

Every four years, adults across the country head to the polls to cast their ballot for the next president of the United States. Though many have been taught that the people have complete control over who becomes the commander in chief, the process is not that simple for this election. After the popular vote has been casted for each state, a system called the electoral college comes into play. Every state has as many electors as congressional representatives and senators, with the District of Columbia having 3. In total, there are 538 electors who determine who the next president will be. To win the election, a nominee only needs 270 electoral votes. For 48 states, the candidate who receives the popular vote for the election will receive all of the electoral votes. In Maine and Nebraska, however, electoral votes are allocated by congressional district, with two additional votes given to the state winner. Though this has been the process for electing the president since the ratification of the 12th amendment in 1804, America's political system is in need of a major change. The electoral college should be abolished because it creates an unbalance of power between most states, and has an often ignored controversial history.

With the 2020 election being less than a month away, politicians and news stations have been analyzing what states will determine the outcome of the election. There is so much uncertainty around this presidential race due to the recent expected shift from states who have historically voted red or blue and the everchanging results from swing states. Swing states are states that tend to "swing" between voting for the Democratic or Republican nominee from election to election. Usually, there are about 12 swing states whose turnouts determine the outcome, but for this election, that number has been narrowed down to four: Florida, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin (*pastemagazine.com*). These states make up close to 86% of the electoral college votes, while only housing 32% of the voting population. Since a nominee that wins these states would automatically win the election, it makes sense that the candidates would increase their efforts to win over the people of these areas. When the future of our country lies in the hands of who the voting population in four states votes for, the desires, needs, and innovative ideas from people in other parts of the country can be overlooked. Because different states have different amounts of electoral votes, these areas are essentially more powerful than other states, instead of all 50 states being equal. If the electoral college was done away with, the people would be in control of electing who they believe is best fit to lead their country.

Due to the events of this summer, many institutions and historic groups have been forced to analyze the exclusion and controversial truths of their past. The electoral college should be the next system to take a look at its uncomfortable history. During the constitutional convention of 1787, leaders shared their ideas of how the president should be elected. Since America had just gained its independence, they wanted to create a long lasting process that would never give one person or group complete power over all others. One group of delegates believe that congress shouldn't have anything to do with the election, as it would be a great opportunity for corruption between the executive and legislative branches. Another group was completely against letting people pick their leader themselves. They believed that voters, especially in rural areas, would be

ill informed on the policies of the candidates. After all of the discussion and debate, a compromise was reached where states would appoint a number of independent electors based on state population size to be the determining factors for the election. However, this compromise was met with more debate, as the new issue would be determining if slaves would be allowed to count towards this number. At this time, 40% of southerners in 1787 were slaves who could not vote (*history.com*). Because of America's negative and degrading viewpoint of African Americans, slaves were not actually considered people. However, southern states knew that they could count the number of slaves towards their total population in order to receive more electoral votes. What resulted is called the 3/5ths compromise. This new addition towards the electoral process allowed for all slaves to count for 3/5ths of a person, increasing the population size of southern states. This was degrading to African Americans not only because they weren't considered people, but also because they were once again being used to be a part of a system where everybody benefitted except for them. Since this compromise, African Americans have fought extremely hard to be considered citizens and receive the right to vote. Though both of these goals have been accomplished, it is impossible to forget the humiliating and exclusionary truth of a system that our country still uses to elect its leaders.

Despite its many flaws, the electoral college was implemented because leaders felt that it would meet the needs of all voters, while ensuring that political groups could have more power than another. Many believe that the electoral college should be kept in place because it gives smaller states an equal voice. If the election was decided by the popular vote, candidates would rarely visit these states, since their smaller voting population would have less of an impact on the outcome. This is true, but the issue could be solved with extensive candidate outreach, instead of the electoral college system. If smaller states feel overlooked, the next action lies with the candidate. He or she needs to visit and make a connection with the people of all 50 states. This would help citizens see that the potential president is committed to serving all Americans, not just the ones that could help them win. Some citizens feel that the electoral college should not be done away with because any change to the way our country elects a president will require an amendment to the constitution. Originally proposed in 1789, the 27th and latest amendment was not actually ratified until May of 1992. For many Americans, there is no point in advocating for a new amendment that might never get ratified. If the fight towards change is stopped here, the progressive work of activists and leaders of the past is being forgotten. Have African Americans ever stopped fighting for equal rights? Have women ever stopped speaking out against inequalities and gender discrimination in the workplace? Even though abolishing the electoral college will be a lengthy and difficult process, the system will never change until everyone works together to show people in power that it is time to use a different approach for electing its leaders. From the counterarguments of abolishing the electoral college, it is apparent that many fear being stripped of equality between all states and that changing the current process could bring about a lot of uncertainty. With every change, there will be unwanted fears and

complications. But many institutions in our country are realizing the errors of their past, and are willing to create an inclusive future for all.

Since its ratification in 1804, the 12th amendment has allowed the electoral college to determine the outcome of each presidential race. However, the uneven amount of electoral votes between states and the racist intentions of its creators have been anything but democratic. What was supposed to be a compromise between the various possibilities of election processes, the electoral college has only allowed exclusion and underrepresentation to thrive. If the past few months have been any indication, there are many leaders who are dedicated to a future of change and equality for all. It is time for Americans to demand the justice that has been promised to all people for centuries. The popular vote needs to determine the election, because it is the only vote that represents what the people truly want. With the electoral college in place, there will only continue to be outcomes that differ from the popular vote. This turnout, which has happened in five previous elections, has been met with backlash from citizens, as their vote seemed to have no say. If the electoral college is done away with, every American will be able to choose who they believe is best fit to lead the country. There will be no swing states, electoral voters, or population disparity that will limit the people from electing who they want. As the upcoming election draws near, consider the electoral college's purpose. Does it really create the equality that every American vote is supposed to be afforded?