

Roots in Ripon

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Chuck Roots

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One More Time

Well, the events following the presidential election last month come as no surprise. In fact, I mentioned in one of my articles leading up to the election that there would be a call from somewhere in the political hallways of Congress to repeal the Constitution's establishment of the Electoral College vote in favor of the more popular "Popular Vote."

Sure enough, the dust hadn't even settled from the November 7th ballot counting and already members of Congress were squawking about the unfairness of the election. A political commentary from CNBC trumpets, "*Democrats and Left Wing activists are loudly calling to repeal the Electoral College.*" The argument that has been put forth goes something like this: Hillary has won the Popular Vote by two-and-a-half million votes over Donald Trump. Therefore, she should be the next president. This same approach was touted by Al Gore in his failed bid for the White House in 2000, garnering more Popular Votes than George W. Bush.

The U.S. Presidential Election has never been a Popular Vote at any time in our 240-year history. Hopefully it never will be. The Founding Fathers intentionally steered our new republic away from popularity voting. High school class presidents were almost entirely about the popularity of the individual running for office. Our Founding Fathers thought this to be a bad formula for electing the president of our country.

The question is still asked, "*Why do we have the Electoral College?*" The answer comes from a clear understanding of the Constitution. "*The founding fathers established the Electoral College in the Constitution as a compromise between election of the President by a vote in Congress and election of the President by a popular vote of qualified citizens.*"

In a rather clever word picture attempting to show how the Popular Vote works, it is likened to two wolves and a lamb deciding what to have for dinner. In a Popular Vote (used in a Direct Democracy) the wolves win every time. Whereas in an Electoral College system (used in a Representative Republic) the vote of the lamb is intended to offset the majority vote (50.1%) by leveraging their vote and the vote of the wolves through a representative which is designed to balance out the direct power of majority rule.

If the two candidates running for president had been solely interested in garnering the highest numbers in the Popular Vote, then they would have spent their time in densely populated areas, like Chicago, New York, City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and so on. Folks in Wyoming, Montana, the Dakotas, and generally throughout "fly-over country" would have little to no influence on the outcome of an election. The reason Hillary Clinton has been ahead in the Popular Vote by a couple of million votes is because she won the five boroughs that make up New York City. The boroughs are: Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Bronx, and Staten Island (A

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borough is an incorporated municipality smaller than a city). The sheer numbers of people living in this cramped and congested area ballooned her Popular Vote numbers past Trump, giving her the clear edge in the overall Popular Vote.

But consider this: Hillary won the District of Columbia and only 20 of the 50 states. Now, furthermore, if you want to break this down into who won more counties, then the comparison between Hillary and "The Donald" becomes very clear. There are 3,141 counties in the United States. Donald Trump won 3,084 counties. Hillary Clinton won 57 counties. Did you get that?

Here is why the Electoral College is critical to our nation's political system. If you believe that every person's vote should count, then the Electoral College system established in the Constitution deserves to be vigorously defended against those who would throw it out, only to be replaced by the Popular Vote.

For instance: in Loving County, Texas, the population is 82. That's right! A mere eighty-two people. In Los Angeles County, California, the population is 9.8 million. Each county has an equal vote.

Do you see why Hillary with 20 states and 57 counties nationwide has won the Popular Vote? She managed to succeed in the most heavily populated areas of urban America.

When you cast a vote for your choice of president, you are actually voting for an elector, a representative, to vote on your behalf. *"There were no political parties when the Constitution was written. They soon developed, and the party organizations in each state began proposing a slate, or list, of electors who were pledged to vote for their party's nominee. Voters no longer choose individual electors. Voters choose between party slates. Political parties want winner-take-all elections for electors. This means that the slate that receives the most popular votes wins all the state's electoral votes. All the states except Maine use this winner-take-all system today."*

The Electoral College has a total of 538 electors, consisting of the number of delegates to Congress from each state. Each member of the House of Representatives, and each states' two Senators cast a vote. The first presidential candidate to reach or surpass 270 electoral votes is the new president-elect.

Next time you hear someone complain that their vote doesn't really count, you can show them that it really does count. In the 2000 election, George Bush won 271 electoral votes, to Al Gore's 267. That means a few votes in a couple of counties may well have made the difference.

The Founding Fathers were brilliant in developing this never-before election system. It must be protected if the United States is to remain the Land of the Free, and the Home of the Brave.

God Bless America!