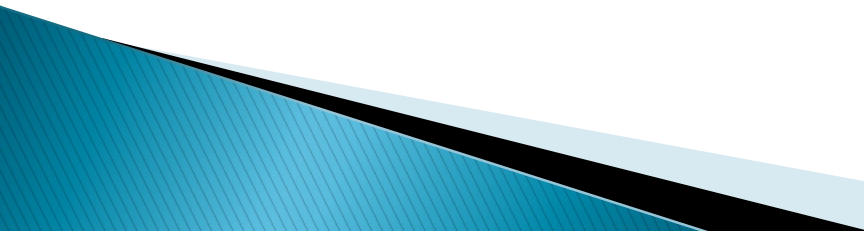


The Presidency – The Electoral College: How It Works....Good Idea?

*How the Attempt to Avoid a “New King”
Turned Into An Imperial Presidency.*

Presidents–Not Always Loved

- ▶ Drafters of the Constitution Were Fearful of Another “King”
 - ▶ Presidents Then, As Now, (*Even More So Then!*) Were Not Universally Loved or Admired
 - ▶ Deep–Seated American Fear of a Tyrant.
 - ▶ This Is In USA’s Political/Cultural DNA
 - ▶ For Example:
- 

MOST HATED presidents?

A brief review of a white House rife with riffraff.

by STEVE BRODNER



GEORGE WASHINGTON

"Dishonest, despotic, stupid, tyrannical." The National Gazette

JOHN ADAMS

"Hideous hermaphroditic, cool character, which has neither the force nor firmness of a man ...



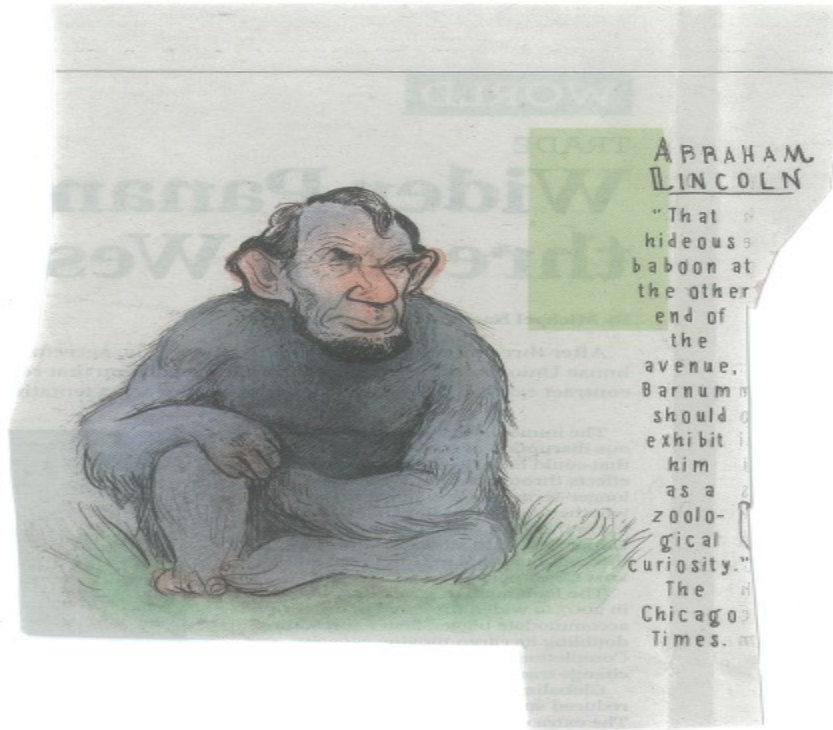
... nor the gentleness of a woman." the 1800 Jefferson campaign.

ANDREW JACKSON

"His mother was a prostitute brought here by British soldiers."



- newspaper, 1824



ABRAHAM
LINCOLN

"That
hideous
baboon at
the other
end of
the
avenue.
Barnum
should
exhibit
him
as a
zoolo-
gical
curiosity."
The
Chicago
Times.



FRANKLIN DELANO
ROOSEVELT

"Swollenheaded, nitwit
with a messiah
complex

and the brain
of a boy
scout."

A Hudson
County
neighbor.



JOHN QUINCY
ADAMS

"A pimp for
the Czar of
Russia."

A pro-Jackson
pamphlet
by Isaac
Hill.

**BARACK
OBAMA**

"Bringing 100 million Muslims to America to turn it into an Islamic state."
Avi Lipkin, conspiracy theorist.



BILL CLINTON

"Head of a drug ring who murdered dozens of people."
Anti-Clinton documentary film.



What Does the Constitution Says About the Presidency:

Qualifications: Age – “*Natural Born Citizen*”

Commander in Chief– Main Power –Washington

Powers: *Seemingly* Limited and Functionary
When Compared to Congress

- ▶ Grounds for Impeachment: It has To Be a Really *Serious Political Offense* That Strikes at the *Heart of the Democracy Itself*. Hence: *Treason* as the Primary Grounds.....not Moral Failings or Difference in Political Policies. Obstruction of Justice, Bribery. Why These?

Electoral College –How We Elect Our Presidents:

- ▶ How Does It Work ? (Video)
- ▶ Explain Electors:
 - ▶ Who Selects Them?
 - ▶ How Many?
- ▶ When/Where Do They Meet? (Read the text)
- ▶ Problems with the Original Plan
 - ▶ (Adams/Jefferson Election of 1796,1800)
- ▶ How Changed? (12th Amendment)
- ▶ How it Works in Case of a Tie or No Majority?

The Electoral College was created for two reasons. The first purpose was to create a buffer between population and the selection of a President. The second as part of the structure of the government that gave extra power to the smaller states. The founding fathers were afraid of direct election to the Presidency. They feared a tyrant could manipulate public opinion and come to power.

Hamilton and the other founders believed that the electors would be able to insure that only a qualified person becomes President. They believed that with the Electoral College no one would be able to manipulate the citizenry, and would act as check on an electorate that might be duped. Hamilton and the other founders did not trust the population to make the right choice. The founders also believed that the Electoral College had the advantage of being a group that met only once and thus could not be manipulated over time by foreign governments or others.

The Electoral College is also part of compromises made at the convention to satisfy the small states. Especially Southern States with small white and large slave populations Under the system of the Electoral College each state had the same number of electoral votes as they have representatives in Congress, thus no state could have less than 3. The result of this system is that in a recent election the state of Wyoming cast about 210,000 votes, and thus each elector represented 70,000 votes, while in California approximately 9,700,000 votes were cast for 54 votes, thus representing 179,000 votes per elector. Obviously this creates an unfair advantage for voters in the small states whose votes actually count more than those people living in medium and large states....BUT that's what was intended as part of the Big State Small State compromise.

One aspect of the electoral system that is not mandated in the constitution is the fact that the *winner takes all the votes in the state*.

Therefore, now, it makes no difference if you win a state by 50.1% or by 80% of the vote you receive the same number of electoral votes. This can be a recipe for one individual to win some states by large pluralities and lose others by small number of votes, and thus this is an easy scenario for one candidate to win the popular vote while another wins the electoral vote.

This “winner take all method” used in picking electors has been decided by the states themselves. (This has occurred over the course of the 1800s and decided by the states

(Exceptions: Maine/Nebraska) They allow a proportional break-down.)

The 5 Presidents Who Lost the Popular Vote.. and Still Took the White House

- *John Quincy Adams (1824) – no electoral college majority, elected by the House of Representatives)*
- *Rutherford B. Hayes (1876) -- more electoral votes than popular votes*
- *Benjamin Harrison (1888) -- more electoral votes than popular votes*
- *George W. Bush (2000) -- election decided by the Supreme Court, which gave Bush more electoral votes than Gore's popular votes.*
- *Trump (2016) – more electoral votes than popular votes (3 million Less!)*

How Racism Blocked Electoral College Reform

- ▶ Video Review of the Book On Origins and
- ▶ Blockage of Reform with the Filibuster

III. Irony of Powers of Congress vs. President and Courts:

We have discussed the reasons the drafters gave Congress so much power and why they limited the power of the President and the Court

The President, they thought, had minor powers to appoint only functionaries and judges.

There was no large executive branch set up in the Constitution, so drafters gave him the power to set up a few departments (Secty of State, Treasury and War.)

They gave him control of foreign policy (Treaties); and they gave him control of the US Army and the militia, but only in a "national emergency" or when asked to help by the states.

The Federal Army at this time numbered less than a thousand soldiers. The State militias outnumbered it.

The Congress' idea at that time of a Commander in Chief was Geo. Washington during the Revolutionary War.

The founders had no conception that the U.S. would expand and become the largest, strongest nation on earth, so control of foreign policy and the military and control of the executive branch seemed insignificant to them. Congress was to be Supreme.

So the irony is that in trying to limit the power of the Presidency they left the door open to an imperial Presidency.

Then Presidents in the 20th Century believed that their power was not what was explicitly granted; but whatever was not prohibited by the Constitution. So they took it!