

DOES YOUR VOTE MATTER?

The short answer is yes, it does. However, most people don't believe that because so much talk goes on about this weird thing called the "Electoral College." So I'm here to tell you all about it and to help you understand how your vote really does matter.

How does the ELECTORAL COLLEGE work?

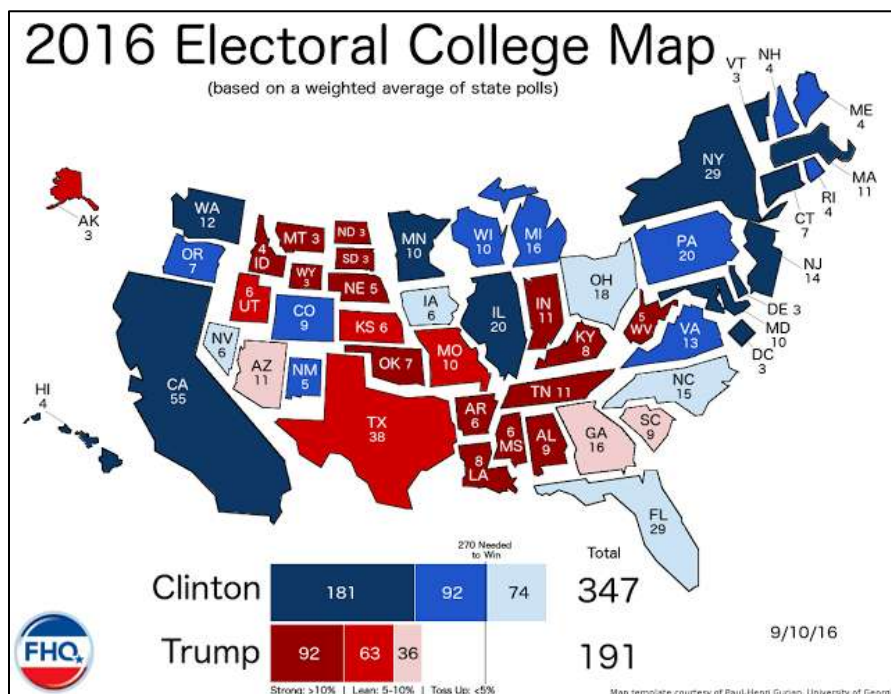
First, you get the details without a lot of history.

The Electoral College is a group of state party officials (chosen or voted for at various political state conventions) that represent the voters in their state. These folks are referred to as "electors." **The number of electors from each state is equal to the number of representatives each state has in the House and Senate.**

Currently there are a total of 538 members of the Electoral College that represent all 50 states, including three from Washington D.C.

Electoral Votes Per State

This is a current map displaying the number of electoral votes per state.



So how does this work?

The way this process works is that most states traditionally award the entire group of elector's votes to the candidate that receives a majority of the people's votes. Many states require that the electors vote this way. However, for those who don't have that requirement carved in stone, the Electoral College members will do it anyway because their goal is to represent the majority of the people. (Maine and Nebraska do things a little bit differently, however for the sake of simplicity, I'll leave it up to you to do your own research on that: i.e, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electoral_College_\(United_States\)#Electors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electoral_College_(United_States)#Electors))

So what it boils down to is that he or she who receives at least 270 of the Electoral College votes, becomes our next president.

Let's get current: TRUMP AND CLINTON

Based upon the idea that the members of the Electoral College in each state ("electors") truly represent the will of the people, if the majority of the people want Trump to win (because they vote for him), then the electors will all submit all votes for Trump...meaning that Trump wins that state and is "awarded" the number of electoral votes per that state. **Again: In order for these people to know what you want, you have to vote!**

Now where this is all a bit skewed, is that in some of those states, you have this huge population of people voting. If you look at the total number of ballots cast by the actual voters in the chart below, you can see that the election could all turn out a bit differently if the country didn't use this whole Electoral College system.

	Electoral Votes Available	Electoral Won		Actual Votes cast by the people		
State		Clinton	Trump	Clinton	Trump	State's total # of votes
CA	55		55	24,999,968	25,000,032	50,000,000
TX	38	38		6,000,000	4,000,000	10,000,000
MI	16		16	2,499	2,501	5,000
FL	29		29	35,000	65,000	100,000
NY	29	29		650,000	350,000	1,000,000
PA	20	20		8,000	2,000	10,000
	187	87	100	31,695,467	29,419,533	61,115,000

You can see that since Trump got more votes in half the states listed, **he was awarded the total electoral votes for each of those states**, therefore he becomes president. That, of course, is



provided that the electors stand by tradition and cast their votes according to the people's/popular votes in each of those states. (In order to keep this chart simple, I've left out how many electoral votes were cast for each candidate per state.

But, when you add up the number of votes actually **cast by the people** as shown above, you can see that Clinton actually received more total votes from the people, thus, she is considered the more "popular" candidate, meaning she won the "popular vote" but does not win the presidency.

Can a candidate lose the popular vote and still be elected president?

Yes. This occurred most recently in 2000, when Democrat Al Gore was defeated by Republican George W. Bush despite winning more votes nationwide.

In my opinion, I would think that with the advancement of technology and the fact that counting ballots for the entire country is already being done, that we could do away with the Electoral College system and go with the popular vote. But that's just my opinion and many disagree. Feel free to explore those pros and cons when you have some time.

Can there be a tie?

Oh, btw, one more tricky thing here is that 538 (the number of electoral votes) divided by 2 is 269. So there is always the possibility of a tie, however, that's very rare. When that happens, it would be up to the House of Representatives to make the final decision. This has only happened twice in our nation's history: Once when there was a tie between Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr in 1800 and a second time when there was a four-way split in 1824.*

So, DOES YOUR VOTE MATTER?

Yes! Definitely! Bottom line, regardless of what some people like to say, your individual vote does matter: **In order for your candidate to win, they must get the majority of electoral votes.** The only way to do that is to make sure that the members of the Electoral College are aware of what you want. **You make them aware by casting your vote!**

I hope this clears up the workings of the Electoral College system for you and you are now more motivated to get registered, do a little more research on the candidates, and make a difference in your life by casting your vote for the person who's values and goals most line up with yours.

Sincerely,

Janet M. Nast

* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_1824

