

# The Electoral College

## PROCESS:

- ✓ Each state receives a # of electors which equals = # of House Representatives + 2 Senators  
**For example, Florida in 2004:**  
25 Congressional Representatives + 2 Senators = 27 Electoral Votes
- ✓ The District of Columbia receives 3 electors
- ✓ Each presidential candidate has a slate of electors who cast their vote for the candidate if he/she wins the popular election in their respective state
- ✓ When the people go to the polls, they vote for President and Vice President but are in fact voting for the slate of electors assigned to the presidential and vice presidential candidates
- ✓ For most states (except Maine and Nebraska), the winner-take-all system is used. This means that who ever wins the popular vote in the state wins all of the electoral votes  
**For example, Florida in 2000:**  
George W. Bush won the popular vote (by 48.8%), therefore he won all 25 electoral votes\*  
\* In 2000, Florida only had 23 Reps and 2 Senators = 25 electors. Since the 2000 Census, Florida now has 25 Reps and 2 Senators = 27 electors.
- ✓ In Maine and Nebraska, only 2 electors are assigned to the state-wide winner. Other electors vote according to the majority vote in their respective congressional district.
- ✓ The amount of electoral votes is totaled to determine the winner of the Presidential election
  - Only a simple majority of 270 votes out of 538 possible are needed to win
  - 538 total electors for the entire country is derived from =  
435 Representatives in the House for all 50 States  
100 Senators (2 per state x 50 states)  
3 Electors for the District of Columbia
- ✓ The actual casting of ballots for the electors is usually done in the state capitol. Then, the votes are sent to the President of the Senate (which is the Vice President of the United States) to be counted in a joint-session of Congress (assigned members of Congress count the votes).
- ✓ If no candidate wins a majority (270 votes or 50.1%), then the House of Representatives elects the President and Vice President. Votes are counted in order of state (not by representative) and a majority of 26 states is necessary to win.

2000 Electoral College (From *The Washington Post Online*, [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com))

