

THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE: THE FOUNDERS' CONCESSION TO SLAVE STATES

TIMELINE OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

May 14th

The Convention
Begins

May 29th

Congressional
Appontment Selected

July 11th

Three-Fifths
Compromise

July 17th

Selection by Electors
Reconsidered
July 24th -26th

Electoral College
Debated & Approved

September 17th

The Constitution is
Sent to Congress

INTRODUCTION

The Electoral College is one of the most widely debated institutions of American democracy. The Electoral College was created during the Constitutional Convention, as a system to elect the President of the United States. Often considered to be a democratic means by which to elect the president, the Electoral College's origin is not based in these supposed democratic values.

DEBATE

THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE IS PRO-SLAVERY

- The Electoral College is based on the three-fifths compromise which helped to perpetuate slavery and over represented the number of enfranchised voters in the Southern states. (Akhil Amar)
- The popular vote would have prevented the South from staying in the union, so the founders granted them more power in order to keep the country together.

DEBATE

THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE IS NOT BASED IN SLAVERY

- The Electoral College was the most practical way to select the president because the popular vote was not feasible due to the US's large landmass.
- The founders also debated selection the president through Congressional appointment, which would have given the same advantage to Southern states. (Sean Wilentz)

CONCLUSION

The Founders intentionally designed an electoral system based on the number of members of Congress because it gave disproportionate advantage to slave states due to the 3/5ths compromise and numerical representation of people who could not vote.