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Those who do not understand the Electoral College often think it is a place, but it is actually the process used to determine our next president. The 'college' is a group of 538 people made up of each state's senators and representatives from Congress. A majority of 270 votes from these electors towards one candidate ensures his/her spot as the next president ("What is"). These electors do not vote for who they personally believe should be president, but rather they listen to their state and its people. Some states have slightly different ways of allocating electoral votes to a candidate, but most use a winner-take all system. In this way of voting, a statewide vote for the president selects one winner, and that candidate receives all of the electoral votes for that particular state. Two states, Nebraska and Maine, use a different method called the proportional voting. In this form, Congressional sections within each state can have their own winner, and therefore give electoral votes to multiple candidates depending on how they were favored in each portion of the state ("What is"). The final Electoral College votes takes place in January, on the 6th, during a meeting between all the members of the House and Senate. Each person votes for a candidate according to how their state voted in the larger elections. This is the processed first used to determine our president, and with all but slight variations, this still is how the Electoral College operates in the United States. Our founders created this system, and for very particular reasons.

The structure of the Electoral College was carefully crafted. The Founders wanted a system that kept complete power from the elite because they had experience with how corruption would take over in a monarchy, but they also wanted to keep away from a direct democracy and the destruction it could bring (Stepman). The Electoral College did just that, creating a compromise between a fully democratic system and an aristocratic one. The Electoral College is also a compromise in the sense that gives equality to all states. Just like the Senate, the Electoral College keeps the states with the largest populations from determining the outcome on their own. Then, like the House, it gives more votes to states with more people. It is all about balance and compromise. The founders chose this system because they wanted the vast variety of people in America to be equally represented. Businessmen in large cities have completely different needs and views than farmers working in the fields every day. The Electoral College gives candidates a reason to visit smaller states because their votes are still important in this system (Stepman). Without the Electoral College, campaigning would take place almost entirely in the largest cities, and candidates would not take into account the needs of the less populated areas. This is just one of the benefits the founders saw in the Electoral College.

Another reason that the founders chose the Electoral College was to protect the interests of the nation as a whole. It was argued that the people must control things for themselves, as to not end up in a tyranny, but others believed in the importance of regulating that power. The Electoral College serves as a way for the people to hold power, but for the nation to have more direct election process. Alexander Hamilton himself described the situation in his Federalist Papers. He stated the importance of having people hold a large amount of power, but also the desirability of having the more capable representative make the final choice. He explained that the Electoral College would allow the representatives to analyze all aspects of the candidates and choose the most fitting (Stepman). The founders saw the need for a final review process, and

found that the Electoral College offered the best way to balance power and make the process smarter. Their decision was supported by many, but of course there were some who opposed, as there are today.

People today often voice their complaints about the Electoral College, especially when the popular vote does not reflect the winner of the Electoral College. This anger often stems from not understanding that the popular vote does not really determine the president, but that it rather determines votes for the electors. Others argue that the Electoral College keeps candidates too focused on 'swing states' where votes are more likely to be shifted during campaigning (Stepman). Again, this thought process is flawed because it does not take in account how the Electoral College keeps smaller states and less populated area on the map. Without the Electoral College, the smaller states would lose their footing and power, causing chaos in the nation. It is easy for people to complain, but our system has worked for over two-hundred years. The Electoral College was created the way it is on purpose, acting as a balance between direct democracy and a monarchy. It serves as a way to produce a definite winner and prevents the appointment of an tyrannical ruler. Our founding fathers devised a well-planned system for many reasons, and its longevity proves to us that it works, and works well.

Works Cited

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