A “winner-take-all” system. A term used to describe single member districts and large election systems that award seats to the highest vote-getters without ensuring fair representation for minority groups.
2. Majority electoral system: A “second ballot” system. If no candidate gets a majority of votes, then the second round of voting is held, and only a certain amount of candidates are allowed to participate.
3. Proportional Representation: A general name for the voting systems that make a percentage of votes received in the election. They use it in almost every country. It is used to award a party the same percentage of seats in parliament as it receives votes at the polls.

History

- After the Civil War, to become an Elector, State Officials had to show loyalty to the U.S. and not hint at rebellion.
- Senators, representatives, an Office of Trust member, or anyone with a political connection to a president cannot be electors for the political parties’ leaders. Voters cast their submissions for electors with their votes for who they want to be president. Electors’ names would be under the names of those running for office.
- Nebraska and Maine have proportional distribution of electors. The winner in Nebraska and Maine will be awarded to one or more candidates.
- According to the popular votes, electors also have to cast their votes and they fall into 2 categories: electors bound by state law and those bound by pledges to political parties. “Faithful electors” may be fined for casting an invalid vote, but this has yet to happen. More than 99% of electors have voted as pledged.

Swing States & Safe States

- States are categorized by the colors red and blue, signifying which party they favor.
- Swing states can change colors because the state’s votes may differ in each election.
- Safe states are labeled as “safe” because during an election the candidate knows that he/she can count on their vote.
- There are only five states that commonly dictate which candidate is going to win or lose. These states are Colorado, Florida, Nevada, Ohio, and Virginia. These are considered to be undecided states, so candidates focus on them more to get votes that they need.

Electoral College Vs. Popular Vote

- Popular vote refers to the overall majority from all votes from all the states in the U.S.
- A candidate can win the most votes but still lose the presidential election because even though citizens may vote for who they want, the final decision is made by the Electoral College.
- Many argue that the electoral college is unfair because the number of votes are not directly proportional to the population of the state.
- In a popular vote, states with higher votes will directly increase their candidate’s influence in the outcome of the presidential race.
- With the popular vote, every vote counts whereas with the electoral vote, even a small amount of votes against a candidate might not make a difference.
- George Bush won presidency with the electoral vote while Al Gore won the popular vote with 543,816 votes in 2000.
- The Electoral College casts two separate votes, one for President and one for Vice President.

Presidency in the Electoral College

- John Q. Adams - Andrew Jackson 1824
  - First election where the winner of the popular vote did not become the President.
  - Andrew Jackson received 99 Electoral votes.
  - John Quincy Adams received 84 Electoral votes.
  - Though Jackson did win the popular vote in 1824, not all states recorded a popular vote.
- Bush - Gore 2000
  - The popular vote winner was not elected.
  - Florida became the key state as the election drew to a close, having almost 6 million voters.
  - Al Gore received more popular votes, 0.5 percent of all votes cast across the country.
  - It took five weeks to determine the winner.
  - Gore lost the Electoral College when he lost Florida.
  - Many who voted for Gore claimed an error in the voting booth.
  - The 2000 presidential election was the first in 112 years in which a president lost the popular vote but captured enough states to win the electoral vote.

References

- http://aii.pitt.edu/32418/