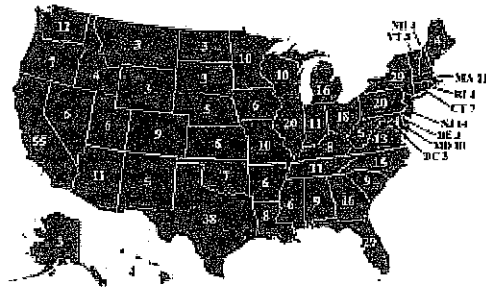


# ELECTORAL COLLEGE

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## THE BASICS

The Electoral College is the system used by the United States to elect its lead executive. The College is outlined in Article II, Section 1 and in the Twelfth and Twenty-Third Amendments to the United States Constitution. It calls for each state to be designated a number of electors that is equal to the number of senators and representatives in each state. This varies from large states such as California which has 55 to only 3 in smaller states like Wyoming and South Dakota. The District of Columbia is given the same number of electors as the least populated state. These electors, currently 538, are the people who vote to choose who will be the next president. To win the presidency, a candidate must receive an absolute majority of votes, currently 270. If



no candidate receives a majority, then the House of Representatives selects the president, with each state delegation getting one vote.

In the majority of states, the electors are directed how to vote based on which candidate wins the popular vote in the state. This is called a "winner-take-all" system. In Maine and Nebraska, however, the votes are divided by congressional district. Whomever wins the majority in the district, gets an electoral vote. Whomever wins the whole state then receives two additional votes, representing the senatorial "at-large" districts.

Many believe this system is a flawed one. They claim that its method of indirect election makes it undemocratic. Others believe that it gives a disproportionate power to "swing-states", or those states of with a significant number of electors that often switch between parties of different candidates. No matter what you believe, the Electoral College has been a system that has led to the peaceful transition of power in the highest office in the land since the country's founding.