
April 19, 2025

BECOME PART OF THE LWVUS CAMPAIGN TO

Abolish the Electoral College

Elect the President by Direct Popular Vote



Jane Newell / Ellie Syverud
LWV of Virginia

What is the Electoral College?

A group of **538 people** (electors) who elect the President and Vice President of the US

State legislatures decide how their state will choose electors

All currently use a popular vote **within their state**

Each state has a number of electors **equal to their number of seats** in the US House and Senate

A majority (270 electoral votes) is needed to win

“

“The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice President is essential to representative government. The League of Women Voters believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished.”

**Position on Selection of the President,
announced by National Board, January 1970**



“

“We support the use of the National Popular Vote Compact as one acceptable way to achieve the goal of the direct popular vote for election of the president until the abolition of the Electoral College is accomplished.”

**Added to Position on Selection of the President,
LWV Convention, June 2010**



What's Wrong with the Electoral College?

And How a Direct Popular Vote for President Solves These Problems

The Electoral College was created in 1787 for slaveholders in the south

A compromise to give Southern states more power in Presidential elections based on counting enslaved people as “3/5” of a free person.



“

"It seems now to be pretty well understood that the real difference of interests lies not between the large and small but between the northern and southern states. The institution of slavery and its consequences form the line of discrimination."

**James Madison, July 14, 1787
(source: National Archives)**

The Electoral College Ushered in the Jim Crow Era (1877 – 1964)

After slavery was abolished, the 1876 election traded the civil rights of Black Americans to allow Rutherford B. Hayes (who lost the popular vote) to become President.



The Electoral College continues to suppress the voices of Black Americans

PROBLEM: ELECTORAL COLLEGE

- States with higher Black populations tend to have less power in the Electoral College, while states with higher white populations tend to have more.

SOLUTION: DIRECT POPULAR VOTE

- Every voter counts as one vote, regardless of race or any other demographic identity.

Population Per Electoral Vote	
States more than 85% White	398,887
States more than 15% Black	644,656

**DC not included*

“

“[An] analysis of every election from 2000 on indicates the Electoral College has consistently awarded more votes per capita to states with whiter populations...”

William Blake, “The Overlooked Racial Dynamics of the Electoral College”

Electoral College Turns Losers into Winners

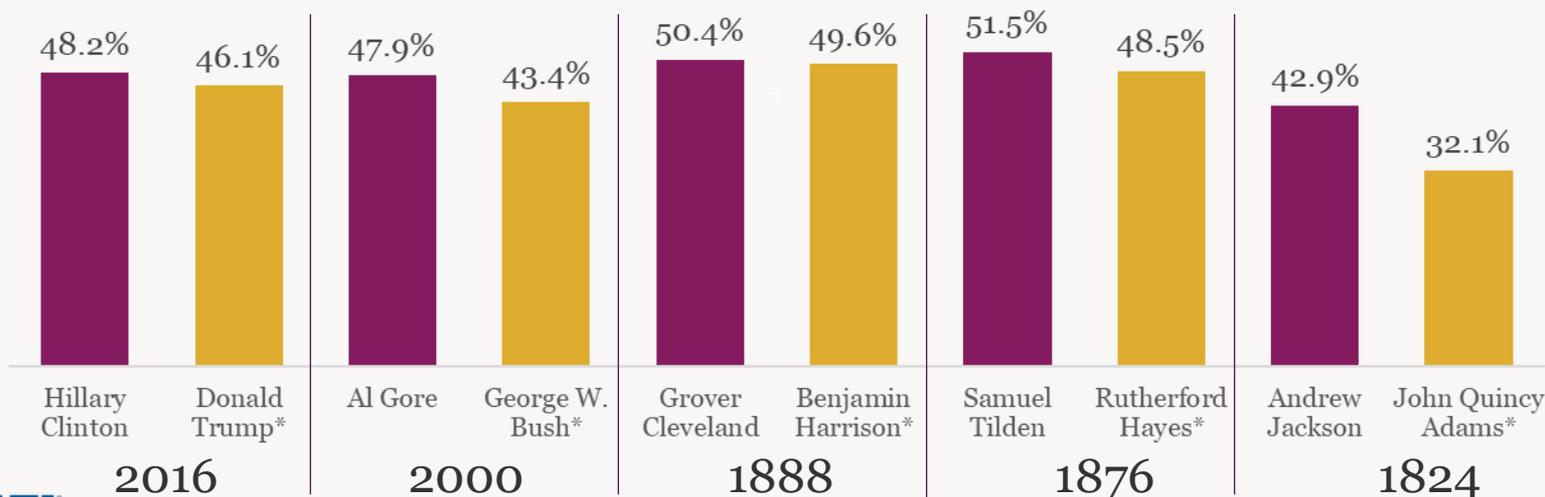
PROBLEM: ELECTORAL COLLEGE

- Allows a candidate with fewer votes from the people to win the Presidency.

SOLUTION: DIRECT POPULAR VOTE

- Ensures that the candidate with the most votes from the people becomes the President.

Popular Vote %



* Elected via Electoral College

Data Source: Federal Elections Commission

Electoral College Makes Some Votes Count More Others

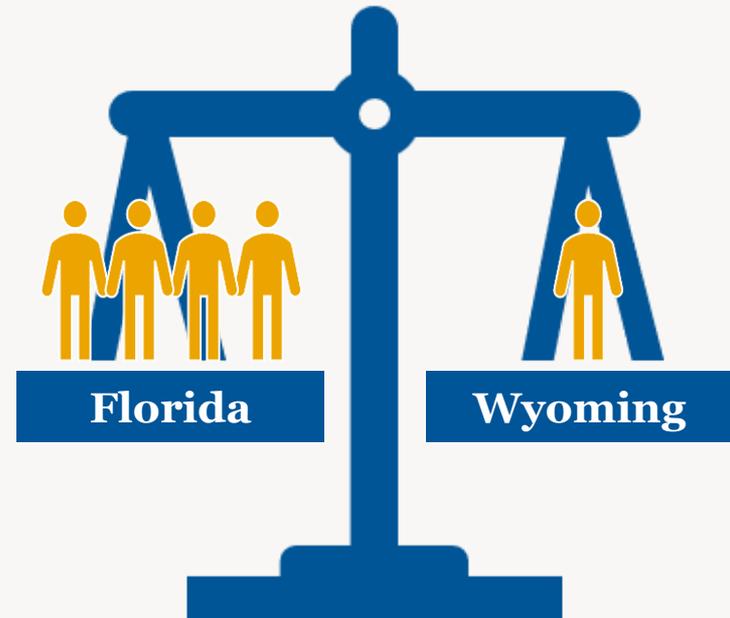
PROBLEM: ELECTORAL COLLEGE

- One person's vote carries more or less weight depending where they live.

SOLUTION: DIRECT POPULAR VOTE

- One person = one vote, no matter where you live.

	Wyoming	Florida
Population	576,000	21,538,000
Electoral Votes	3	29
Population per Electoral Vote	192,000	743,000



Electoral College Means Only a Few Swing States Matter

PROBLEM: ELECTORAL COLLEGE

- Focuses candidates' time, money, and policy on a handful of "swing" states. Most states are completely ignored.

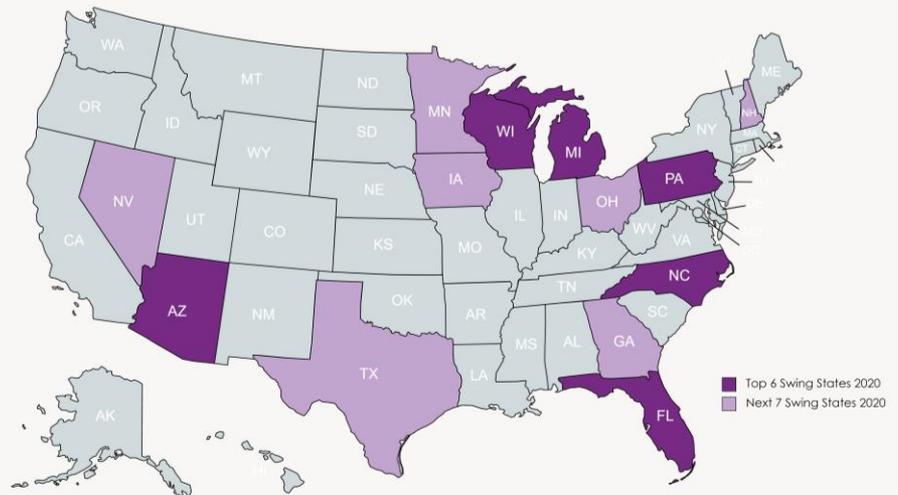
SOLUTION: DIRECT POPULAR VOTE

- Increase our access to candidates and widen the geographic scope of their campaigns.

Swing States 2020

13 Swing States

% of all US states	25%
% of US population	40%
% of Presidential Campaign Events	98%
% of Presidential TV ad spending	100%



Electoral College Discourages Voter Participation

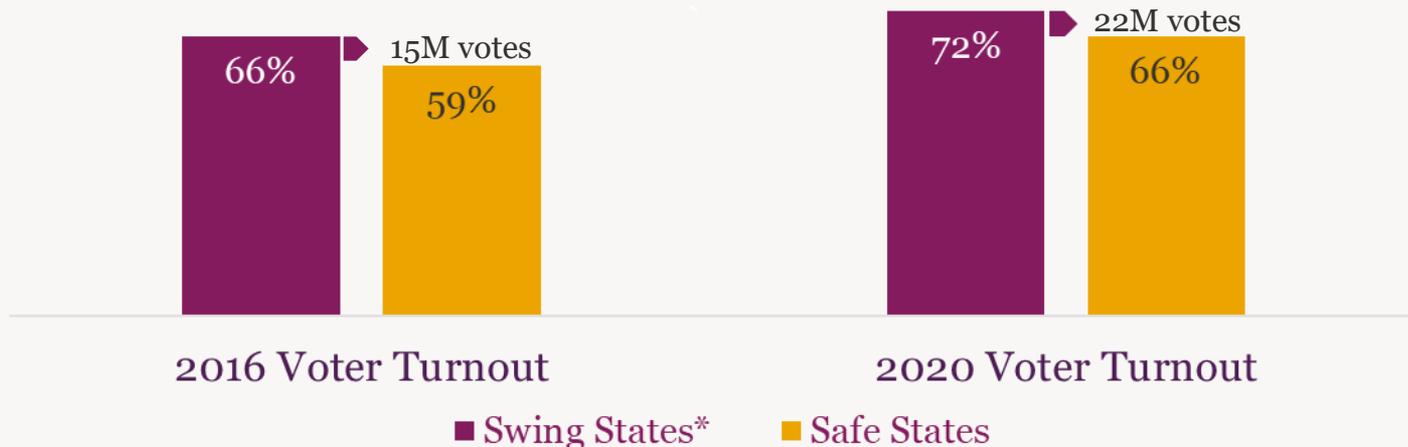
PROBLEM: ELECTORAL COLLEGE

- The Electoral College decreases voter turnout in so-called “safe” states.

SOLUTION: DIRECT POPULAR VOTE

- Increase voter turnout and participation by making every vote count – and count equally.

% of Eligible Voters Who Voted
(M = millions of votes)



Electoral College Makes It Easy to Cheat

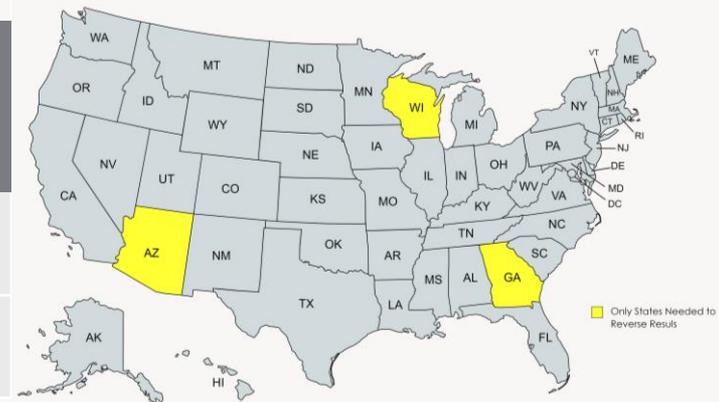
PROBLEM: ELECTORAL COLLEGE

- The Electoral College makes our Presidential elections more vulnerable to manipulation and even outright fraud.

SOLUTION: DIRECT POPULAR VOTE

- Increases election security by making it harder to influence the outcome.

	# Votes To Overturn			
	Biden	Trump	Popular Election	Electoral Election
Electoral Votes	306	232	-	38
Popular Votes	81,268,924	74,216,154	3,526,386	42,918



Myth Busters!

*Common Arguments for the Electoral College
Fail the Fact Test*

Electoral College Myth #1

MYTH

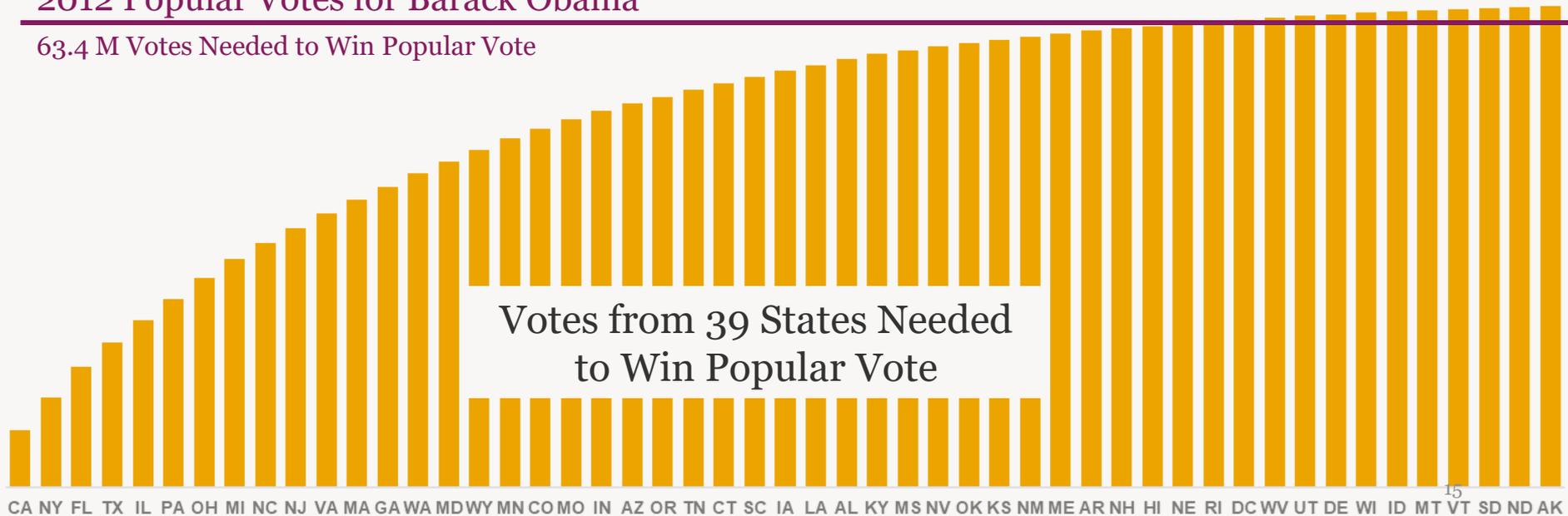
- Without the Electoral College, our Presidents would be chosen by a few big states, like California and New York

FACT

- Votes from MOST or ALL states would be needed to win the Presidency by a direct popular vote.

2012 Popular Votes for Barack Obama

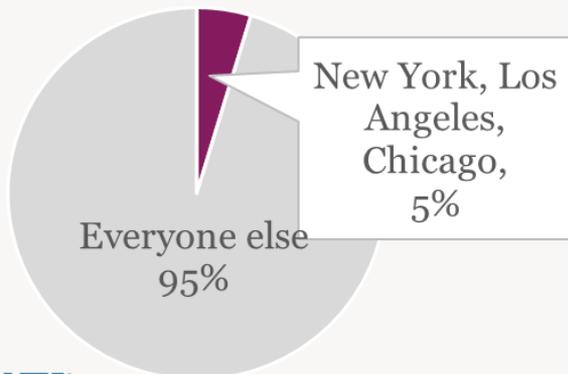
63.4 M Votes Needed to Win Popular Vote



Electoral College Myth #2

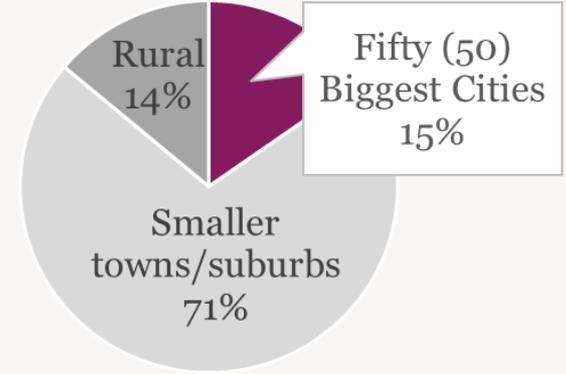
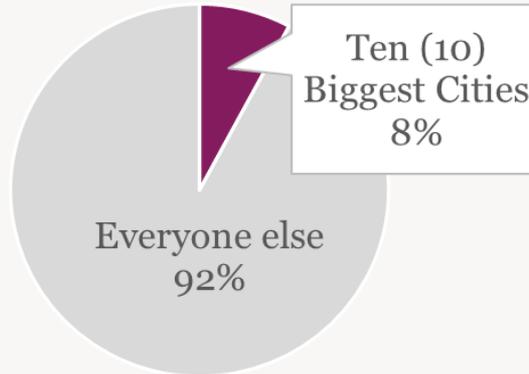
MYTH

- Without the Electoral College, our Presidents would be chosen by a few big cities, like New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago.



FACT

- There aren't enough people living in New York City, Los Angeles and Chicago — or even in the 50 biggest cities — to choose the President on their own.



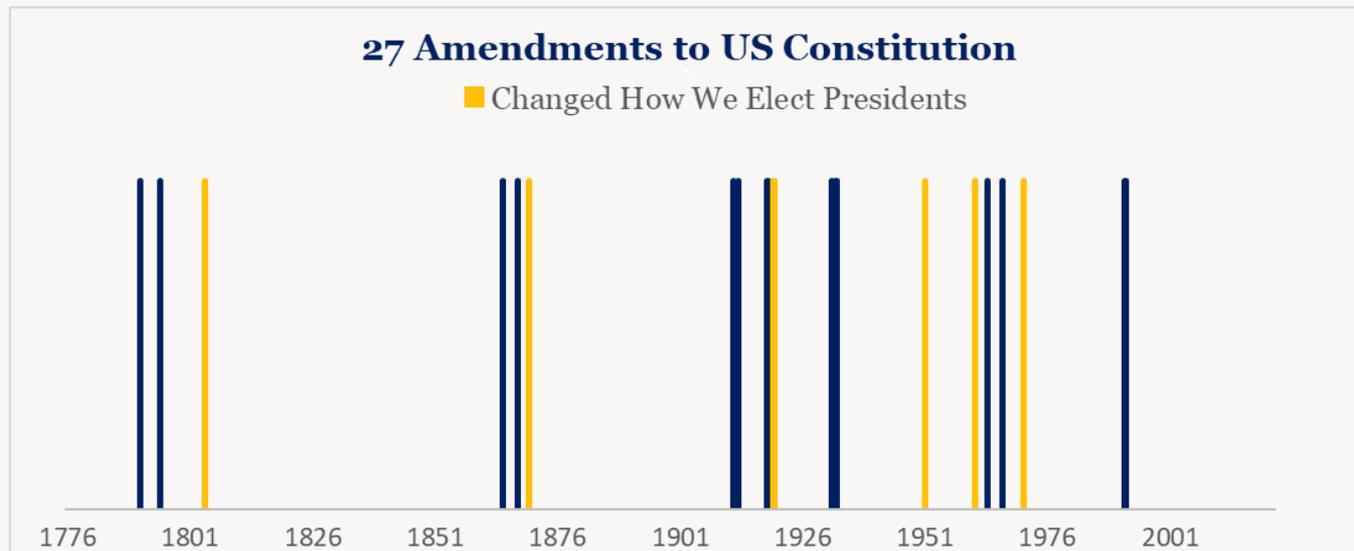
Electoral College Myth #4

MYTH

- The Electoral College will never be abolished because it requires an amendment to the US Constitution.

FACT

- US Constitution has been amended 27 times, often during times of crisis and conflict. Six amendments changed how we elect our President



What Needs to Be Done?

Our Goal and How to Get There

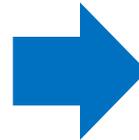
Goal: A Constitutional Amendment

Abolishing the Electoral College requires an amendment to the US Constitution.



Proposal

- 2/3 vote US Senate
- 2/3 vote US House



Ratification

- By $\frac{3}{4}$ of state legislatures (38 states)

Note: A Constitutional Convention is not required and is not supported by the League of Women Voters.



Actions in US House and Senate

1968 – 1970

- 81% of Americans supported abolishing Electoral College (source: Gallup poll)
- US House of Representatives voted 338 to 70 to abolish the Electoral College in favor of a direct popular vote
- Bill died in Senate when filibustered by Southern Democrats

2019 – present

- Bills introduced in both House & Senate
- No vote as yet

Goal: National Popular Vote Interstate Compact

National Popular  ote!

National Popular Vote (NPV) Interstate Compact

Would guarantee
Presidency to the
candidate who
receives the most
popular votes across
**all 50 states and
the District of
Columbia**



Q: Is the current way the President and Vice President are elected required by the US Constitution?

A: It is NOT!

What is an Interstate Compact?

An interstate compact is a formal contract or agreement between states, similar to a treaty, that establishes a legal relationship for addressing shared problems or promoting common goals.

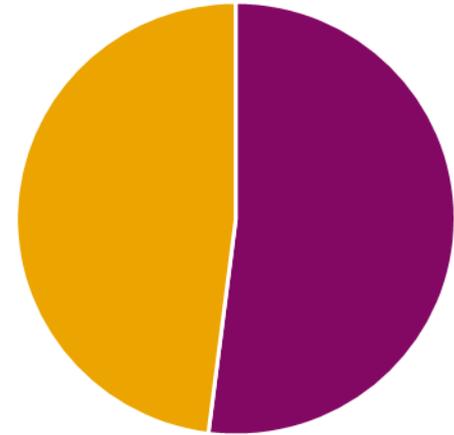
Examples of Interstate Compacts

- 1. Border compacts**, agreements between states regarding the establishment of boundaries of the states
- 2. Advisory compacts**, agreements to create commissions to study a problem or issue relevant to both states
- 3. Regulatory compacts**, agreements to create agencies to create rules and regulations binding to the states

Virginia is in at least 49 Interstate Compacts

National Popular Vote Interstate Compact

- Activation happens when signing states total **270 electoral votes**
- NPV plan awards all of a state's electoral votes to the winner of the national popular vote from all 50 states + DC

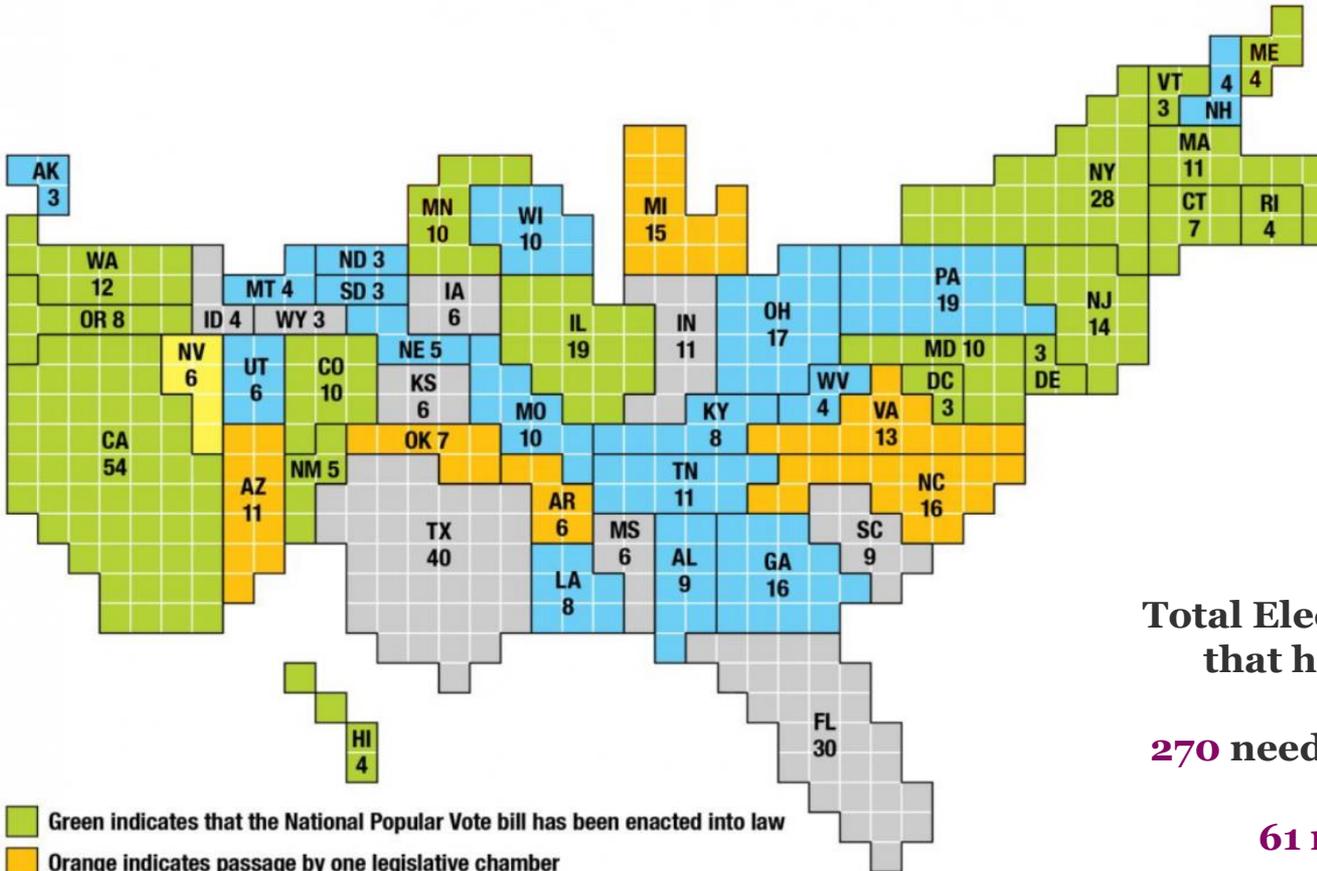


Majority of 538 votes



270 TO WIN

Status of NPV by State (2024)



Total Electoral Votes in states that have passed NPV: **209**

270 needed to elect President

61 more Electoral Votes needed to activate NPV

- Green indicates that the National Popular Vote bill has been enacted into law
- Orange indicates passage by one legislative chamber
- Yellow indicates passage by both legislative chambers
- Blue indicates a hearing by at least one legislative committee
- Gray indicates bill introduced, but no hearing

What has happened in Virginia?

Delegate Dan Helmer introduced the National Popular Vote bill as chief patron ([status of HB375](#)). It was continued to the next session where it was dropped.

This was not the first time a NPV bill was introduced.



On November 11-12, 2020, 983 Virginia voters were asked:

“How do you think we should elect the President? Do you think it should be the candidate who gets the most votes in all 50 states, or do you think it should be the current electoral college system?”

The poll was conducted by Public Policy Polling and the results were as follows:

- **By political party, 61% of Virginia voters, including 73% of Democrats, 57% of Independents, and 50% of Republicans favor a national popular vote for President**

Current System: Winner Takes All

Battleground States Determine Who Becomes President

- Campaigns *woo* battleground states
- Campaigns *ignore* 70% of US voters

RESULT: Voter Apathy

Summary: National Popular Vote Plan

- ***Guarantees*** candidates with the most popular votes nationwide wins
- ***Gives*** every vote equal value
- ***Ensures*** all states are competitive
- ***Honors*** the will of the people
- ***Works within*** Electoral College, preserving the tradition
- ***Does not*** require a constitutional amendment

Questions

