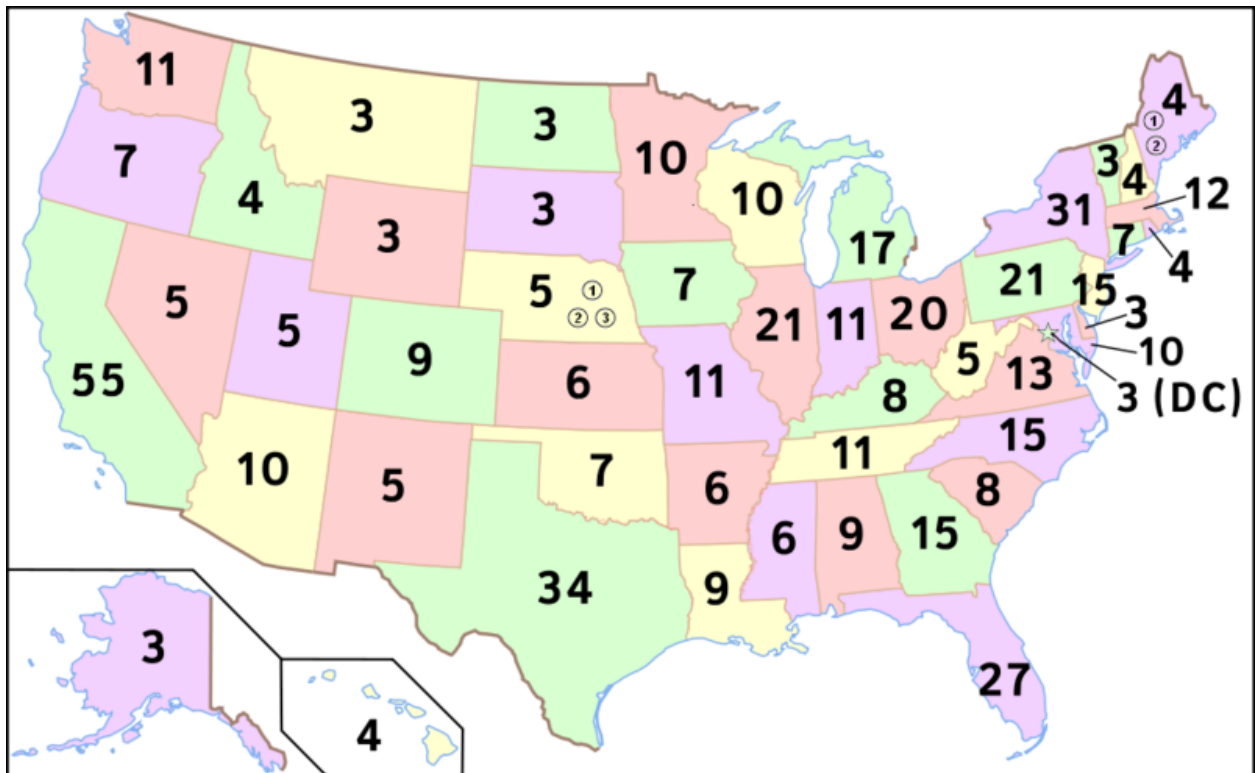


The Americans do not **elect** their president directly. They vote for an elector—a representative who must vote for the same candidate. There are 538 electors. together, They are called the Electoral College. Each state has as many electors as it has members in **Congress**. There are 435 **representatives** in the House, **based on** the number of **inhabitants** each state has, and one hundred Senators, two from each state. There are three **additional** electors from the **District of Columbia**.



On Election Day voters go to the **polls** to choose the electors in their state, **however** they only see the names of the presidential and vice presidential **candidates**. When they vote for a **candidate** of a party they **actually** vote for an elector of that state. This is called the popular vote.

In almost all of the states the candidate who **receives** the most popular votes wins all that state’s electoral votes. A **candidate** needs 270 votes to win the **election**. **Even though** the winner of the election is known by the following morning he or she is officially **elected** president in December when the electors meet.



Number of members in the Electoral College

PROBLEMS OF THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Many people don’t **agree** with the way the Americans elect their president. They think it’s wrong for the winning **candidate** to get all the electoral votes of a state and the loser none. That’s why it is possible for a candidate to **receive** fewer votes from the people and still win the **election** by winning the “big” states. This happened last in 2000, when Al Gore got half a million more popular votes than George Bush, but lost the Electoral College by 266 to 271.

Others criticize that **candidates** concentrate their **campaign** on the big states, like California, New York, Texas, Florida and others because they have the most electors. Smaller states or those in which a **candidate** feels safe may get less **attention** in the **campaign**.

Those who are **in favour of** keeping the system say that smaller states are better represented because they have more electors.

HISTORY OF THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

The voting system in America goes back to the days of the **founding fathers** who wrote the first **constitution**. They did not want the people to vote directly for the president. Because there was no radio and TV they thought that it was too hard for the people to get information about a **candidate**.

At first electors could vote for whoever they wanted to, but then political parties became stronger and they had a growing **influence** on the electors.

WORDS

- **actually** = really
- **additional** = extra
- **agree** = to have the same opinion
- **attention** = notice, interest
- **based on** = depending on
- **campaign** = movement to get a person elected as president
- **candidate** = a person who wants to be elected for a position
- **Congress** = group of people elected to make laws in the USA . It consists of the House of Representatives and the Senate
- **constitution** = a set of laws that a country is ruled by
- **District of Columbia** = the area of the American capital Washington
- **elect** = to vote for
- **election** = when people vote to choose someone for an official position
- **even though** = while
- **founding fathers** = the early settlers who created the American colonies and wrote the Constitution
- **however** = but
- **in favour of** = to be for something
- **influence** = power, control
- **inhabitants** = people, population
- **polls** = here: the place where you go to vote
- **receive** = get
- **representative** = member