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## Debating Democracy

In the summer of 1787, leaders from across the thirteen American states gathered in Philadelphia for an important meeting. This meeting, called the Constitutional Convention, was held to create a new government for the United States. One of the biggest debates was about how to choose the president. The Founding Fathers had different ideas, and their discussions led to the creation of the Electoral College.

One of the main debates was about who should elect the president. Some leaders believed that Congress should choose the president. They thought lawmakers had the experience and knowledge to make a good choice. However, others worried that if Congress picked the president, it could give the government too much power and lead to unfair elections.

Another idea was letting the people vote directly. Some leaders, like James Wilson, believed the president should be chosen by the people's votes. However, others, like James Madison, worried that regular citizens might not know enough about candidates from faraway states. They feared that people might just vote for someone from their own area instead of picking the best leader for the entire country.

A third problem was balancing power between big and small states. Large states wanted the president to be elected based on population, meaning states with more people would have more power in elections. Smaller states, however, feared that they would always be outvoted and have no real influence.

To solve these issues, the Founding Fathers created the Electoral College. Instead of a direct vote, each state would have a certain number of electors, based on their population and the number of representatives in Congress. The people in each state would vote, and their electors would then cast votes for the president. This system was a compromise—giving the people a voice, keeping Congress from having too much power, and making sure small states still had influence.

The Electoral College has been used in every presidential election since. Some people today debate whether it is still the best system, but it remains an important part of American democracy, shaped by the ideas and concerns of the Founding Fathers at the Constitutional Convention.