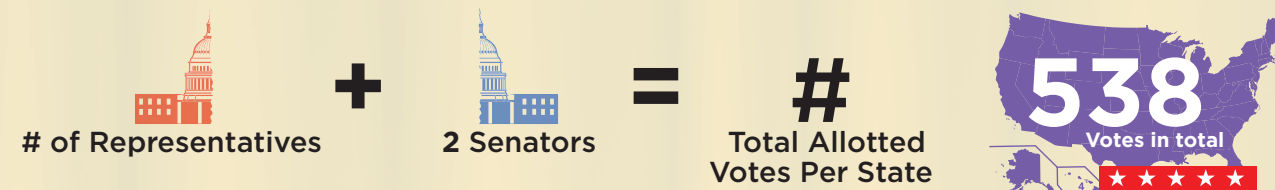


THE BIG PICTURE: HOW THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE WORKS, AND HOW IT MIGHT WORK

The founding fathers intended the Electoral College to be a compromise between direct election of the president (they weren't sure they trusted us!) and selection of the president by Congress (they didn't want him to be indebted). Consequently, the Electoral College is selected once every four years, those members meet in November to choose the president, and then they disband, never to meet again. Good idea, or bad? Look at how it works and decide for yourself.

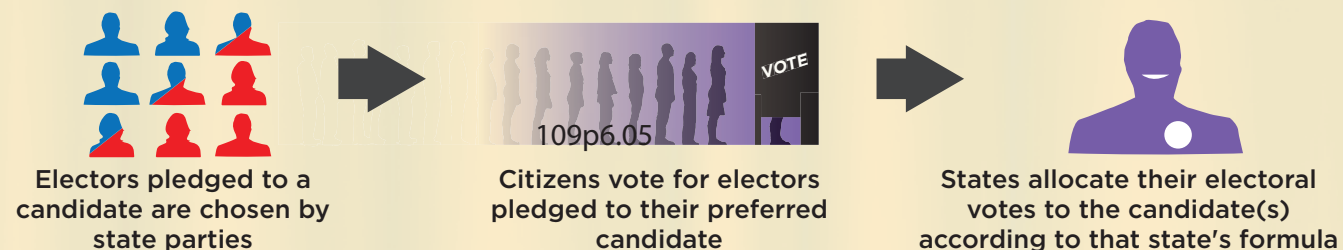
How It Works

Each state is allotted a set number of electors but can decide how to allocate them among the presidential candidates.



What Your Vote Means

When you cast your vote you are really voting for an elector chosen by the state party who will cast a vote for president on your behalf.

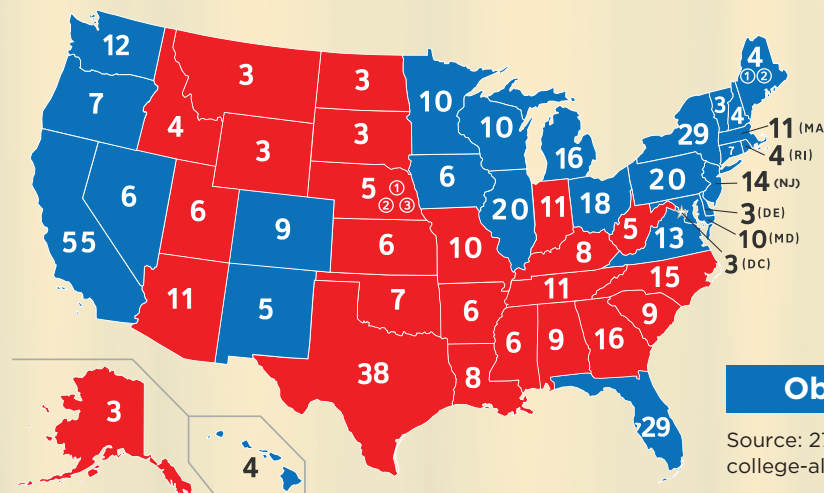


How the States Allocate Their Votes

48 states have a winner-take-all system where the candidate who wins the popular vote in the state gets ALL the state's electoral votes. But Maine and Nebraska award their votes proportionally.



In 2012, the Electoral Vote Looked Like This...



On election night, news networks use returns and exit poll interviews to estimate who won each state and its electoral votes. A simple majority, or 270, is sufficient to win.

270

Obama 332

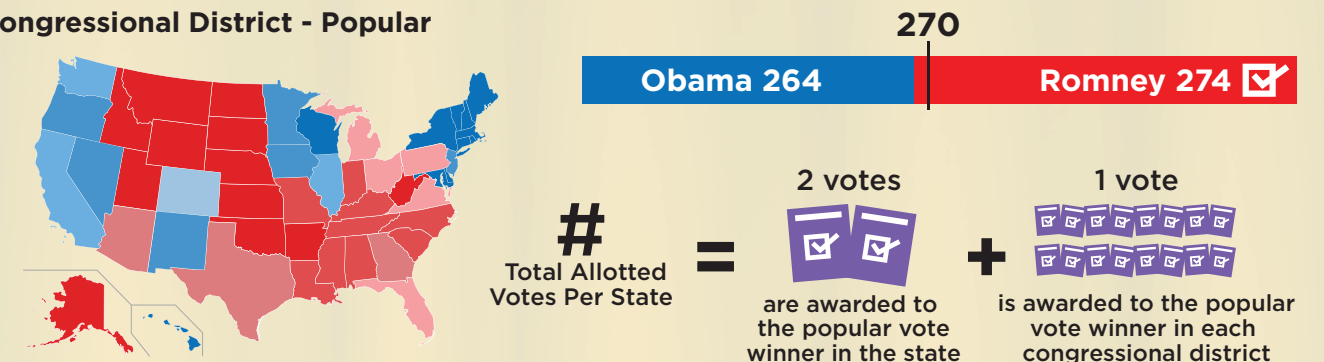
Romney 206

Source: 270toWin [<http://www.270towin.com/alternative-electoral-college-allocation-methods/>]

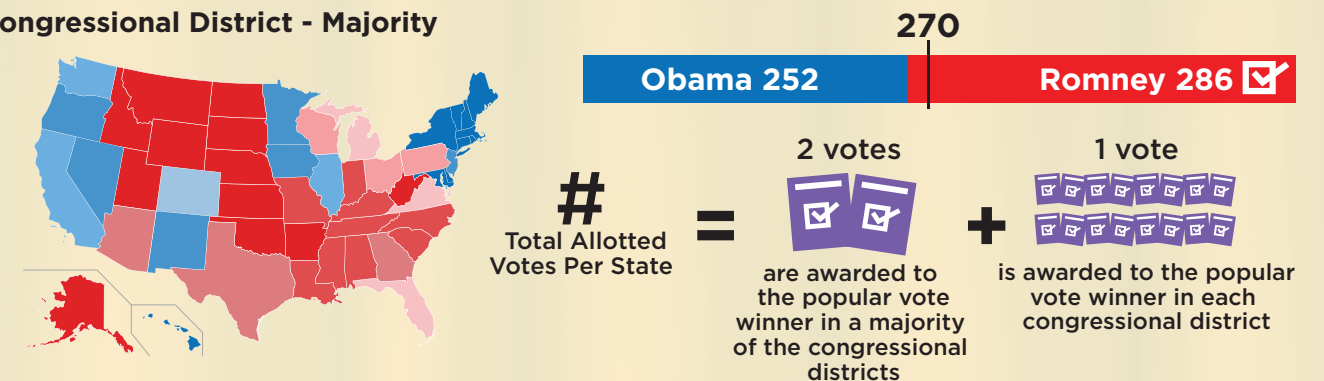
But It Could Be Different

The winner-take all system seems unfair to some people, and it concentrates presidential contests in just a few "battleground states." But states could allocate their votes differently. Here are a few of the options, with a look at how they would have affected the results of the 2012 election.

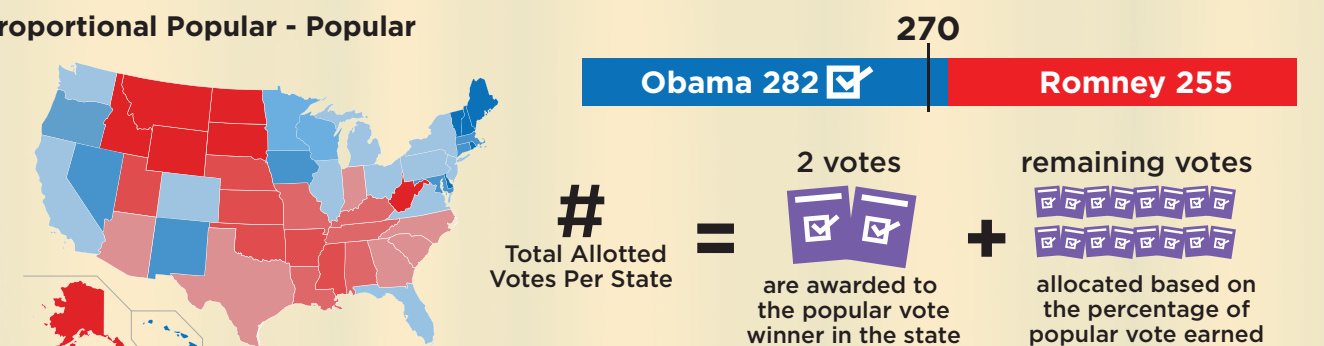
Congressional District - Popular



Congressional District - Majority



Proportional Popular - Popular



Popular Vote - Eliminate the Electoral College (because the popular vote winner has lost 4 times!)

Obama 65,918,507 (51.01%)

Romney 60,934,407 (47.15%)

National Popular Vote Interstate Compact A budding agreement among the states would commit each state to cast all of their electoral votes for the national popular vote winner, ensuring that the popular vote winner becomes president, but without amending the Constitution. It will take effect if states with 270 combined electoral votes commit to be bound by it. As of 2014, ten states plus the District of Columbia, accounting for nearly a third of the required 270 votes, had passed legislation to join the compact.

