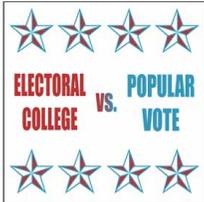


Abolish the Electoral College

The watering down of California's votes

By **Kat Avila** | Published on LatinoLA: November 27, 2016



Abolish the Electoral College, and the condescension that comes with it. Make every vote count. One citizen, one vote. That is what most of us understand of a democracy. Why should an accident of birth or residence make another American's presidential vote more important than mine – just because I live in California?

California is the most populous state (LA Times, 7/8/15) with the largest Latino and Asian populations in the U.S. (U.S. Census, 2014, 2013 respectively). We have the nation's largest economy, which is also the sixth most powerful economy in the world just ahead of France (World Economic Forum, 7/8/16). But our voting power in the Electoral College ranks 49th out of 50 states (Slate, 11/2/12)!

We are the second most diverse state (after Hawaii) with the highest mixed-race population (MainStreet, 2/11/11) and with a plurality of religions represented. But the Electoral College is slipping an unqualified fool with a white supremacist, right-wing Christians-only agenda into the highest political office in the land. One of his senior advisors is alt-right propagandist Steve Bannon. With a Republican-controlled Senate and House, this is an ominous development that will sacrifice the health, welfare, and tax dollars of our progressive state to prop up harmful national policies.

This month, California U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer introduced legislation to abolish the Electoral College. This was quickly followed by similar legislation by Representative Charlie Rangel of New York.

Since 1976, Americans have supported the popular vote over the Electoral College to elect our nation's president (Gallup, 2011; Vox, 11/24/16). In 2004, the president of the League of Women Voters also wrote an opinion against the Electoral College (Scholastic). If Congress were to approve this constitutional amendment, three-quarters of state legislatures still need to ratify it within seven years.

The current inequity needs to be corrected. One California vote should equal one Texas vote = 1 Florida vote = 1 New York vote = 1 Wyoming vote. It is the foolishness of the Electoral College that has determined your California vote has only one-third the weight of a vote of an American who lives in Wyoming (Washington Post, 11/21/16; NY Times, 11/20/16).

One out of 8 Americans lives in California (PPIC, 7/2014). Though when a presidential election rolls around, we Californians – our interests and our communities - are disproportionately ignored by the candidates and media in favor of swing states. Additionally, voters who are neither Democratic nor Republican are discouraged from voting their conscience, with them getting blamed if a majority party candidate "loses" a state.

Twice during my lifetime, candidates who won the popular vote lost the presidency due to the Electoral College. The last time was in 2000 when Al Gore narrowly lost to George W. Bush. This time around Hillary Clinton's popular vote victory is over 2 million votes! That figure does not include the over 1 million California votes that are still uncounted (LA Times, 11/23/16).

Most Americans voted for ethnic diversity religious plurality science over superstition, equality of men and women, LGBT civil rights, against Russian interference with American politics, and facts over fake news. Most Americans, and certainly most Californians, did not vote for the president that is being forced upon us.

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