Name:

**Should We Elect The President By Popular Vote**?

The following debate is taken from UpFront magazine.   


**YES**

With the Electoral College, voters in two-thirds of the states are effectively disenfranchised from choosing the President because they do not live in closely divided

"battleground" states.

Presidential candidates now have no reason to campaign in states they are sure of

winning or losing. In recent elections, candidates have spent two thirds of their time and money

in six closely divided states—Florida, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan, and

Minnesota—and 99 percent of their ad dollars in 16 states.

Another shortcoming of the Electoral College is that a candidate can win the presidency

without winning the most votes nationwide. In fact, the second-place candidate was elected in

2000 (when President Bush lost the popular vote to Al Gore), 1888, 1876, and 1824. And in

2004, a shift of 60,000 votes in Ohio would have given John Kerry a majority of the electoral

votes, despite President Bush's 3.5 million-vote lead in the nationwide popular vote.

The National Popular Vote plan—which is based on the fact that the Constitution lets

each state decide how to award its electoral votes—would solve these problems: It calls

for states to award all their electoral votes to the presidential candidate who gets the most

votes nationally.

The plan has been approved in New Jersey and Maryland, and is being considered in 45

other states, it would take effect when it is approved by states representing a majority (270) of the

538 electoral votes.

More than 70 percent of Americans say they favor nationwide election of the President.

It's time to make the change.

*—John R. Koza   
Chairman, National Popular Vote*

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**NO**

The Electoral College was a key part of the compromise between large and small states at

the Constitutional Convention of 1787, and it has served America well for more than 200 years.

There have been more than 700 attempts to amend the Constitution to abolish the Electoral

College; all have failed. The latest scheme is the National Popular Vote plan, which would

circumvent the Electoral College, rather than abolish it. States would enter a compact promising all

their electoral votes to whichever candidate wins the popular vote nationally.

Under this plan, as few as 11 of the country's biggest states, which represent more than

270 electoral votes, could ignore the electoral votes of the remaining 39 states.

This is not what the Founding Fathers had in mind. They wanted to ensure that support for a

President was broad as well as deep, so that a candidate who received 90 percent of the vote in one

region and a slim majority of votes nationally would not be elected against the will of the rest of the

country.

Minorities should also be alarmed by the National Popular Vote proposal. As Vernon Jordan,

then-president of the Urban League, noted in 1979, "Take away the Electoral College, and the importance

of being black melts away." Instead of being crucial to victory in a number of key states, black voters

simply become 10 percent of the electorate, with reduced impact.

Furthermore, circumventing the Electoral College would encourage the growth of splinter

parties and make it less likely that any candidate would get a majority of votes.

*—Robert Hardaway   
Author, The Electoral College and the Constitution*

**The Electoral College**

Complete the paragraph with a word/phrase/number that makes sense.

**50 citizens 538 plurality 9**

**popular** (used 3 times) **President**  **population** (used 2 times)

**electoral** (used 3 times) **270 11 2** (used 2 times)

On Election Day, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ cast ballots for their choice for President of the United States. These votes are called the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ vote, and they are tallied in each state. The candidate who wins a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ vote in that state receives ALL of that state’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ votes. A state’s number of electoral votes is equal to its number of representatives in the House of Representatives, which is based on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and the number of Senators, which is always #\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. For example, Massachusetts has #\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Senators and #\_\_\_\_\_\_ representatives in the House of Representatives. Its total number of electoral votes is #\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The total number of electoral votes possible nationally, including D.C., is #\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. In the most recent election, a candidate must win #\_\_\_\_\_\_ (half the total number of national electoral votes + 1) electoral votes to win the presidential election. If a candidate wins the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ vote in the national election, but loses the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ vote, he does NOT become president. The candidate that receives the majority of the electoral votes nationally becomes the next\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Essentially, a candidate for President is trying to win #\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ individual state elections in the Electoral College System. Most candidates, though, realize that they only really need the electoral votes from the states with the highest \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because they have the most \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ votes.

Difference between a **majority** and a **plurality**:

In elections, a **majority** happens when more than half of the citizens votes for one candidate. For example, if a candidate gets 50.1% of the popular vote, she gets a **majority**. A **plurality** happens when less than half of the citizens vote for a candidate that wins because the electoral vote is split among more than two candidates. In other words, the candidate who has the most votes wins even if they do not get at least half of the popular vote.