

Electoral College



The 2000 Presidential Election results were controversial, and became a civics lesson for citizens on the purpose and importance of the numbers 538 and 270. Both candidates challenged the popular vote count by officials in the State of Florida. Lawsuits were filed and appealed up to the Florida Supreme Court. The outcome of the election was not known for more than a month after the balloting ended. Counting and recounting Florida's presidential ballots extended the process. Finally, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Bush v. Gore*, 531 U.S. 98 (2000) that vote recounts must end. Governor Bush won Florida's 25 electoral votes and was elected the 43rd President of the United States. Many people expressed outrage because Vice President Gore had won more popular votes and thought that he should be the next president. This chapter explains the constitutional provisions for electing the President and Vice President of the United States.

The Electoral College is not an educational institution, but a process written into the Constitution that prescribes the method for conducting presidential elections. Anti-Federalists were suspicious of a central government and did not support the election of a president by the Congress. Convention delegates also rejected election by State legislatures because it could potentially erode federal authority. There was strong opposition to direct elections because states with large populations would have more influence on election outcomes than states with smaller populations.