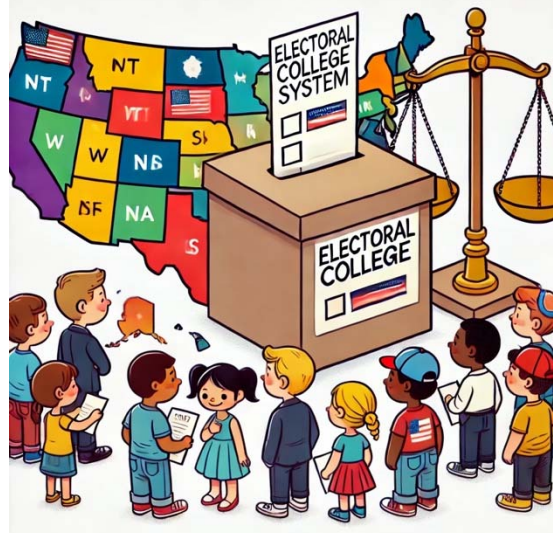


Name _____



Choosing the President

In 1787, the leaders of the United States gathered to decide how the new country would be run. One of their biggest debates was about how to elect the president. Should the people vote directly, or should there be another system? After much discussion, they created the Electoral College.

The Founding Fathers had a few concerns about a direct popular vote. One of their biggest worries was that most people wouldn't have enough information to make a good choice. Back then, there were no televisions, radios, or the internet. News traveled slowly, and people mostly knew about leaders from their own state. Some leaders at the Constitutional Convention feared that people might only vote for someone from their own area instead of choosing the best leader for the whole country.

Another problem was giving too much power to big states. Some states, like Virginia and Pennsylvania, had many more people than smaller states like Rhode Island and Delaware. If the president was elected by a simple popular vote, bigger states would have much more influence. Smaller states worried that their voices would be ignored. The Founding Fathers wanted a system that gave every state a fair role in the election.

A third concern was keeping the government balanced. Some leaders thought Congress should pick the president. They believed lawmakers had more experience and could make better decisions. However, others feared that Congress would become too powerful and choose a president who would only follow their wishes instead of leading the country fairly.

To solve these problems, the Founding Fathers created the Electoral College. In this system, each state gets a certain number of electors, based on the number of representatives it has in Congress. When people vote in a presidential election, they are actually voting for electors who will then vote for the president. This system was meant to be a compromise—giving power to the people while also protecting smaller states and preventing Congress from having too much control.

Even today, people debate whether the Electoral College is the best system. Some believe it helps balance power, while others think a direct popular vote would be fairer. No matter what, the Electoral College remains an important part of how the United States chooses its leaders.