
January 13, 2024

WHY WE MUST...

Abolish the Electoral College

Elect the President by Direct Popular Vote



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Local LWV member and retired mathematics teacher

Agenda

- **What is the Electoral College?**
- **League of Women Voters' position**
- **What's wrong with the Electoral College?**
- **Challenging arguments in favor of the Electoral College**
- **What needs to be done?**
 - How to amend the US Constitution
 - What you can do NOW!
- **Q&A**

What is the Electoral College?

A group of **538 people** (electors) who elect the President and Vice President of the US

State legislatures decide how their state will choose electors

All currently use a popular vote **within their state**

Each state has a number of electors **equal to their number of seats** in the US House and Senate

A majority (270 electoral votes) is needed to win

Attempts to end the Electoral College

District Plan Amendments: 1813-1824, *districts in states choose electors*

Lodge-Gossett Amendment: 1950, *electors chosen to match popular vote*

Hubert Humphrey: 1956, *2 electors in each state go to the state winner,
the rest to the national popular vote winner*

Bayh-Celler Amendment: 1969-70, *Abolish EC and replace it with
national popular vote*

Attempts to end the Electoral College

Carter: 1977, essentially supports Bayh-Celler, debated through 1979

H.Con.Res.79 — 115th Congress: 2017 national popular vote

National Popular Vote Interstate Compact: 16 states and DC have agreed to match pledge their electors to the winner of the national popular vote if a majority of electors are so promised.

“

“The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice President is essential to representative government. The League of Women Voters believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished.”

**Position on Selection of the President,
announced by National Board, January 1970**



What's Wrong with the Electoral College?

And How a Direct Popular Vote for President Solves These Problems

The Electoral College was created in 1787 for slaveholders in the south

A compromise to give Southern states more power in Presidential elections based on counting enslaved people as “3/5” of a free person.



“

"It seems now to be pretty well understood that the real difference of interests lies not between the large and small but between the northern and southern states. The institution of slavery and its consequences form the line of discrimination."

**James Madison, July 14, 1787
(source: National Archives)**



The Electoral College Ushered in the Jim Crow Era (1877 – 1964)

After slavery was abolished, the 1876 election traded the civil rights of Black Americans to allow Rutherford B. Hayes (who lost the popular vote) to become President.



The Electoral College continues to suppress the voices of Black Americans

PROBLEM: ELECTORAL COLLEGE

- States with higher Black populations tend to have less power in the Electoral College, while states with higher white populations tend to have more.

SOLUTION: DIRECT POPULAR VOTE

- Every voter counts as one vote, regardless of race or any other demographic identity.

Population Per Electoral Vote	
States more than 85% White	398,887
States more than 15% Black	644,656

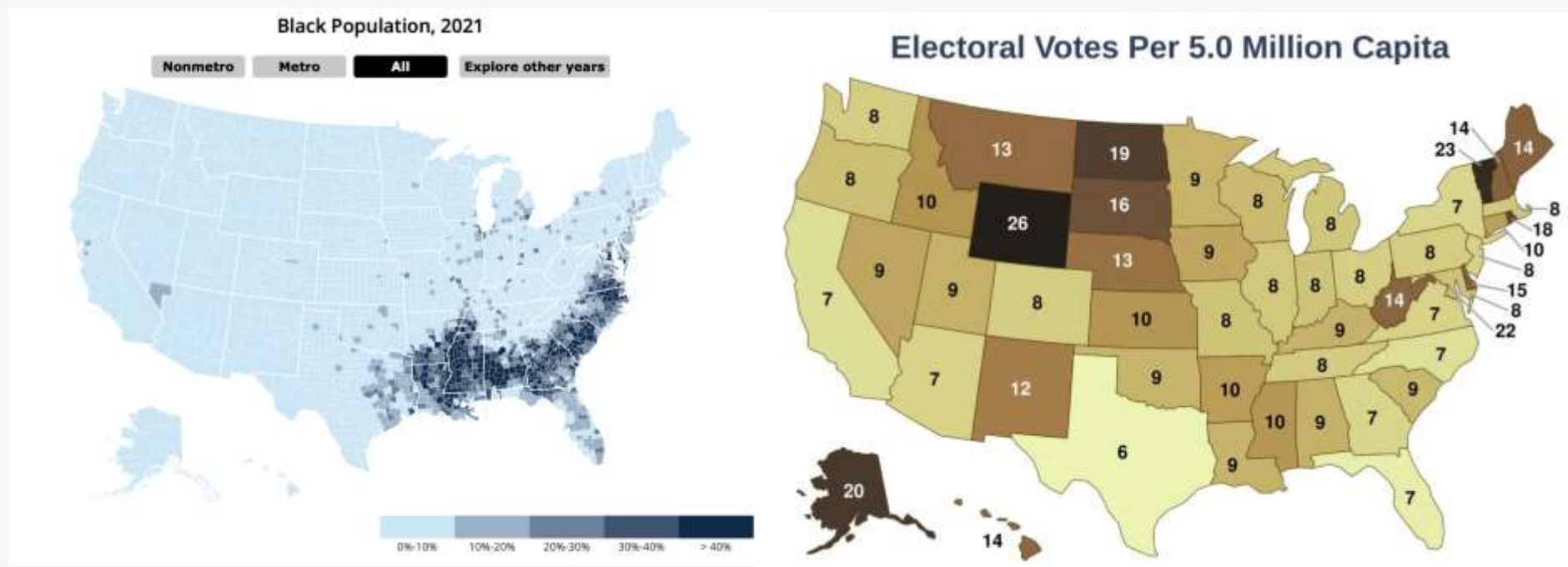
**DC not included*

“

“[An] analysis of every election from 2000 on indicates the Electoral College has consistently awarded more votes per capita to states with Whiter populations...”

William Blake, “The Overlooked Racial Dynamics of the Electoral College”

The Electoral College continues to suppress the voices of Black Americans

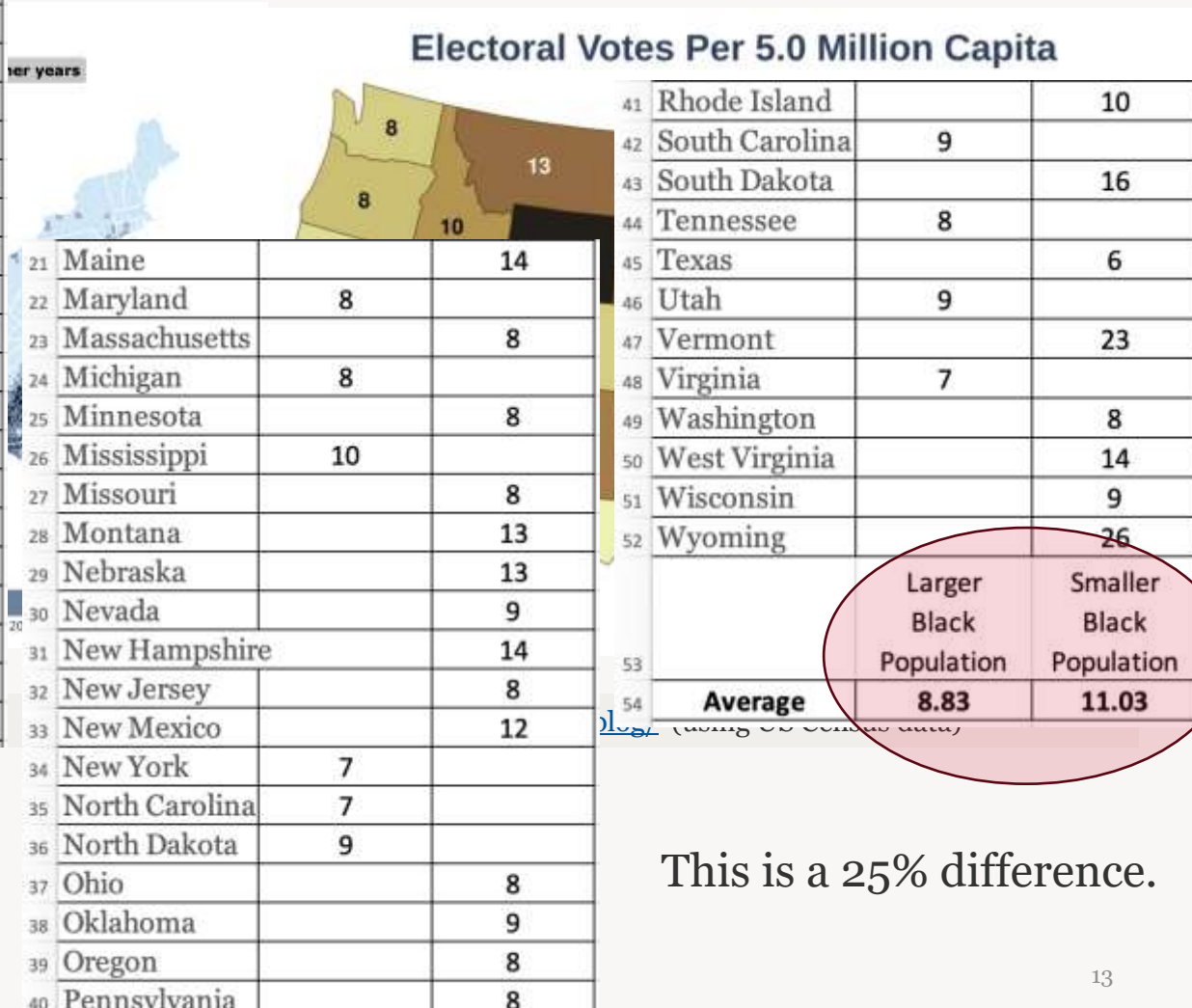


<https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/charts/22>

www.MegaRhyme.com/blog/ (using US Census data)

The Electoral College continues to suppress the voices of Black Americans

State	% black >13.6	% black < 13.6
Alabama	9	
Alaska		20
Arizona	7	
Arkansas	10	
California		7
Colorado		8
Connecticut		8
D. C.	14	
Delaware		8
Florida	7	
Georgia	7	
Hawaii		14
Idaho		10
Illinois	14	
Indiana		9
Iowa		9
Kansas		10
Kentucky		9
Louisiana	9	



Larger Black Population: 8.83
 Smaller Black Population: 11.03

This is a 25% difference.



Electoral College Turns Losers into Winners

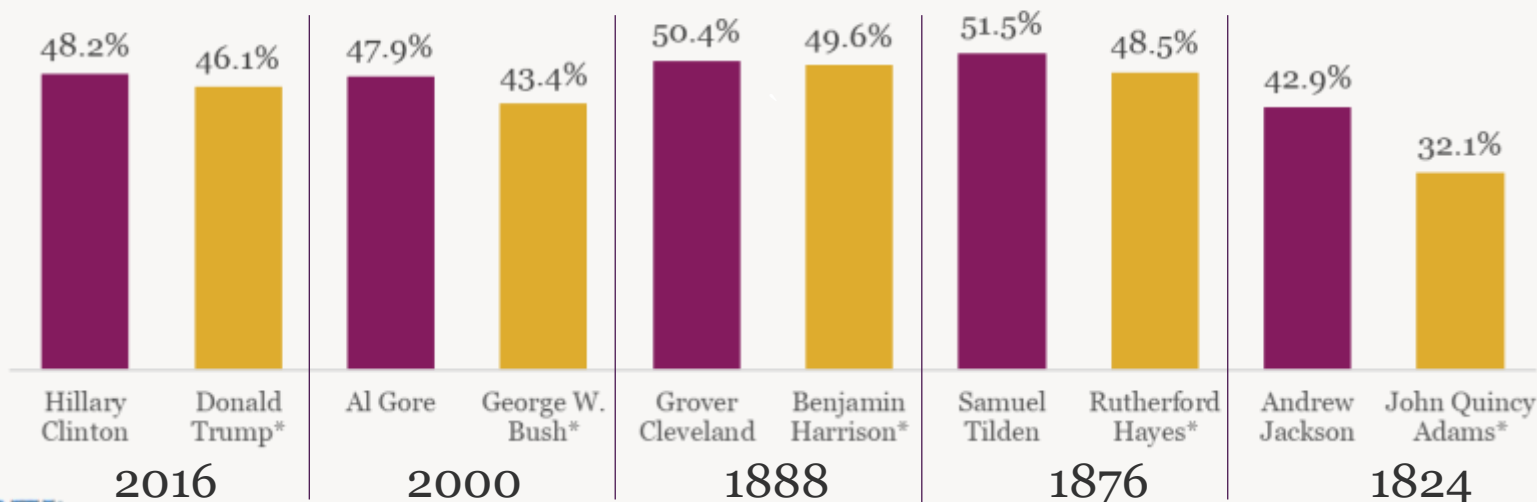
PROBLEM: ELECTORAL COLLEGE

- Allows a candidate with fewer votes from the people to win the Presidency.

SOLUTION: DIRECT POPULAR VOTE

- Ensures that the candidate with the most votes from the people becomes the President.

Popular Vote %



* Elected via Electoral College

Data Source: Federal Elections Commission

Electoral College Makes Some Votes Count More Others

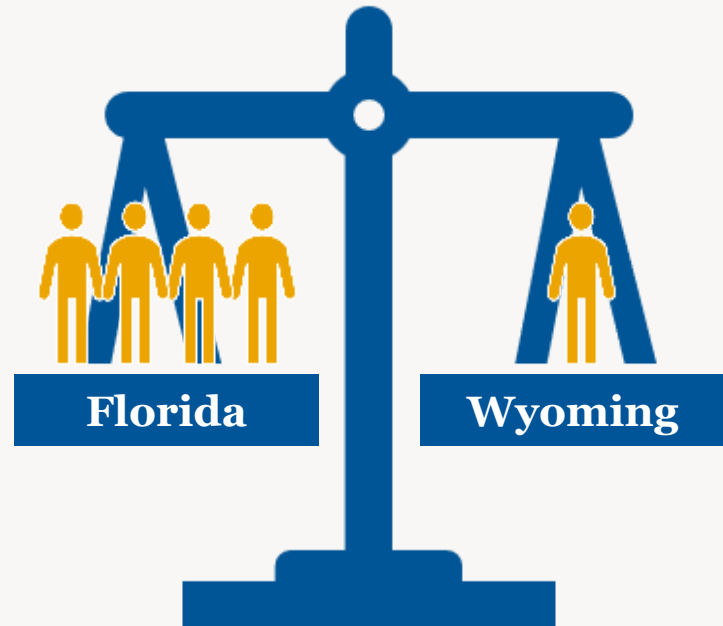
PROBLEM: ELECTORAL COLLEGE

- One person's vote carries more or less weight depending where they live.

SOLUTION: DIRECT POPULAR VOTE

- One person = one vote, no matter where you live.

	Wyoming	Florida
Population	576,000	21,538,000
Electoral Votes	3	29
Population per Electoral Vote	192,000	743,000



Electoral College Means Only a Few Swing States Matter

PROBLEM: ELECTORAL COLLEGE

- Focuses candidates' time, money, and policy on a handful of "swing" states. Most states are completely ignored.

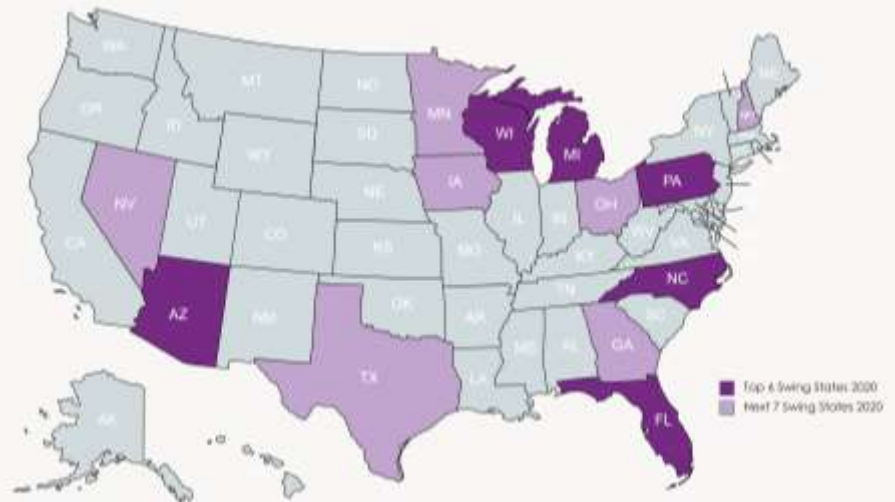
SOLUTION: DIRECT POPULAR VOTE

- Increase our access to candidates and widen the geographic scope of their campaigns.

Swing States 2020

13 Swing States

% of all US states	25%
% of US population	40%
% of Presidential Campaign Events	98%
% of Presidential TV ad spending	100%



Electoral College Discourages Voter Participation

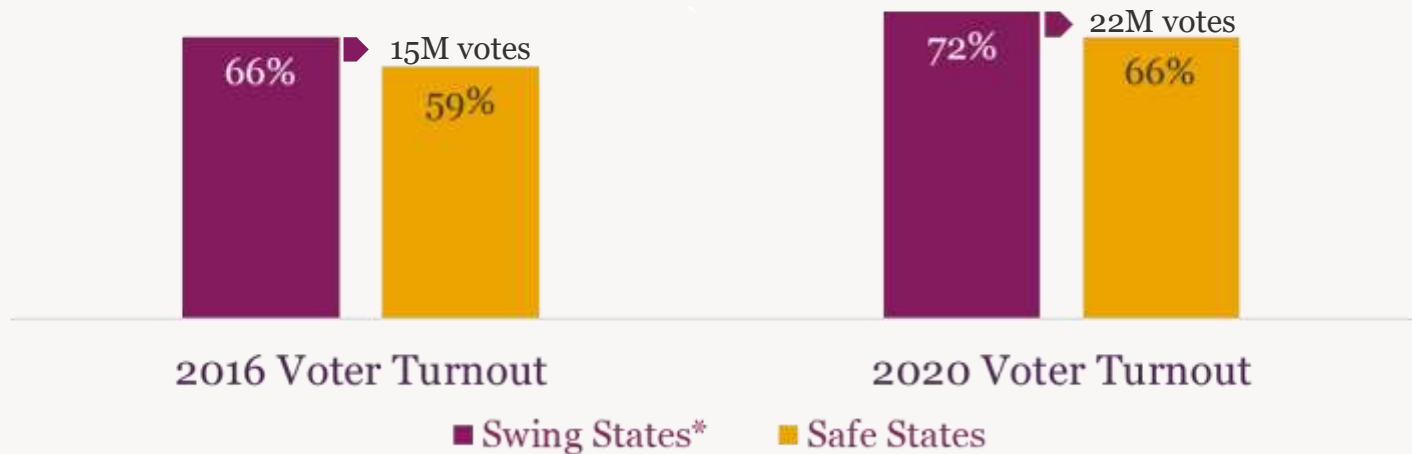
PROBLEM: ELECTORAL COLLEGE

- The Electoral College decreases voter turnout in so-called “safe” states.

SOLUTION: DIRECT POPULAR VOTE

- Increase voter turnout and participation by making every vote count – and count equally.

% of Eligible Voters Who Voted
(M = millions of votes)



*Swing states based on Politico reporting

Data Source: The United States Election Project, Michael P. McDonald, Phd, University of Florida Department of Political Science

Electoral College Makes It Easy to Cheat

PROBLEM: ELECTORAL COLLEGE

- The Electoral College makes our Presidential elections more vulnerable to manipulation and even outright fraud.

SOLUTION: DIRECT POPULAR VOTE

- Increases election security by making it harder to influence the outcome.

	# Votes To Overturn			
	Biden	Trump	Popular Election	Electoral Election
Electoral Votes	306	232	-	38
Popular Votes	81,268,924	74,216,154	3,526,386	42,918



Electoral College Makes It Easy to Cheat Consider Jan 6, 2021

From Amendment 12:

“The person having the greatest number of votes for President, shall be the President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of Electors appointed;



Electoral College Makes It Easy to Cheat

Consider Jan 6, 2021

From Amendment 12:

“ ...

The person having the greatest number of votes for President, shall be the President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of Electors appointed; **and if no person have such majority, then from the persons having the highest numbers not exceeding three on the list of those voted for as President, the House of Representatives shall choose immediately, by ballot, the President.** But in choosing the President, the votes shall be taken by states, the representation from each state having one vote; **a quorum for this purpose shall consist of a member or members from two-thirds of the states, and a majority of all the states shall be necessary to a choice.** ...”



Myth Busters!

*Common Arguments for the Electoral College
Fail the Fact Test*

Electoral College Myth #1

MYTH

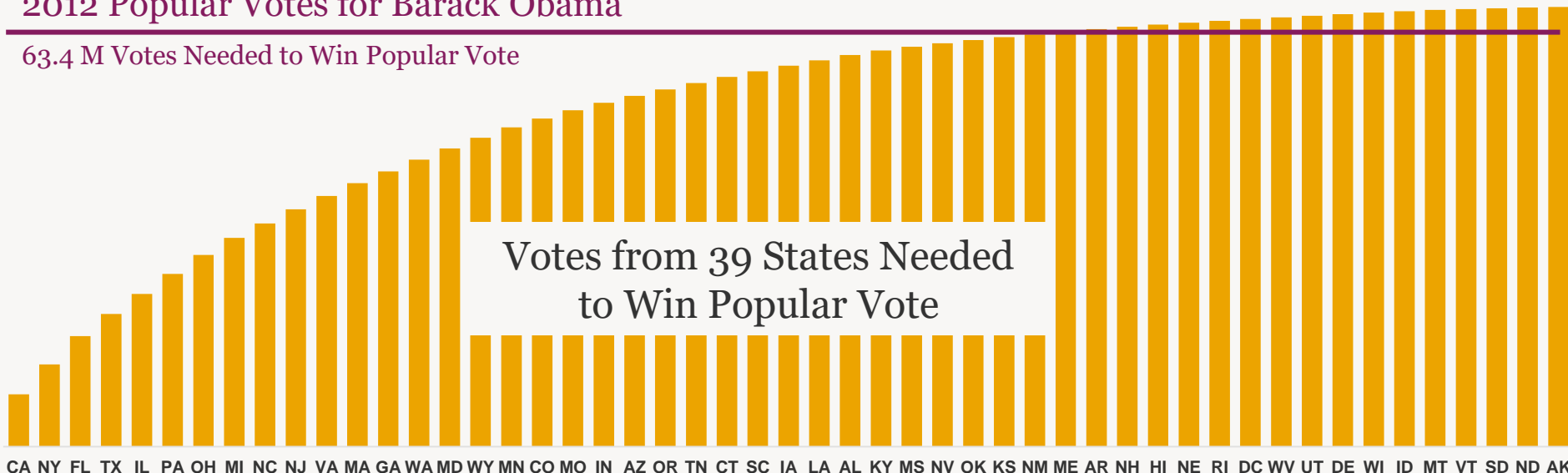
- Without the Electoral College, our Presidents would be chosen by a few big states, like California and New York

FACT

- Votes from MOST or ALL states would be needed to win the Presidency by a direct popular vote.

2012 Popular Votes for Barack Obama

63.4 M Votes Needed to Win Popular Vote



Electoral College Myth #2

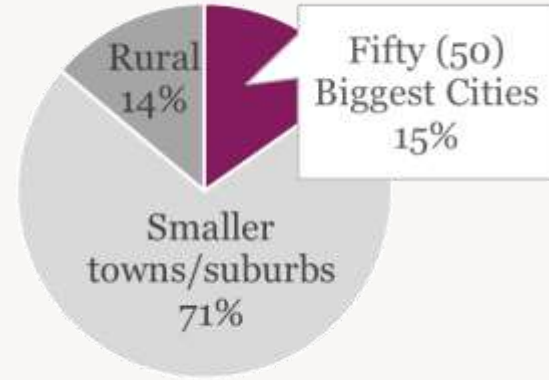
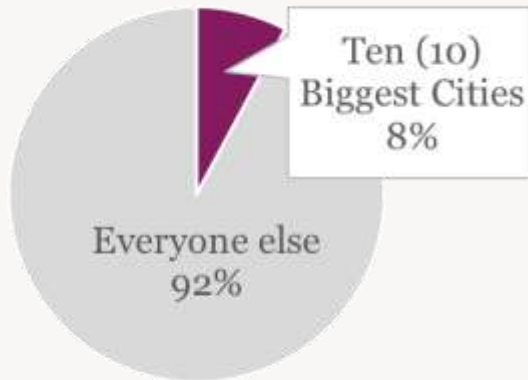
MYTH

- Without the Electoral College, our Presidents would be chosen by a few big cities, like New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago.



FACT

- There aren't enough people living in New York City, Los Angeles and Chicago — or even in the 50 biggest cities — to choose the President on their own.



Electoral College Myth #3

MYTH

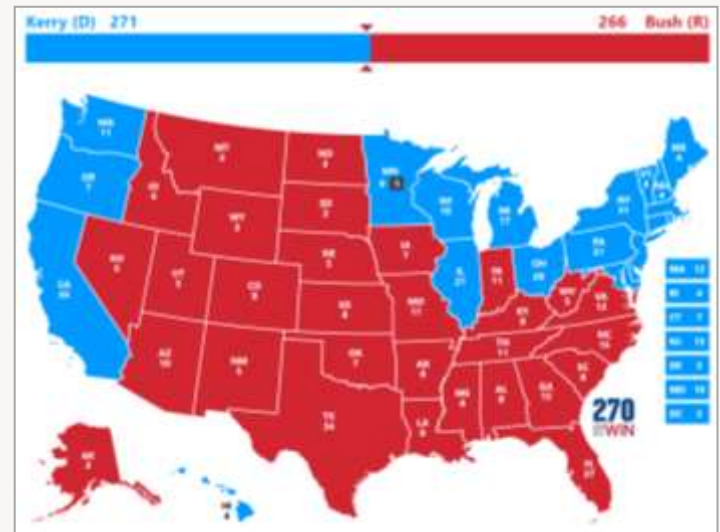
- Abolishing the Electoral College will only benefit candidates from the Democratic Party

FACT

- The Electoral College can hurt both Democratic and Republican candidates. This is a non-partisan issue.



2004 Actual



2004 Altered



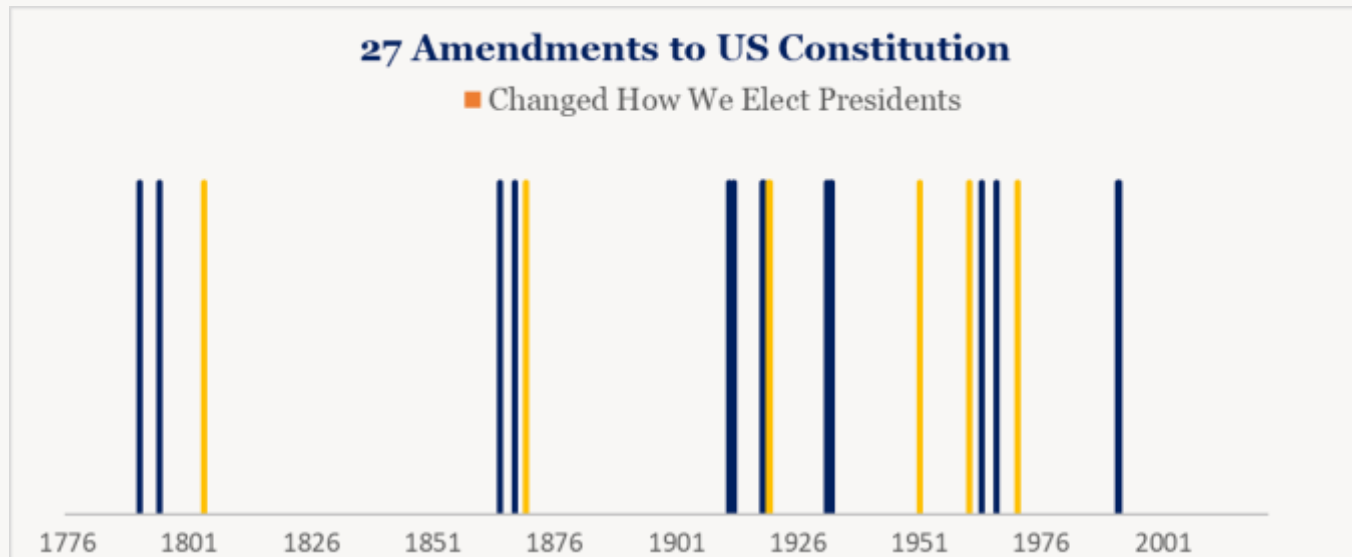
Electoral College Myth #4

MYTH

- The Electoral College will never be abolished because it requires an amendment to the US Constitution.

FACT

- US Constitution has been amended 27 times, often during times of crisis and conflict. Six amendments changed how we elect our President



What Needs to Be Done?

Our Goal and How to Get There

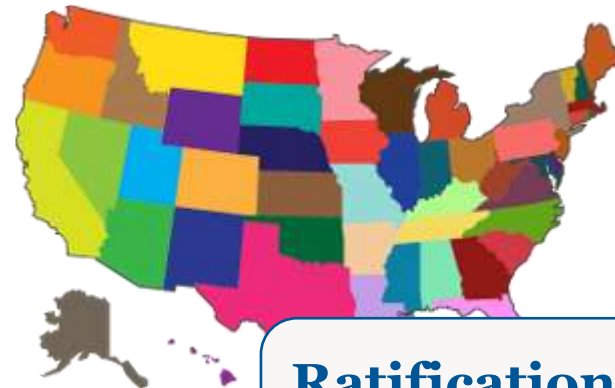
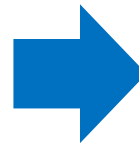
Goal: A Constitutional Amendment

Abolishing the Electoral College requires an amendment to the US Constitution.



Proposal

- 2/3 vote US Senate
- 2/3 vote US House



Ratification

- By $\frac{3}{4}$ of state legislatures (38 states)

Note: A Constitutional Convention is not required and is not supported by the League of Women Voters.



Actions in US House and Senate

1968 – 1970

- 81% of Americans supported abolishing Electoral College (source: Gallup poll)
- US House of Representatives voted 338 to 70 to abolish the Electoral College in favor of a direct popular vote
- Bill died in Senate when filibustered by Southern Democrats

2019 – present

- Bills introduced in both House & Senate
- No vote as yet

What do we need? Momentum!

The League of Women Voters is uniquely positioned to empower voters through education and advocacy at the local, state, and national levels

- Once empowered, voters can then be activated when the time is right to bring this momentum to Congress.



What You Can Do Now

Organize

- Register League coordinator with Abolish Electoral College Task Force.
- Identify state & local ally organizations.
- Activate supporters.

Educate

- Enroll in “Electoral College 101” training.
- Present to civic & social groups, colleges & universities, etc.
- Distribute informational brochures in your community.

Advocate

- Download free graphics to create visibility “swag.”
- Observe “Abolish Electoral College Day” on January 6th.
- Watch for “Action Alerts” from LWV.

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