



CIVICS IN REAL LIFE

Inching Toward Inauguration

Civics is all around us. There is a lot to know about the government and how "We the People" interact with the government and each other. Let's help each other expand our civic literacy.

The Electoral College, established by Article II, Section 1 of the US Constitution, is the formal body which elects the president and vice president of the United States. So, how do we get from Election Day to Inauguration Day? Let's explore the Electoral College process.



Nov. 3, 2020 ELECTION DAY!

On Election Day (the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November) individual voters cast their ballots and determine the state's electors.



Wait, What??



Yes! When you cast your vote for a presidential candidate, you are actually voting for your state's electors. This means you are telling your state which candidate you want your state to vote for at the meeting of the electors.



Mid-November - Dec. 14, 2020 Certificates of Ascertainment of GOVERNOR

After the election, the governor of your state prepares 7 Certificates of Ascertainment. The Certificates of Ascertainment list the names of the electors appointed and the number of votes cast for each person.



Now we're done, right?



Not quite. If there are any concerns with the election results there is a timeframe to get those fixed.



By Dec. 8, 2020 States resolve controversies

If concerns arise with the electors, or a court case gets filed, the states must remedy them no later than six days before the Electoral College is scheduled to meet.



What do you mean by 'concerns'?



Sometimes *irregularities* emerge and require action be taken by the state legislature or the court system. The best example of this occurred during the 2000 presidential election when in *Bush v. Gore*, the U.S. Supreme Court said states cannot violate the *14th Amendment's* Equal Protection Clause when conducting election recounts.



Dec. 14, 2020 Electors vote in each state

When the Electoral College meets, electors from all 50 states gather in their state capitals and in D.C. Electors are required to vote for president and vice president on separate ballots and make their choices official by signing and sealing their Certificates of Vote and pairing them with six of the governor's Certificates of Ascertainment.



So, the Electoral College is in each state?



Basically, yes. There isn't a physical building called the Electoral College, rather the Electoral College is a collection of electors from the fifty states and Washington D.C. Per The Constitution, the number of electors each state has is based on the number of representatives it has in the House and its two senators. So, in Florida there are 29 electors. 27 U.S. House districts + 2 U.S. Senators = 29 Electors



Dec. 23, 2020 Electoral votes go to D.C.

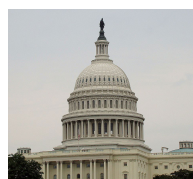
Within nine days of the electors casting their votes, the electoral votes must be received by the president of the Senate, who is also the vice president of the United States.



States have certified the votes, why is the vice president involved?



Remember, under the Constitution, the vice president is the president of the Senate. In this role, the vice president has the responsibility of counting the electoral votes, which is why the vice president must receive them no later than the nine days.



Jan. 6, 2021 Congress counts the electoral votes

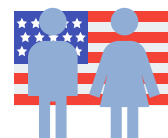
Congress meets in a joint session, with the vice president presiding as president of the Senate, to count and announce the Electoral College results. Under the *12th Amendment*, if no candidate wins 270 electoral votes, the House of Representatives elects the president and the Senate elects the vice president.



What if a member of Congress objects to the vote?



Well, that first happened in 1824, and when it does, the objection must be signed by both a member of the House and a member of the Senate. Then each chamber alone considers if the objection is valid.



Jan. 20, 2021 INAUGURATION DAY!

At noon, the president-elect and vice president-elect take their oaths of office and officially become the president and vice president of the United States.



Ok! So, now we're done!?



Yup! Per the *20th Amendment*, the president-elect and vice president-elect take the oath of office at noon on January 20th, thus becoming the president and vice president of the United States.

To Think and To Do: Visit WhiteHouseHistory.org and learn more about the evolution of inaugural day traditions and transitions. Find one tradition to share that you find the most interesting.



Lou Frey Institute

Learn More about the Electoral College: The Electoral College, from the National Archives