

PRESIDENTIAL VOTING PROCESS MADE SIMPLE

Did you ever wonder how a Presidential candidate can win the majority of individual votes and lose the election? Well, it can happen and has happened on several occasions. There are two type of votes in the presidential election; the popular vote which is simply the aggregate of individual votes cast and the electoral vote which is votes cast by the Electoral College. The Electoral College consists of members referred to as Electors. Electors are chosen by each State and the District of Columbia. The amount of state Electors is based upon the voting membership of each state in Congress (the number of representatives in the House plus the number of Senators). There are currently 435 Representatives and 100 Senators in Congress. With the addition of 3 Electors from the District of Columbia, it brings the total of electoral votes to 538. The office of President of the United States is elected by winning 270 or more of the electoral votes, not the popular vote. Hence, a candidate can receive the most individual votes and not win the office. Throughout history there have been five candidates that have won the popular vote and lost the election; Andrew Jackson (lost to John Quincy Adams), Samuel Tilden (lost to Rutherford B. Hayes), Grover Cleveland (lost to Benjamin Harrison), Al Gore (lost to George W. Bush), and in our last election – Hillary Clinton (lost to Donald Trump).

Why the Electoral College? The process of electing the President of the United States by the electoral vote has been in place (with changes through the years) since September 6, 1787. The electoral vote process was established in an attempt to ensure that less populated states are fully represented and have a significant impact on the election – thus they can't be overlooked or ignored during the election process or the candidate cannot win the election. This is possible because the number of electoral votes is not directly proportional to the population of the state. That is also the reason why a candidate may win the popular vote and lose the election!

What does your individual vote do? It directly relates to how the Elector for your state will cast their electoral vote and indirectly elects the next President of the United States! So no matter where you're from – VOTE!