

## The soft tyranny of ignorance

Nobody likes tyranny...except for masochists and maybe a few radicals who would rather fall on their swords than live to fight another day. To hear some Democratic Party Presidential hopefuls talk, you would think that something happened to the United States in the middle of the night that subverted our election process. They're talking about the *tyranny* of the Electoral College (EC) and their steadfast belief that the Presidential Election of 2016 was commandeered by a gaggle of evil Republican men and handed to Donald Trump. Still smarting from Al Gore's loss to George Bush in 2000, the Dems are renewing their complaint about the EC

If they were the least bit interested in history, they would have picked up their pocket Constitutions and looked up Article II, Section I. which states, "Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress: but no Senator or Representative, or Person holding an Office of Trust or Profit under the United States, shall be appointed an Elector." And if that still isn't enough to convince them, maybe the 12th and 14th Amendments will.

There is no physical college of electors. It's a process, not a place, and it was instituted as a compromise to insure that neither the Congress nor the general public could directly elect a President. Our founders believed that neither ordinary voters nor seasoned politicians would select presidents that were different from politicians of their day and who could be counted on to check and balance Congress. A compromise measure was necessary to impede demagogery and absolutist power, so the EC was established.

The electoral college also came about to appease the smaller population states - to assure them of adequate representation and influence. Under the system of the Electoral College each state has the same number of electoral votes as they have representatives in Congress, thus no state could have less than three. The argument put forward by the populous states is that smaller states have an unfair advantage in that their electoral votes count more (because of per capita ratios) than medium and large states.

Nowhere in the Constitution is it mandated that the winner of a state's popular vote automatically gets all of that state's electoral votes. Therefore, it makes no difference if you win a state by 50.1% or more. You are only allowed to receive the number of electoral votes authorized by the individual state's methodology. This can be maddening for candidates who win the popular vote (like Gore in 2000 and Clinton in 2016) and who go on to lose the electoral votes necessary to become President, but that's the system.

There have been occasional attempts to abolish the Electoral College. There was one right after Richard Nixon's loss to John Kennedy. Most recently, Senator Elizabeth Warren is beating that drum. She and her party do not want to see a replay of 2016 in 2020. Her simplistic appeal that 'the electoral College is unfair' resonates with millions of Democrats who feel that HRC should be making decisions in the White House instead of Donald Trump because she got three million more popular votes. We can expect more rhetoric from the Democrats on this issue in the coming year as they carefully bundle it together with other issues that paint a picture of an unfair system that is both rigged from without (Russian interference) and from within (systematic voter suppression and gerrymandering by the Republicans and the retention of the Electoral College aka 'the Republican status quo') that are meant to thwart the "will of the people."

Democrats will probably succeed in whipping up their base on the 'unfairness' aspect of the issue as most of them don't understand the Electoral College or why it was established in the first place. That's a pity because the Founding Fathers were not the village idiots. They were keenly aware of the problems of politicians electing politicians (Congress choosing a President) and for voters (of

large population states with special interests) electing a President that would accede to their wishes even in defiance of the Constitution.

There are many of us that believe that the EC still serves a purpose by insuring small state participation and that we must preserve that participation to protect the country from becoming a monolithic 'Blue vise' of bi-coastal Democrat domination that could intimidate the rest of America. We must remember that the EC is enshrined in the Constitution and that it would take a Constitutional Amendment to change or abolish it. The process isn't easy. The Constitution provides that an amendment may be proposed either by the Congress with a two-thirds majority vote in both the House of Representatives and the Senate or by a constitutional convention called for by two-thirds of the State legislatures. (None of the 27 amendments to the Constitution have been proposed by constitutional convention.) The Congress proposes an amendment in the form of a joint resolution. Then, three-quarters of the states (38 out of 50) must ratify it. In all, it's a mammoth undertaking.

Democrats know that and they see that the best way to insure EC victories going forward is to amend their individual EC states' voting processes - so that all their electoral votes go to the winner of the popular vote. Efforts are already underway in states like mine in New Mexico and in other 'Blue' states to do just that. If they succeed, we could eventually witness the euthanizing of the Electoral College. What is equally worrisome is a movement by the Democrats to lower the voting age from 18 to 16 (Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi is already on record saying she supports it). Should both happen, our elections could become nothing more than telegenic teenage voter beauty contests where candidates on the Left are only interested in boosting their electability by skateboarding their way through large population states.

Do we really want our country governed by populist-driven candidates who will say anything to gain power and thereby become the *soft tyrants* the Founding Fathers warned against when they created the Electoral College? I sincerely hope not.

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