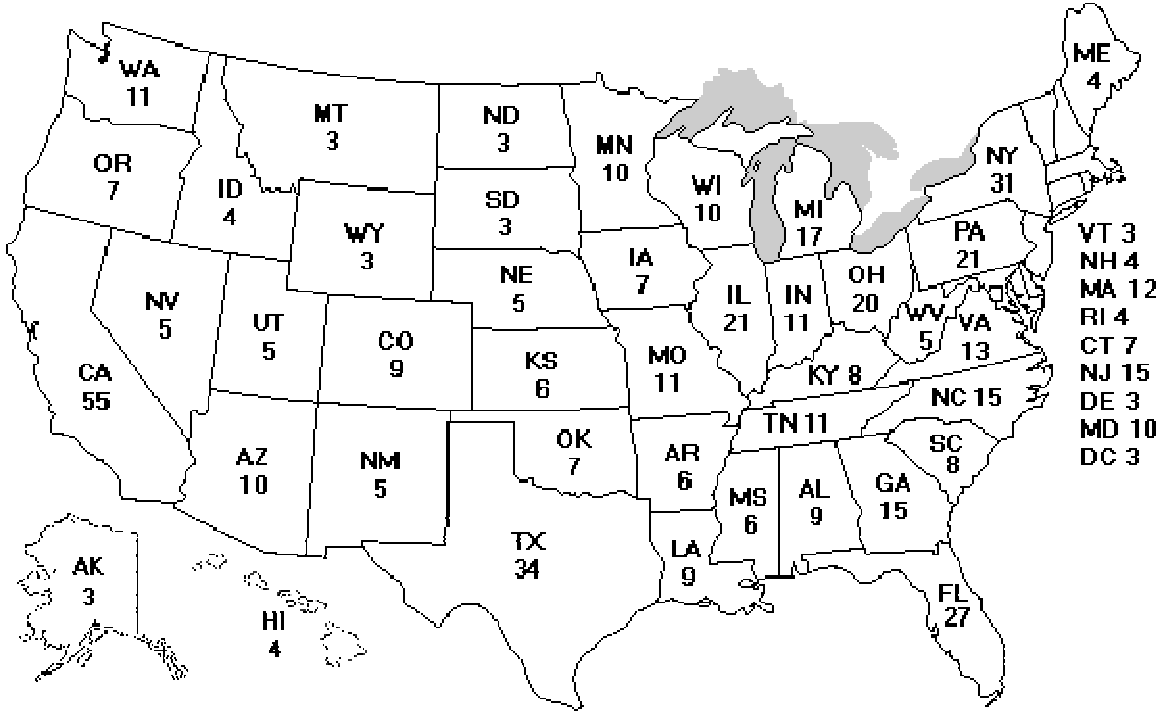


The Daughtry Times[®]

Education through Integration[™]

Tuesday, October 19, 2004
Associated Press



The actual mechanism of electing the president and the vice president of the United States is a rather complicated process. The Electoral College is one of the many compromises written into the United States Constitution in 1787. The founding fathers devised the Electoral College to elect the president but they did not anticipate the emergence of national political parties or a communications network able to bring presidential candidates before the entire electorate.

Providing that the president be chosen indirectly through the "electoral college" rather than directly by the voters in November was one of the founders' hedges against "popular passion." In the beginning, the electors had very real powers to work their will. Now, their sole function is to confirm a decision made by the electorate six weeks earlier.

Under the Constitution, each state is authorized to choose electors for president and vice president, the number always being the same as the combined number of U.S. senators and representatives allotted to that state. With 100 senators and 435 representatives in the United States, plus three electors for the District of Columbia provided by the Twenty-third Amendment, the total Electoral College vote is 538. The candidate for president with the most electoral votes, provided that it is an absolute majority (one over half of the total), is declared president.

1. Name ten possible combinations of states and their electoral votes a candidate must win to obtain the necessary 270 electoral votes.
2. The Electoral College was created for two reasons. The first purpose was to create a buffer between population and the selection of a President. The second as part of the structure of the government that gave extra power to the smaller states. The founding fathers were afraid of direct election to the Presidency. They feared a tyrant could manipulate public opinion and come to power. In your personal opinion, do you feel the Electoral College method of voting needs to be replaced? Explain.



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Kerry Edwards