

The book was found

# The Electoral College: How It Works In Contemporary Presidential Elections



## The Electoral College: How It Works in Contemporary Presidential Elections

Thomas H. Neale  
Specialist in American National Government

October 22, 2012

Congressional Research Service  
7-5700  
www.crs.gov  
RL32611

CRS Report for Congress  
*Prepared for Members and Committees of Congress*



## Synopsis

When Americans vote for President and Vice President, they are actually choosing presidential electors, known collectively as the electoral college. It is these officials who choose the President and Vice President of the United States. The complex elements comprising the electoral college system are responsible for one of the most important processes of the American political and constitutional system: election of the President and Vice President. A failure to elect, or worse, the choice of a chief executive whose legitimacy might be open to question, could precipitate a profound constitutional crisis that would require prompt, judicious, and well-informed action by Congress. Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution, as amended in 1804 by the 12th Amendment, sets forth the requirements for election of the President and Vice President. It authorizes each state to appoint, by whatever means the legislature chooses, a number of electors equal to the combined total of its Senate and House of Representatives delegations, for a contemporary total of 538, including three electors for the District of Columbia. Since the Civil War, the states have universally provided for popular election of the presidential electors. Anyone may serve as an elector, except Members of Congress and persons holding offices of *Trust or Profit* under the Constitution. In each presidential election year, the political parties and other groups that have secured a place on the ballot in each state nominate a *slate* or *ticket* of candidates for elector. When voters cast a single vote for their favored candidates on general election day, Tuesday after the first Monday in November (November 6 in 2012), they are actually voting for the slate of electors pledged to those candidates. The entire slate of electors winning the most popular votes in the state is elected, a practice known as winner-take-all, or the general ticket system. Maine and Nebraska use an alternative method, the district plan, which awards two electors to the popular vote winners statewide, and one to the popular vote winners in each congressional district. Electors assemble in their respective states on the Monday after the second Wednesday in December (December 17 in 2012). They are expected to vote for the candidates they represent. Separate ballots are cast for President and Vice President, after which the electoral college ceases to exist until the next presidential election. State electoral vote results are reported to Congress and are counted and declared at a joint session of Congress, usually held on January 6 of the year succeeding the election, a date that may be altered by legislation. Since January 6 falls on a Sunday in 2013, Congress will likely set another date for the joint session in 2013, possibly January 8. A majority of electoral votes (currently 270 of 538) is required to win, but the results submitted by any state are open to challenge at the joint session, as provided by law. Past proposals for change by constitutional amendment have included various reform options and direct popular election, which

would eliminate the electoral college system, but no substantive action on this issue has been taken in Congress for more than 20 years. At present, however, a non-governmental organization, the National Popular Vote (NPV) campaign, proposes to reform the electoral college by action taken at the state level; eight states and the District of Columbia have approved the NPV compact to date. For further information on contemporary proposals to reform or eliminate the electoral college, please consult CRS Report R42139, Contemporary Developments in Presidential Elections, by Kevin J. Coleman, R. Sam Garrett, and Thomas H. Neale.

## **Book Information**

File Size: 364 KB

Print Length: 28 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publisher: Congressional Research Service (October 22, 2012)

Publication Date: October 22, 2012

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00BUCTW38

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #345,559 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #40 in Kindle Books > Law > Administrative Law > Urban, State & Local Government #76 in Kindle Store > Kindle Short Reads > 45 minutes (22-32 pages) > Politics & Social Sciences #196 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Elections & Political Process > Campaigns & Elections

## **Customer Reviews**

This gives a basic understanding of the reason for and use of the Electoral College. It would provide excellent textual material for a high school social studies class or a beginning college course in government.

This is a quick, clear read on a complicated problem that most of us only think about once every

four years.

[Download to continue reading...](#)

The Electoral College: How It Works in Contemporary Presidential Elections The Presidential Libraries Act and the Establishment of Presidential Libraries The Presidential Debates: Issues and Questions for the 2016 Elections and Beyond The Timeline of Presidential Elections: How Campaigns Do (and Do Not) Matter (Chicago Studies in American Politics) Presidential Elections: Strategies and Structures of American Politics Go To College For Free: College Planning ABC's Guide To Finding Scholarships, Financial Aid and Free Tuition Awards For College The Lavender Vote: Lesbians, Gay Men, and Bisexuals in American Electoral Politics Race, Reform, and Regulation of the Electoral Process: Recurring Puzzles in American Democracy (Cambridge Studies in Election Law and Democracy) Learning Democracy: Citizen Engagement and Electoral Choice in Nicaragua, 1990-2001 La democracia cristiana en AmÃ©rica Latina. Conflictos y competencia electoral (Seccion de Obras de Politica y Derecho) (Spanish Edition) ConstituciÃ³n PolÃtica de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos: Actualizada con las Ãºltimas reformas en materia PolÃ-tico - Electoral, Transparencia, EnergÃ-a, Telecomunicaciones y Educativa (Spanish Edition) Congress: The Electoral Connection, Second Edition The Collected Works of Sigurd F. Olson: The College Years, 1935-1944 (Olson, Sigurd F//Collected Works of Sigurd F Olson) Season's Greetings from the White House: The Collection of Presidential Christmas Cards, Messages and Gifts Season's Greetings from the White House: The Collection of Presidential Christmas Cards Barack Obama Presidential Collector's Vault Presidential Campaign Posters: Two Hundred Years of Election Art Hillary Rodham Clinton Presidential Playset: Includes Ten Paper Dolls, Three Rooms of Fun, Fashion Accessories, and More! Political Buttons, Book III 1789-1916: A Price Guide to Presidential Americana Presidential Dollar Commemorative Folder: Complete Philadelphia and Denver Mint Collection (Official Whitman Coin Folder)

[Dmca](#)