ELECTORAL COLLEGE NOTES (Completed)

What is the Electoral College?

On December 15, a total of 538 people will assemble in the 50 states and the District of Columbia, and cast ballots. These people are Electors in an institution called the Electoral College. It was set up under the U.S.

Electors are, in number, [equivalent to] the Congressional Delegation in each state - - two for the Senate, and however many Representatives. And, they are elected by a winner-take-all in the states.

Two states, Nebraska and Maine, are an exception to the winner-take-all rule. They assign Electors proportionately according to the popular vote.

Democratic and Republican Parties are fixated on capturing a majority of the 538.

When you think about the strategy of an election, the most important number is 270. That is how many a candidate must get to win the election.

If no one receives 270 electoral votes, it goes to the House of Representatives to decide.

Problem with the Electoral College

It is possible for a candidate to not get a single person's vote -- not one -- in 39 states or the District of Columbia, yet be elected president by winning the popular vote in just 11 of these 12 states:

- California
- North Carolina
- Georgia
- Virginia
- New York
- Texas
- Florida
- New Jersey
- Illinois
- Ohio
- Michigan
- Pennsylvania
Interesting...

There are 538 total votes in the Electoral College and a presidential candidate must win a majority --270 -- electoral votes to be elected.

There have been three times when a candidate loses the popular vote, but wins the electoral vote:

- **In 1876** there were a total of 369 electoral votes available with 185 needed to win. Republican Rutherford B. Hayes, with 4,036,298 popular votes won 185 electoral votes. His main opponent, Democrat Samuel J. Tilden, won the popular vote with 4,300,590 votes, but won only 184 electoral votes. Hayes was elected president.

- **In 1888** there were a total of 401 electoral votes available with 201 needed to win. Republican Benjamin Harrison, with 5,439,853 popular votes won 233 electoral votes. His main opponent, Democrat Grover Cleveland, won the popular vote with 5,540,309 votes, but won only 168 electoral votes. Harrison was elected president.

- **In 2000** there were a total of 538 electoral votes available with 270 needed to win. Republican George W. Bush, with 50,456,002 popular votes won 271 electoral votes. His Democratic opponent, Al Gore, won the popular vote with 50,999,897 votes, but won only 266 electoral votes. Bush was elected president.

Why don’t we change the system?

A constitutional amendment must get a two-thirds vote from both houses of Congress and be ratified by three-fourths of the states.