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THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE: A SYSTEM “FOR THE PEOPLE?”

by

Maria Maffucci

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for a Degree with Honors  
(Political Science)

The Honors College

University of Maine

May 2018

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## ABSTRACT

This research project investigates the thoughts and opinions of the University of Maine faculty and undergraduate students regarding the Electoral College system. I chose to collect this information through an online survey of twenty questions that I created on the software, Qualtrics, and sent it to the various classes and faculty who gave approval. Once I got a sufficient number of results, it was then time to analyze it all. Overall, my results were mostly what I had predicted; most undergraduates and faculty are in favor of replacing the Electoral College with either a direct popular voting system or a candidate ranking system. More than half of my respondents claim to know at least some information about the Electoral College and are opposed to it. A majority of respondents who voted chose Hillary Clinton, though there were a large number of respondents who simply did not vote at all and also claim to not know much about the Electoral College. However, more men than women claim to feel confident in such knowledge and are more in favor of the system. In a concise introduction, literature review, methodology, data analysis, and conclusion, I explore each and every one of my survey results as well as give an extensive overview of the history and purpose of the Electoral College and the various impacts it has had on America and its people over the past two centuries, concluding with possible solutions to better educate Americans as a whole regarding this highly debated, controversial system.

## DEDICATION

This careful compilation of research is dedicated to my generation. May we all possess a sincere passion to improve upon the state of our country, an ever-present hunger for knowledge, and an unwavering pursuit of a prosperous future, not just our sake, but for the sake of generations to come.

For that is the true American dream.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing a thesis as an undergraduate college student is by no means a facile task. It is a journey, an endeavor, which not only has allowed myself to explore a topic that has interested me all throughout my time at the University of Maine, but which has also served as a learning experience on how to conduct over one year's worth of in-depth research and detailed analyses for a proposed hypothesis; something that not many students have the privilege to do before receiving their Bachelor's degree.

I want to start off by sincerely thanking my advisor, Dr. Mark Brewer. Without his careful guidance and patient mentorship, my research would not have flourished into the following product of which you are about to comprehend. Dr. Brewer helped me to map the work out in a way that was not overwhelming and rather a step-by-step process. For this I am deeply thankful.

I also want to sincerely thank my committee, for each member has assisted me with different aspects of this thesis. A special thanks to Dr. Melissa Ladenheim for her extraordinary aid with the Reading List, and to Dr. Harold Daniel, for not only being an outstanding mentor, but for also taking the time to instruct me on how to run an extensive data analysis.

Finally, I want to thank the University of Maine Honors College, for not just having a huge impact on my undergraduate career, but for also inspiring me to pursue my dreams. The Honors Thesis is what sets the Honors College curriculum apart from all others, as it offers its students the opportunity to really immerse themselves in an extensive, rigorous research project that will serve as a learning experience like no other. For this, I owe my sincerest thanks.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The Electoral College, America's longtime and often controversial presidential voting process, has determined the outcome of our country's presidential elections since the ratification of the Constitution. It has become exceptionally controversial over the past twenty years or so, particularly during the recent 2016 presidential election where Donald Trump was elected due to receiving 306 electoral votes as opposed to Hillary Clinton's 232. However, Clinton received the most popular votes, beating Trump by almost 3 million. The only reason Trump had won at all is because of the Electoral College system, as we do not determine our presidential winner by the number of popular votes they receive but rather by the number of their electoral votes.

The debate over whether the Electoral College is the most accurate representation of the peoples' choice for electing the president or if we should instead switch to a direct popular voting method is a highly argued, controversial topic among Americans. Just looking at the statistics of this past presidential election alone shows that there can be decidedly different outcomes due to considering electoral votes over popular votes. Those who support the Electoral College believe that it is vital for the functioning of the two party system. This is because as a winner-take-all system, there is no reward for the party or candidate that finishes second. There is no incentive to form a party that consistently gets votes but cannot win an election. As a result, two political parties usually dominate plurality electoral systems to the disadvantage of smaller third parties, just as the

Democrats and the Republicans dominate the American political system. No one person or organization prevents third parties from forming, but the plurality system itself usually hinders their efforts to win votes. Supporters also argue that the Electoral College keeps the peoples' best political interests in mind, as the electors are expected to be highly educated and knowledgeable about the political system and thus make highly educated decisions when it comes time to vote, thus preventing "ignorant" votes from uneducated, politically unaware citizens. Those who are in opposition disagree, as they feel that many citizens who are registered to vote are just as knowledgeable and politically educated as the electors, and that it is discriminatory to assume that only these designated electors' votes have finality in determining the outcome of each presidential election.

I knew that the topic for my honors thesis was going to be something pertaining to our current government system, as this is what I have been most passionate about studying. I wanted to research something that was not only relevant, but also the center of much controversy and debate; something that I knew almost everyone I surveyed would have some sort of opinions and thoughts on. As I thought about the current political events that were taking place in our country while also listening to what my fellow classmates and friends were discussing regarding politics, I decided that I would do my thesis on something involving the American voting system. Perhaps the most central, disputed aspect of our voting system is the Electoral College. I knew that I could find a wealth of information on this system as well as sufficiently survey the views of many people regarding it. I knew I wanted to be able to have a large enough yet manageable subject group, so I planned to survey the entire University of Maine undergraduate student body as well as faculty. As a campus comprised of people from all over the

country and from almost every racial background, political affiliation, financial situation, etc, I believed that this would serve as an effective survey population since a college campus is comprised of people from various ethnicities, incomes, beliefs, age ranges, etc. While a small group to survey in comparison to the whole country, what my campus lacks in numbers it makes up for in a wide variety of ideologies and backgrounds, which provided me with multiple different responses to analyze when it came time to do the data analysis. My final thesis topic had thus been settled-“What are the thoughts and opinions of University of Maine faculty and undergraduate students regarding the Electoral College system?” After much contemplation, my working title became “The Electoral College: A System for the People?”

Another reason why I chose this topic is because I personally wanted to learn all about the Electoral College and just why we have it, as I have always pondered over why a representative democracy such as the American government, a system for the people, by the people, would not allow its citizens to directly vote for the most important, esteemed political office-the presidency, but then allow the people to directly vote in all other elections. In sum, the Electoral College is a voting system that was developed at the Constitutional Convention of 1787 and has remained quite unchanged since the ratification of the 12<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1804, which stated that in the event of an electoral tie or no majority winner, the House would vote for the president while the Senate would vote for the vice president. Also, the president and vice president would be distinguished separately on the ballot rather than just allowing the runner-up presidential candidate become vice president.

The Electoral College is comprised of 538 electors who cast votes to decide the presidential and vice presidential winners. Every state plus D.C. gets at least three electoral votes because a state's number of electors- delegates who have pledged to vote for a specific candidate- is identical to the total number of its senators and representatives in Congress. The presidential candidate who receives at least 270 of the electoral votes wins. However, if there is no majority winner, the House of Representatives conducts the vote. Maine and Nebraska are the only two states in the country that do not go by the Electoral College's "Winner-Take-All" method. Rather, they use the "congressional district" method, meaning that they each allocate two electoral votes to the state popular vote winner, and then one electoral vote to the popular vote winner in each Congressional district (2 in Maine, 3 in Nebraska). This creates multiple popular vote contests in these states, which could lead to a split electoral vote. An electoral split has only occurred once in both states; in Nebraska during the 2008 election and in Maine during the 2016 election.

It is possible, though not common, for a candidate to lose the popular vote and win the electoral vote, as this has occurred five times throughout the existence of this voting system. When citizens go to vote for president, they are actually voting to select their state's electors. The winning presidential candidate's slate of potential electors becomes the state's official electors. In Nebraska and Maine, as I have previously stated, the overall state presidential winner receives two electors and the presidential winner of each congressional district receives one elector. This system permits the electors from Nebraska and Maine to be awarded to more than one candidate. As far as the rest of the country, the chosen electors then go and directly vote for their party's candidate at the

official meeting of the Electoral College, which always takes place at each state's capital on the same day.

Many Americans have been outraged by this system and feel that it is a breach of democracy. They argue that their votes do not matter since they are not actually voting for the president, but rather people to elect the president. There has always been talk about a reform or complete abolishment of this system to make it more citizen-oriented, but no actions to do so have been formally taken. The desire for reform/abolishment only increased after Trump's presidential victory in 2016, as many Americans were starting to understand the implications and effects that the Electoral College has on the outcome of presidential elections. Also, this was the second election within a time span of twenty years that the president-elect lost the popular vote but won the Electoral vote. As someone who wants to eventually work for the government and potentially hold a political office, learning just why we have this system in place and how it affects the politics of our country is crucial. There obviously has to be a paramount reason for using such a voting system, so I took to researching and analyzing dozens of scholarly journals and online news articles to find out the history and purpose of the Electoral College.

My specific research question is "What are the beliefs and views of University of Maine faculty and undergraduate students regarding the Electoral College system as a means to elect the president of the United States?" I have always had a strong curiosity about what different age groups, ethnicities, political party members, etc feel about this system, especially after the most recent presidential election. The Electoral College is only now being brought to the attention of many because of just how controversial Trump's victory was. People are slowly starting to "wake up" and realize the reality and

impact that their votes and participation are having on the operation of American politics. However, there is still a majority of Americans who either do not vote at all or who simply do not care about the impact of their vote. This is another reason why I chose to pursue this research, to find out just what people are thinking and feeling regarding the Electoral College system and how much or how little they actually care. My results, as I will explain further in this thesis, were both surprising and expected depending on the questions I asked in my survey.

Once my actual data had been gathered, I consulted with my thesis advisor about how best to set up the thesis itself. We decided that I would begin with an introduction of my topic and why I chose it, then go into an extensive literature review as a majority of my outside research came from scholarly journals and articles. Next, there would be a section on the methodology of my research, as in, what my concerns were, how I conducted my investigation, the way I developed my survey, and all the aspects both difficult and inspiring that I encountered throughout the whole process. Following the methodology section would come the data analysis. This is the section where I would be recording my in-depth examination of the answers to each of my survey questions; comparing, contrasting, and analyzing the various responses and linking them to my overall research question. Finally, I would write a concluding section, which would be a summary of both why I chose this particular topic and my research process, as well as include any questions that may have arisen throughout my analysis and study. Also, I would include here what I feel that future researchers should examine based on my own findings, such as just how much certain demographic factors can determine one's opinions on the Electoral College, how implementing related courses into public schools

and universities could increase the number of students who are knowledgeable about the Electoral College, why so many people between the ages of 18-24 seem less willing to vote and get involved politically than people over the age of 50, etc.

As a whole, I am very satisfied with how my research went and I feel strongly that I have gathered a sufficient amount of data to satisfy my initial research question. In the following pages, I will further explain my research findings through an analysis of multiple scholarly journal/article sources, followed by my method of coming up with my research process and how I conducted it, then an in-depth data analysis of the results of my survey, and finally a conclusion that wraps everything up. Being aware of how the Electoral College system works, as it is the determining factor of who gets to hold the highest political office in the country, is something all Americans should not only be knowledgeable about, but also concerned and inquisitive about as well. The more knowledge one has, the more educated, thought-out opinions and views they will likely have. The results of this research not only exhibit the varying, individual perspectives of a sample of the University of Maine community regarding the Electoral College, but also just how much people do and do not know about this system in general.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Before I introduce my own research on the Electoral College system, it is important to first consider the Electoral College's creation and impact over the span of its entire existence and also previous academic analyses of the institution. Countless opinions, controversies, and political backlash regarding the Electoral College have existed since it was first drafted, particularly increasing over the last twenty years due to how our country and its politics are constantly evolving. For instance, compared to how our country was governed in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, minorities and women are allowed to vote and hold office, technology has given us a front row seat to the world of politics, and pretty much anyone who is an American citizen can run for office. The Electoral College has not changed much at all since the ratification of the 12<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1804, which allows the president and vice president to have two separate elections, but even that itself is not enough of a change to modernize the Electoral College to the extent where a majority of voters are satisfied with it. The Electoral College is considered by many to be too outdated due to how little it has evolved, which is a large factor in the push for its reform/abolishment.

Taking the next step and analyzing the American public's varied viewpoints on the Electoral College as well as the consequences it has had and likely will have on the United States provides crucial information that will support my research regarding this system. This literature review draws on the analyses and findings of specific scholarly



research to better foster and support my own research, providing vital information that I can use to compare the views and opinions found in my own research to that of the ever-changing views and opinions of our country's citizens on this long-standing, controversial component of American politics.

### 1.1 The Origins and Intent of the Electoral College

To truly comprehend the Electoral College, one has to understand why it was developed in the first place. According to a 2007 journal article exploring the diversification and process of the Electoral College, the first ever recordings of this voting system were not actually during the Founding Fathers' time but rather during the time of the Ancient Roman Republic (Basciano, Cain, & Cain 2007). Known as the Centurial Assembly System, the most respected and intelligent men were chosen and put into groups of 100, known as centuries, and one man from each group would be elected to cast one vote on proposals submitted to them by the Roman Senate. This particular article discusses the possibility that the Founding Fathers may have researched this system and used it as a basis for the creation of the Electoral College, though this is merely a theory. Nevertheless, the official drafting of the Electoral College took place in 1787 at the Constitutional Convention. Here, the Founding Fathers discussed several methods of electing the president, including selection by Congress, by the governors of the states, by the state legislatures, by a special group of members of Congress chosen by a lot, and by direct popular election. After much back and forth, they decided on having an elected group of qualified and respectable men, none having any connections to Congress, be the ones to directly vote for the president in each of their respective

states (Dixon Jr. 1950). Originally, the presidential elector was anticipated to be a noble, non-partisan figure.

The Founding Fathers expressed pride in this voting system, though there were disagreements regarding the rules and restrictions it placed on the people. This had caused them to change their minds on several occasions. Alexander Hamilton, for instance, had initially wanted the people to be directly responsible for the election of the president, but had reconciled with the theory proposed by his fellow delegates that it takes the most intelligent, highly regarded citizens to elect such a vital, highly regarded office (Steiden 2012). Gouverneur Morris and James Madison both favored a direct election by the people, arguing that it had worked well during governor elections in some states and was a more democratic option (Goldstein, 1996). During these particular elections, voters would fill out their ballots knowing that their individual votes would directly influence who would become the governor. However, this was always moderated by the state legislature or other elected executive officials.

Both Elbridge Gerry and George Mason believed that the American public was not capable or politically educated enough to directly elect the president. They argued that the vastness of the country would prevent voters from knowing enough about the candidates to make the best decision (Goldstein, 1996). To the Founding Fathers, it was a safer, more practical option to elect well-read, respectable men to do this crucial, impactful job instead of the general public.

The Founding Fathers initially intended for the electors to represent the general peoples' votes. This was due to how electors were expected to be the most politically knowledgeable, honest citizens who would prevent the uneducated, politically ignorant

voters from making a “mistake” on voting day. To make this equitable for all states large and small, it was decided that there would be a delegation of one elector to each member in that particular state’s delegation in the House of Representatives and one for each of their two senators. This way, the smaller states would have a better advantage, as the ratio of citizens to electors would be closer than in larger states, though the larger states still had a population-related advantage. The voters in each state would then go and vote for their ideal candidate, but they actually were voting for the elector of that candidate’s specific party. The elected elector would then go and vote for the final candidate in their state’s capital (Steiden 2012). The runner up to the president would become the vice president. If there were a tie, the House would go ahead and make the final decision for both positions, but if there were a deadlock in the House, meaning that still no decisions were able to be made, then it would be left up to the Senate to resolve. However, once the 12<sup>th</sup> Amendment was ratified, if there is ever a tie, the House decides on the president and the Senate decides on the vice president. The Founders truly felt that they had developed the most efficient, representative voting method, and finally put it to the test during the 1789 presidential election.

Under the Constitution, state legislatures are given the power to appoint their electors however they choose. In the first election in 1789, a popular election of electors was authorized in Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. Massachusetts and New Hampshire used systems combining a popular election with legislative selection. All other states had their legislatures make the selections (Dixon Jr. 1950). Most states used a general ticket system, meaning the dominant party in each state would secure the state’s entire electoral vote. The winner of the popular election, George Washington,

was also the winner of the Electoral College election as well, proving, at least at that point, that this system was an efficient way of electing the leader of the country.

However, the original Electoral College system was only uncontroversial and effective during the first three presidential elections (1789-1796). According to Joel Goldstein's research article, the development of national political parties in 1796 forever transformed the Electoral College. Now, because there was a two-party system (Federalists and Democratic Republicans), electors went from being independent actors to partisan loyalists expected to support their party's choice. The 1800 election was the final nail in the coffin for the Electoral College as it originally existed. The candidates of this election (Jefferson and Burr), both Democratic-Republicans, received an equal vote from their party's loyal electors. As there was a tie between the two candidates, the House of Representatives held a vote and Jefferson ended up becoming the president. The tie vote between Jefferson and Burr pointed out problems with the electoral system. The framers of the Constitution had not anticipated such a tie nor had they considered the possibility of the election of a President or Vice President from opposing factions - which had been the case in the 1796 election.

In 1804, the passage of the 12th Amendment corrected these problems by providing for separate Electoral College votes for President and Vice President, "one vote for president and a separate vote for vice president, changing the original design of casting two votes for president with the first runner up gaining the vice-presidency (Basciano, Cain, & Cain 2007)." This was the last time any major changes were made to the Electoral College. However, according to Vincy Fon's 2017 article which extensively examines the origins of the Electoral College, she notes how in addition to the ratification

of the 12<sup>th</sup> Amendment, another constitutional change made to the Electoral College was the ratification of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Amendment in 1960 which granted Washington, D.C. representation in the Electoral College with three electoral votes. However, this change was so minor that it is not usually mentioned when discussing any impactful changes to the Electoral College. The only other relevant change made to this system was setting a permanent date for selecting electors so it could be the same day for all states; the first Tuesday in November every four years on years divisible by four. This was to prevent any states from having a time advantage over the other (Basciano, Cain, & Cain 2007).

Today, this system has remained pretty much the same since the last major changes were made in 1804. However, in 1964 it became a rule that there would always be 538 total electors and a 270-vote quota in order for a candidate to win the election (Fon 2017). Under the Winner-Take-All system, which is used today by all states except for Maine and Nebraska, all electoral votes of each state typically go to the candidate who wins the popular vote, though there have been a few exceptions throughout history where the winner would end up losing the popular vote but winning the overall election due to acquiring the most Electoral College votes. Maine (starting in 1972) and Nebraska (starting in 1992), on the other hand, use the Congressional District Proportional system (Fon 2017). Further explained in the article by Basciano et al (2007), this means that these states choose two electors by a statewide vote with the remainder selected by a popular vote within Congressional districts.

Of course, the more that our country evolves and moves farther away from its original political values and ideals, the more the Electoral College is scrutinized and becomes the topic of much debate, as it has barely changed since 1804. Much discussion

regarding it ranges from keeping it in place as America's primary voting system to abolishing it and replacing it with a more updated, direct popular voting system. The Founding Fathers never could have predicted just how much American politics would evolve over such a short time span. They also never foresaw the creation of a 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> party system (Zycher, 2004), something that occurred almost 100 years later in the late 1800s as the Electoral College was designed to suffice only a two-party system in order to force candidates to the center of the political spectrum to encourage compromise and also to steer away from the chance of civil war (Zycher, 2004). 3<sup>rd</sup> parties were initially created to serve as a political alternative for those who disagreed with the existing two parties. For example, the Whig Party originally formed in opposition to the policies of President Andrew Jackson (in office 1829–1837) and his Democratic Party (Zycher, 2004). Most other 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> parties came into existence for similar reasons. It was and still is highly unlikely for a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to win any Electoral College votes due to this factor. As I will further explain in the next section of this literature review, our country has undergone dramatic changes over the past 200+ years and this system has yet to evolve to the extent where it has received majority approval from the American people (Kimberling, 1992).

### 1.2 The History and Evolution of the Electoral College

The evolution of the Electoral College, while not groundbreaking, has still made an impact over the past 200+ years of its existence. Shlomo Slomim's article analyzes the historical development of the Electoral College. He describes how this voting system came into existence largely due to the Founding Fathers deeply distrusting the capability of American citizens to make an intelligent presidential vote (Slomim 2009). Slomim

further discusses how the Electoral College was really just a “last-minute compromise designed to allow the Constitutional Convention to wind up its business (2009).” What this article does in particular that most other articles regarding this topic do not do is give an in-depth analysis of the actual discussions that took place during the Constitutional Convention; in other words, what exactly was being said that conjured up the idea for this system in the first place. It was these conversations and debates that acted as the catalyst for the creation of the Electoral College, so in order to understand this system’s extensive history and evolution, it is necessary to understand just what went into its development.

Both the Virginia Plan and New Jersey Plan, for instance, highly influenced the creation of the Electoral College. They called for the executive elections to be conducted by the legislature. The Virginia Plan provided for a popularly elected legislature with the representation of each state proportional to its population size. The New Jersey Plan proposed that the legislature remain as the representative body of the states with each state entitled to one vote (2009). The Virginia Plan favored the large states while the New Jersey Plan favored the small states, foreshadowing the debates to come over fair representation of large vs. small states within the Electoral College system. One prominent challenge that came up during the development was if there should be a popular election of the executive (president). According to an article by William Kimberling, the Deputy Director of the FEC Office of Election Administration, the idea of a popular election was immediately criticized by opposing Founders (Elbridge and Mason) who argued that Americans were too uneducated to directly select a president and that this also would supersede the state authorities. However, one of the convention’s leading conservatives, Gouverneur Morris, was against leaving the electoral decision in

the hands of the legislature and not of the people. He pushed for a direct, popular election, but was met with opposition (Kimberling, 1992). For the next three months, there would be much back and forth between the Founding Fathers over if the president should be elected by a direct popular vote or by selected electors whom each state saw as “fit” for the task. They also argued about fair election practices for large vs. small states and how to ensure that there would not be profound state misrepresentation. Finally, on September 4 at the Constitutional Convention, the Electoral College was officially completed. At that point, it was basically a package deal in which diverse interests and safeguards were balanced. It also represented a “congress away from home” for the sole purpose of electing the president (Slomim 2009). In sum, the conversations and debates that took place at the Constitutional Convention paved the way for more intense debates and conversations over the Electoral College for the years to come. More importantly, they served as the essential backdrop to the evolution of this new instrument of government.

The evolution of the Electoral College really started to occur after the 12<sup>th</sup> Amendment was ratified in 1804. Since then, there have been many federal and state statutory changes, which have affected both the time and manner of choosing electors. However, the fundamental workings of the Electoral College have remained untouched, though many have pushed for its reform or abolishment over the years. This is largely due to how fast our nation is evolving itself and changing in ways that the Founders could never even fathom. In order to be able to keep up with such rapid changes, the Electoral College has had to be altered in some ways, though no major modifications have been made. According to Kimberling’s article (1992), the aspects of this system that have



evolved are primarily the manner and time of how electors are chosen. Regarding the manner, during the 1800s, more and more states were beginning to choose their electors through a direct popular vote rather than just leaving it up to their legislatures to decide. Today, almost all states (except Nebraska and Maine) choose their electors through a direct statewide popular vote. Kimberling goes on to explain how the “Winner-Take-All” system evolved. Under this system, the candidate who wins the most popular votes within a state wins all of that state’s electors. This was the only logical consequence, Kimberling (1992) explains, of having a direct statewide vote for electors since voters loyal to one party’s presidential candidate would likely also vote for that party’s list of proposed electors.

Regarding the actual time for choosing electors, for the first 50 years after the creation of the Electoral College, Congress permitted states to conduct elections for presidential electors anytime within 34 days before the first Wednesday of December (Kimberling 1992). This was highly unorganized and only benefitted those states that voted early. In 1845 Congress adopted a uniform day on which the states would choose their electors, which, as I stated in part one of this literature review, would now be the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November in years divisible by four.

The revised system did not receive much scrutiny until the election of 1876 (Kimberling 1992). Known as one of the most disputed presidential elections in American history, Samuel J. Tilden of New York outpolled Ohio's Rutherford B. Hayes in the popular election and had 184 electoral votes to Hayes' 165, with 20 votes uncounted. These 20 electoral votes were in dispute in three internally divided states (Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina). Both parties reported that its candidate had won

the particular state, while in Oregon one elector was declared illegal (as an "elected or appointed official") and replaced. The 20 disputed electoral votes were ultimately awarded to Hayes after a bitter legal and political battle, giving him the victory. Due to this mess of an election, in 1887, Congress enacted legislation that delegated to each state the final authority to determine the legality of its choice of electors and required a concurrent majority of both houses of Congress to reject any electoral votes. This has remained in effect to this day.

The presidential elections themselves have also had a heavy impact on the evolution of the Electoral College. Throughout the history of the system, there have been five elections where the president won the office by taking the most electoral votes but losing the popular vote: the elections of 1824, 1876, 1888, 2000, and 2016. These five elections alone have shaped the Electoral College and have inspired many to work towards reforming it so as not to have any further outcomes like this. As Arthur Schlesinger Jr. of the *Wall Street Journal* explains in his article, the 1824, 1876, and 1888 elections in particular sparked national tensions regarding the Electoral College system as well as propelled its evolution. In the 1824 election between John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, William Crawford, and Andrew Jackson, none of the candidates tallied the necessary amount of electoral votes to win, so the House has to choose the president. Therefore, in a contingent election where each state had one vote, as determined by the wishes of the majority of each state's congressional representatives, Adams emerged as the winner with a one-vote margin of victory. This was basically the first time in history that full trust was placed into the Electoral College, which allowed this system to strengthen (Schlesinger Jr. 1988). The outcome of the election of 1876 seemed very

predictable, with Democrat Samuel Tilden anticipated as the winner. Before the electoral votes of the last few states came in, as Kimberling previously stated in his article, it was almost a guarantee that Tilden had won the presidency. However, amidst dispute in Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina, Congress established a special commission to decide the electoral outcomes in these three states. It ended up that Hayes was elected president due to receiving a majority of electoral votes. However, as Schlesinger further explains in his article, “it was a rigged electoral commission and a sectional bargain (1988)” that really awarded Hayes the office. This is also noted as beginning of “end of Reconstruction,” which was when President Hayes went ahead and removed federal troops from the South, just as he had promised throughout his campaign (historycentral.com, 2015). The end of Reconstruction returned control of the government in the South to the white southerners who promptly disenfranchised African-Americans. It was not until the late 1960s that African-Americans in the South would achieve legal rights and be allowed to vote, thus having their votes formally included in the Electoral College system.

Both Kimberling and Schlesinger raise points particularly about the 1888 election and how it was not a clear case. Neither candidate, Grover Cleveland (D) nor Benjamin Harrison (R) waged a strong campaign (Schlesinger Jr. 1988). Cleveland's attitude toward the spoils system had antagonized party politicians. His policies on pensions, the currency, and tariff reform had made enemies among veterans, farmers, and industrialists. Even with these enemies, Cleveland had more popular votes than Harrison. However, Harrison received a larger electoral vote and won the election. Kimberling blames this outcome on the basis of superior party organization in getting out the vote. The impact of

this election on the evolution of the Electoral College was that eventually in 1965, Black Americans were given suffrage, which therefore allowed a minority group to participate in the Electoral College system giving more progressive candidates an advantage.

It was not until over one century later, in 2000, that again we would see a president take office after losing the popular vote but winning the electoral vote. Many scholars compare the 2000 election to the 1888 election due to just how much the Electoral College debate has intensified since then (The Harvard Law Review Association 2001). For instance, the Senate add-on provision, which grants two electoral votes to every state, makes small states more relevant in the election process. In the case of the 2000 election, George W. Bush (R) received fewer popular votes than Al Gore (D) but beat him with a total of 271 electoral votes to 266. The Senate add-on votes were particularly crucial in this election due to how close the numbers were. Some argue that this process gives small states an advantage over larger states. The difficulty that this provision creates is not only a bias favoring small states, but it also clashes with how the Electoral College generally amplifies the popular vote totals of winning candidates into larger electoral victories. Nonetheless, as this Harvard Law Review article puts it, the development of the Senate add-on provision impacted the outcome of two elections (1876 and 2000) where the winner had lost the popular vote. This provision is crucial when elections are particularly close. It also affects the functioning of the Electoral College in how with Winner-Take-All voting, a large pivotal state can deliver enough votes to offset the Senate add-on votes (2001). In 2000, the Senate add-on provision not only altered the power of the Electoral College's Winner-Take-All system, but changed the electoral outcome altogether. In the wake of the 2000 election, this article explains, the Founding

Fathers have been praised based on how the Electoral College protects small states from “simple-minded majoritarianism.” In other words, though Gore won the popular vote, he won fewer states than Bush who ended up losing the popular vote. Thus, Gore’s defeat accords with the Founding Fathers’ intent to make it difficult for large states to dominate.

A little more than a decade later, the 2012 election between President Barack Obama (D) and Governor Mitt Romney (R) took place. Though this election was not another instance where the presidential winner lost the popular election, many speculated it would be such due to how close the race was turning out to be (Brown 2012). It was really left to ten swing states to determine who would receive the most electoral votes. Scholars predicted two things for this election: that the Democrats would perform better than they did in 2000 and that the Republicans would, in turn, perform worse. In 2012, there was one scenario in particular that seemed highly plausible; an Electoral College vote tie between Obama and Romney (Brown 2012). This would occur if five of the ten swing states switched parties. Due to the demographics of some of those states as well as their voting history, this theory was not so implausible. This idea alone highlights just how the Electoral College evolved to allow such a possibility to exist. If America used a direct popular vote system for electing the president, there would likely be no tie, as the number of voters per party would never reach equilibrium.

Our most recent election has likely stirred up the most controversy and debate in history regarding the reliability of the Electoral College system. The America of 2016 was far from the America of 1787. An article analyzing how the 2016 election fits into American history describes how the increasing geographic concentration of each major party’s electoral support impacts the functioning of the Electoral College (Jacobs &

Ceaser 2016). What occurred during the 2016 election was that Donald Trump, the first non-politician or non-military candidate to ever make it to the final stretch of a presidential race, was running against Hillary Clinton, the first woman to ever receive a major party nomination for president. Everyone, supporters or not, believed that Hillary Clinton would win by a large margin. However, it had turned out that Trump, while losing the popular vote, won the Electoral College vote 306 to 232. Jacobs & Ceaser go on to explain that the 2016 election was the most geographically polarized of the last six elections. Trump had won majorities in small-populated states-primarily rural and Republican, while Clinton won majorities in heavily populated states-primarily urban and Democratic. Without the use of the Electoral College, the outcome of the presidential election would depend on alternative voting methods, such as a direct popular vote.

The fact that within such a close time frame (2000 and 2016) two presidential elections were won by candidates who lost the popular vote raised much concern and debate over the reliability of the Electoral College system. The measure of geographic concentration that Jacobs and Ceaser analyze in their article suggests that the discrepancy between the popular vote and the electoral vote will continue for years to come. This discrepancy is largely due to how voters are moving all over the country rather than staying in one place, bringing their political ideologies with them to places that have stayed relatively stagnant politically. Another article that examines the impact of the 2016 election on the Electoral College, states that the volatility of the nomination battle, particularly on the Republican side, suggests that 2016 could provide a break from the past (Azari & Hetherington 2016). The authors compare the 2016 election and its impact on the Electoral College to that of elections during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They discuss that

while the voting behavior in both times was strong, similar national issues were being fought over, and elections were marked for their continuity, that recent issues such as economic populism, stricter immigration laws, and battles for minority rights have arisen, which impact the mindset of voters today in a different way than 19<sup>th</sup> century voters were impacted. However, the country is just as divided today as it was in the 1800s. Today, America is dealing with more racial/minority diversity, a Democratic-heavy population in heavily populated areas, and more people moving around the country than ever before. This has led to the Electoral College evolving in a manner that is starting to work against Republicans. For instance, due to geographic statistics which point out how more and more highly populated areas are becoming increasingly Democratic, there are now becoming more Democratic electors than there are Republican ones, as Republican areas tend to be more rural and less populated. In other words, more minorities and progressives are drawn to city environments, while conservatives tend to be traditional and stay in one area most of their lives.

The potential future of the Electoral College rests in how it evolves. According to an article from the Yale School of Law, this rests in the actions of the top eleven most populated states. For instance, one way that the Electoral College system could evolve is if these particular states decide to push for a direct popular voting system to replace the Electoral College (Amar 2007). These eleven states together have 271 electoral votes, one more than the 270 votes necessary to win the presidency. Thus, if all eleven states passed the statute to start using a direct popular voting system, this alternative could become a possibility, at least in theory. Say that the same candidate won in all of these states. Automatically, due to the fact that these particular states equate to 271 electoral

votes, that candidate would win the election. The likelihood of this theory actually becoming a reality is unlikely, as to change the Electoral College system requires changing Amendments, in-depth Congressional meetings regarding what to do, and possibly rewriting sections of the Constitution.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to say for sure just how the Electoral College may evolve in the years to come. It may very well become completely reformed or abolished for all we know, or it could remain the same well into the future. A point that Robert Dixon Jr.'s article brings up in particular is that ever since the creation of political parties (1796), scarcely has a Congress adjourned without some sort of resolution regarding the Electoral College. Notably, if the 1950 Lodge-Gossett resolution, which provided a plan to abolish the Electoral College system and replace it with a proportional electoral vote, had become law, the entire system as we know it would have been done away with. However, when this resolution received the necessary 2/3 majority votes in the Senate, it was blocked in the House Rules Committee therefore leaving the Electoral College as it was (Dixon Jr. 1950). To this day, no proposal has proven strong enough to survive Congress and alter the Electoral College, though that could very well change in the near future. In the meantime, however, we can only refer to this system's history and past evolutionary path to predict just how it could affect the future of American politics. In this next section of my literature review, I will be examining and discussing the opinions of the American public on the Electoral College system and what they feel should be done about it.



### 1.3 Public Opinion on the Electoral College

Every passing year there seems to be ever changing and developing opinions on the Electoral College system. There are many Americans who support it, many who want it altered, and many who want it abolished altogether. Every passing election where the president wins solely based on the electoral vote tends to stir up more controversy and heated debate regarding the future of this system. After the 2016 election, the push for reform/abolition of the Electoral College was stronger than ever, and has remained so ever since. Before Donald Trump won the office in 2016, he tweeted about the Electoral College during the 2012 election, stating that it is a “disaster for a democracy” (Philadelphia Tribune 2016). Ironically, it was the Electoral College that won him the presidency during his race, to which he flipped his views, tweeting “The Electoral College is actually genius in that it brings all states, including the smaller ones, into play. Campaigning is much different!” (2016). Trump’s change of opinion is reflected in the opinions of many American citizens when it comes to this topic. Many were outraged by how this system impacted such elections like 2000 and 2016, and depending on whom they supported, many voters came away from both elections either favoring or hating it.

There seems to be more arguments against the Electoral College than in favor of it. According to an article published by the *Philadelphia Tribune* in 2016, many Americans feel that this system rigged the 2016 election. Due to the mass outrage over Trump, many of his opposers felt that he should not have taken office since the popular vote reflected everyone’s disdain for him. Nevertheless, no serious action had been taken at that time to even remotely change the Electoral College. However, throughout much of the mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century and start of the 21<sup>st</sup>, the desire of Americans to reform/abolish

the Electoral College had been strong. In the 1990s during one of the Northeastern Political Science Association's annual conferences, two political scientists who had attended described how they conducted a study regarding reasons why many United States citizens opposed the Electoral College. What they concluded was that many had at least some form of bias against it stemming from four different aspects: 1) the constant allocation of two electoral votes to every state (senate add-on provision), 2) the Winner-Take-All provision, 3) the assignment of electoral votes to states on the basis of population rather than voter turnout, 4) the assignment of electoral votes on the basis of census population features (Longley & Dana 1992). Opinions on this system really arise from the voting power of each state. For instance, more populous states have stronger voting power than less populous states under the Electoral College system, thus the more populous, large states are less likely to push for a reform than smaller, less populated states.

Many ideas for alternatives to the Electoral College are also analyzed in this particular research article. Three proposed reform options that are favored by the citizens involved in this study are the Proportional Plan, which would eliminate the Winner-Take-All system and transform the Electoral College into a system that favors the smallest states, the District Plan, which would favor/discriminate against citizens based on their geographic location, and the Direct Plan, which states that voting power would reside in each individual state (1992). Fast-forward almost a decade later to the election of 2000, it was noted in a Harvard Law Review article on reforming the Electoral College that the candidates had the largest impact on voters from large swing states (Florida, Ohio, Michigan) than on voters from small swing states (New Hampshire and West Virginia).

Like the previously mentioned article, this article discusses how larger states tend to have an advantage over smaller states regarding benefitting from the Electoral College. In other words, more supporters for this system reside in large states than in small states. However, after the 2000 election, America was in an uproar over the efficiency of the Electoral College.

To recap what I discussed in the second section of this literature review, the winner of the 2000 presidential election was George W. Bush, who beat Al Gore in the Electoral College vote even though he lost the popular vote. The question on everyone's mind at that point was "Why do we have an Electoral College that says that Al Gore should lose the 2000 election even though he won more votes? (The Harvard Law Review Association 2001)" A shift of a mere 538 votes from any state that Gore won to Florida, for instance, would have produced a Gore victory. The press at that time, however, had a vastly different opinion on the Electoral College than the people did, stating that it should be praised for how it protects the small states and federal structure from uneducated, ignorant voters.

Political science scholars conducted a study back in 2012 regarding what kind of reform citizens would want to see of the Electoral College. They chose to analyze data collected right before the 2004 election between John Kerry and President George W. Bush, as this was the first election after the controversial 2000 election where the president won due to receiving the most electoral votes but the least popular votes (Aldrich & Reifler & Munger 2012). What they found was that a majority of the citizens whose data they studied would want to see a system where each state's Electoral College votes were split proportionately. However, this depended on which candidate they

supported, which candidate they thought would win the election, preferences for abolishing the Electoral College in favor of the popular vote winner, and statistical interactions between these particular variables. Those in favor of John Kerry winning the 2004 election largely supported splitting their state's Electoral College votes if they felt that George W. Bush was going to likely win in that state (2012). However, what this data also showed was that Kerry supporters who felt that Kerry would, on the other hand, likely win in their state, in turn favored the Winner-Take-All system of the Electoral College. The reverse is true for Bush supporters. This article recalling the events of this study investigates a situation in which respondents were presented with a choice of institutions: stay with the current Electoral College system or switch to an alternative method. The findings were that citizens in states where a less preferred candidate is expected to win are more likely to favor a proportional allocation of electoral votes. Meanwhile, citizens in states where the more preferred candidate is expected to win favor the current Winner-Take All system.

In the article, "Electoral College Alternatives and U.S. Presidential Elections", author Vincy Fon goes into depth about certain potential alternatives while also analyzing the opinions of Americans leading up to the 2004 election, similar to the study conducted by Aldrich, Reifler, and Munger. This article also points out various strengths and weaknesses of the two popular alternative ideas for the Electoral College: the Perfect Proportion system and the Integral Proportion system (Fon 2004). Regarding the Perfect Proportion system, this would accept fractional numbers of electoral votes that perfectly reflect the proportion of the popular vote for each candidate. The Integral Proportion system, on the other hand, would only take integral numbers of electoral votes and

allocate them to approximately reflect the popular vote in a state with a tilt towards the plurality winner. These two proportional allocation systems would split the number of electors in a state. Therefore, if either system were to be adopted, the Constitution would need to be changed to allow the winner of a plurality of electoral votes to win the election. Many Americans in 2004 argued that the Perfect Proportional system does not keep the property of magnifying the victory margin of the presidential winner, but that the Integral Proportional system does. However, Fon describes how the Perfect Proportional system is the most intuitive alternative to the current Winner-Take-All system of the Electoral College. This is because the Perfect Proportional system “has the virtue of keeping the principles of federalism and of ‘every vote counts equally’ in the state, as the fraction of electoral votes assigned to any candidate reflects precisely his fraction of popular votes in the state” (Fon, 2004). Basically, what mattered the most to 2004 voters was developing a system where their votes would all be counted equally and directly. This was especially the case since the most recent election of 2000 ended up being one where the winner lost the popular vote. However, as the Electoral College framework is retained, no allocation system of electoral votes can assure that the nationwide popular vote winner will become the president.

While a reform of the Electoral College sounds appealing to a majority of Americans, it actually comes with more risks than many anticipate. Political scientists Darshan Goux and David Hopkins state in their article regarding the negative impacts of an Electoral College reform, that more attention should be on the consequences of such a reform rather than the reasons why there should be a reform (Goux & Hopkins 2008). In other words, a reform is easier said than done. It may be what many concerned citizens

want, but very few have actually stopped and thought long enough about how exactly it could be done and what would happen to our government. For starters, under a system of direct popular election, candidates no longer have a reason to acknowledge state boundaries, as all votes would be of precisely equal value no matter where they are from. However, the severe practical limitations placed on presidential campaigns would endure even after a reform. Resources, primarily time and money, would remain limited. However, Democrats may gain an advantage from a reform, as places with high populations tend to be urban cities, which are usually Democratic, while Republicans would gain an edge (2008) as low populated, rural areas lean more Republican. Even still, it is very difficult to predict what exactly will occur if a reform takes place.

What this particular article is explaining is that everyone is too focused on Electoral College reform and not focused enough on the consequences this could have on our country as a whole. In 2008, the year this article was written, the election between former president Barack Obama (D) and John McCain (R) took place. Though there had not been a presidential election where the winning candidate lost the popular vote since 2000, many Americans in 2008 were still worried about the effects the Electoral College would have on that year's election, especially since Obama was half black, a first for a presidential candidate. Nevertheless, Obama ended up winning both the popular vote and electoral vote and became president. However, that did not mean that Americans wanted to keep the Electoral College system in place. The main point that Goux and Hopkins' article is trying to make is that people cannot claim to support a reform of a two-century old system without considering what can actually happen as a consequence. This is the

issue with Americans regarding this subject even today; they all talk about wanting a reform but never stop and really consider the effects it could have.

The most recent public opinions regarding the Electoral College are still highly leaning towards reform/abolishment. In an article written right after the 2016 election, it was noted that the use of the Electoral College has led to a major distrust of Americans in their government, where only 19% of Americans said they trust it (Shockley-Zalaback & Morreale & Stavrositu, 2017). This is largely due to how unpopular Donald Trump was, and still is, and how the only reason he won the presidency was through the Electoral College. A study was conducted after this election to explore voters' perceptions of both Clinton and Trump regarding their general trust in them as presidential candidates. This study used two online census-representative surveys to examine registered voters' views both before and after the election. The results showed that there were relatively low-trust levels for both Clinton and Trump and an electorate divided demographically about their trust in these two candidates. Furthermore, there was also a large distrust found in the Electoral College system (2017). Based on the popular vote victory for Clinton and the electoral vote victory for Trump, the swing states were used for further analysis of state issue preferences and trust perceptions for the two. Trump won 136 Electoral College votes in the swing states and Clinton only won 32. These swing states are what accounted for a majority of Trump's overall electoral votes.

What this particular article proved was just how much of an impact the 2016 election had on a majority of America's perception of the Electoral College. Because of the high disapproval ratings for both Clinton and Trump, not only did the general trust in the governmental system plummet, but also in the Electoral College system. Trump has

one of the lowest approval ratings in history (2017) and this has driven many to push for a reform or abolish the Electoral College altogether. Unfortunately, as previous articles in this section have stated, reforming the Electoral College is very risky and tedious. The Constitution would have to be rewritten and it would take many years for a reform/abolition to finally become official. In reality, as much as America may strongly dislike the Electoral College system, it may be decades before we see action taken to reform/abolish it. However, just as American politics have changed drastically and unexpectedly in such a short amount of time, it may very well be possible that the Electoral College system could change soon, too. In this next and concluding section of my literature review, I will explore the various implications of the Electoral College and explain why my personal research on the topic is relevant to the overall debates regarding this system today.

#### 1.4 Implications of the Electoral College and the Importance of my Research

The Electoral College system has had and will continue to have significant implications on the fabric of our government. As long as it exists, so will controversy and disagreements over how best to elect our president, since many voters are divided between supporting the Electoral College and pushing for its reform/abolishment. Those in favor of the Electoral College state that its implications are vital to the current two-party system. According to an article discussing the benefits of the Electoral College, the Electoral College and two-party system were made for each other (Spillenger 2000). This is because this system, as I described earlier in this literature review, makes it almost impossible for a third party candidate to even make it to the final debate round of a presidential election. This article is on the side favoring the two-party system, stating that



it makes for a more fair election as the parties have an equal chance of gaining the political power of the state. Also, it allows for political stability in that if one party wins the election, the other automatically goes into a recognized opposition. In this defense, we need the Electoral College system to protect our current party system, which according to this particular article is what makes America a strong political power.

Another article that backs the previous claims goes into detail about how the debate over keeping or abolishing the Electoral College centers primarily on the charge that it is not representative and that it violates the “one person, one vote” principle, benefiting some states and disadvantaging others (Johnson 2005). However, this article defends the Electoral College by stating that the “one person, one vote” argument is misplaced because the United States is a federal democracy, which is where the president is elected by a system that blends the direct popular vote with the indirect vote via individual states, and not a national democracy, which is where the president would be elected by people through direct popular vote. This, Johnson claims, is the confusion many Americans have regarding our government and is why many are too quick to be against the Electoral College. In order to fully understand why this system exists, people should first understand the set up of the American government. This article also argues that the states that are competitive (swing) indicate that there is a spur to democracy and attentive participation. Basically, the Electoral College drives more people to become involved in American politics, especially in competitive states. If there was no Electoral College and simply a direct popular vote, voters would not be so concerned about the outcome of elections, which would reduce public interest in politics. However, with the current Electoral College system, voters do not have a way to directly vote for a

candidate, which may increase their political engagement and motivation to vote so that the elector for the party they align with will get chosen.

Sociologists Bernard Grofman and Scott Feld reiterate this in their article about the impacts of the Electoral College. As Johnson stated, those who argue against the Electoral College really need to take a step back and note the original justification for its existence. These scholars go into more depth regarding the “one person, one vote” failure, defending the reason for this by explaining that America is not a pure democracy in that its institutions deliberately balance state-specific representation with the representation of individuals. Also, that the magnitude of the small state bias in the Electoral College is overstated, and that it is actually the large states that have the advantage due to having a much greater chance to be pivotal (Grofman & Feld 2005). As for the claim that the nature of the Electoral College focuses attention of presidential candidates primarily on a handful of potentially competitive states, one must consider the consequences of a reform or abolishment of this system. Just as Johnson stated in her article, the Electoral College’s implications are largely biased towards competitive states, but it is because of this that there is a large percentage of active voters in the country. It would be safer, Grofman and Feld explain, to keep the Electoral College system in place to prevent a lack of enthusiasm among voters, which would likely happen in a direct popular election. In other words, if the voters know that their votes would directly determine the presidential winner, they would be less apprehensive about the power of their vote as they know that it would directly correlate to the election results. The Electoral College system, on the other hand, drives many voters to actually get out and vote to ensure that the elector of their party gets chosen as they do not have direct control

over the winner like they would under a popular election system. The Electoral College does not allow for one's vote to directly influence who wins the election, so voters, for the most part, are more apt to go vote so that their party's elector gets selected, therefore increasing the chances for their preferred candidate to win the election. Another point that Grofman and Feld bring up is that if the Electoral College was replaced with a direct election, it could lead America from a systematic manner of vote counting to a more complicated, chaotic method, as a direct voting system is not as structured as the current Electoral College system.

On the other side of the spectrum are those who criticize the Electoral College and desire its reform/abolishment. They believe that its implications are that it will always produce a "wrong winner," meaning a president who wins the electoral vote but loses the popular vote (Fuentes-Rohwer & Charles 2000). The scholars who wrote this article state that a direct popular voting system is indeed the correct method of voting, as it would reflect the voice of the people. They also claim that the Electoral College will "choose" the wrong winner if that candidate loses the popular vote yet still wins the Electoral vote, as the Electoral vote does not reflect the direct popular votes of the people. This is one of the more popular arguments made against the use of Electoral College.

The article also highlights how one of the main reasons why it has been impossible to reform the Electoral College is due to the fact that the same three reform strategies are always brought up: a direct election, a proportional vote distribution, or a districting system (2000). It seems that none of these options have ever been able to catalyze a reform, so the only option, aside from abolishment, is to rethink various reform methods and find one that best matches up with the rapidly evolving political climate. For

instance, this could be discovered through mass polls and/or surveys sent out to registered American voters. They could be mailed/emailed a list of different alternative voting systems and then select the choice that best matches their political ideals. Unfortunately, this would be very difficult to conduct and later analyze due to such large amounts of collected data. There may be no “ideal” replacement of the Electoral College for quite some time. Fuentes-Rohwer and Charles (2000) further explain how the debate over the Electoral College is something that will always be relevant in our society, and that its current implications threaten to increase the political turmoil after every passing election. Looking back at this past 2016 election, this statement could not be more accurate, as Hillary Clinton’s loss of the Electoral votes cost her the presidency and in turn won Donald Trump the office.

When considering the push to abolish the Electoral College, many believe that this system is particularly harmful during the times it defeats the will of the majority (Potts 1926). Though the article of which this claim is from was written almost a century ago, its points are still relevant to how many Americans feel about the implications of the Electoral College today. The author, C.S. Potts, discusses how the Electoral College has failed to accomplish the purpose for which it was created, to be the voice of the people. In adopting the Electoral College, Potts argues, the Founding Fathers failed to accurately gauge the sentiment of America as expressed at the voting polls. If this system were to be abolished, voters would have the chance to be presented with a new and improved voting method, one that would preferably be more direct. Fast-forward to 2016 and we can see just how much the Electoral College has made a negative impact on the mindsets of voters. Because Trump was so unpopular but had still won the electoral vote, America

was, for the most part, angry and confused as to why this system was still even being used as it clearly had failed to represent the majority approval.

Going off of the 2016 election and its effects on the outlook of the Electoral College, this system is under more scrutiny than ever before. Because Trump won due to taking the electoral vote, this made many Americans outraged as the majority was not in favor of him. An article written a few months after the election regarding the implications of the Electoral College on the presidential race, stated that not only did the widespread shock and anger over the results prove that it is indeed time for a reform, but that the fact that two elections ended in this manner within a time span of only 16 years proves that the Electoral College is indeed becoming increasingly outdated for our modern political system (Sides, Tesler, Vavreck 2017). In a similar article, not only are these same points discussed but also the notion of how partisan bias plays a role in how the Electoral College functions (Zingher 2016). The elections that have been effected by this system bring attention to the question of whether partisan bias consistently influences presidential election outcomes. Zingher personally finds that the presence of partisan bias provides a sizable, but not insurmountable, obstacle for the disadvantaged party. Of course, partisan bias is inescapable with or without the Electoral College.

My research on the Electoral College and the varying opinions on it is particularly significant because of how America is ever changing and evolving, becoming more diverse politically, economically, demographically, etc. Because of this, I wanted to examine just how many people are in favor/not in favor of this long-existing system. Though I surveyed just my college campus, my subjects were from diverse backgrounds, making for a useful and varied data sample. The reason why I wanted to research this

particular topic is because as someone who aspires to go into government affairs and legislative work, I am curious to see what the current public stance is on the Electoral College, a system that has been so controversial over the course of its existence, especially after Trump's election. I feel that now, more than ever, Americans need to be actively engaged in politics especially after the chaos that the 2016 election brought to both parties. If it truly is the will of the majority of America to reform the Electoral College, then action indeed should be taken. Also, we as Americans have the right of revolution. This is found in the Declaration of Independence, stating that it's the right and duty of the people of a nation to overthrow a government that acts against their common interests and/or threatens the safety of the people without probable cause. Therefore, if enough Americans believe that the Electoral College acts against their best interests/ threatens their political safety, than by all means they should be allowed to reform/abolish it.

### 1.5 Conclusion

After analyzing various articles from all different points of view regarding the Electoral College system, I feel that in order to satisfy our modern political climate, more attention should be brought to the effects of this system on voters and the overarching opinions on it. In other words, there should be more surveys like mine sent out to every city/town in every state to gather precise data regarding how the people really feel about this system. Public polls should be more readily available to voters as well, maybe placed in each voting booth for them to fill out after casting their ballots as one possibility. Not many Americans really give the Electoral College much thought, though through my small sample, I was able to direct a number of people's attention towards analyzing this

system for at least a few minutes, which some have likely never done before. It is a vital part of our government, and every American voter should care about its history, evolution, public opinion, and implications.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

Determining the flow of my actual thesis was initially daunting, as there were so many different ways I could write it and discuss my research findings. After consulting with my thesis advisor, I decided that I would conduct an online survey of University of Maine undergraduate students and faculty to collect my information. For my particular research, I felt that this was the best method as I would be able to really analyze each response and come to a conclusion about just how peoples' individual characteristics can affect their political views relating to the Electoral College. It also allowed me to focus on a specific, contained subject group, as a college campus is ideologically diverse with students from various backgrounds, ethnicities, ages, etc.

I spent the majority of this past summer constructing the survey questions, which were segmented into three sections: background information, political knowledge, and the Electoral College. I felt that it was necessary to have these particular sections in place as one's background information and political knowledge can contribute greatly to their individual beliefs and knowledge about the Electoral College system. I ended up drafting 20 questions. After multiple revisions of each question, perfecting the wording of some and being more specific in others, it was finally ready to be transferred onto survey software. I chose to use Qualtrics, as it is not only free for University of Maine students, but it is also easy to use. The completed survey data are reported in a clear and concise way on Qualtrics, which makes analyzing them more manageable and straightforward,



especially since I am more of a visual learner and have a better time analyzing graphs than written data on a spread sheet. I can also see the individual counts of how many people selected each choice per question in a bar graph format. However, creating the survey was the easy part. Actually distributing it was the real challenge.

Because I would be working with human subjects, I was required to complete an application form and online training for the University of Maine Institutional Review Board (IRB) before I went forward with anything else. Anyone at the University of Maine who plans to conduct research involving human subjects must comply with the University Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research. These procedures exist for the rights and safety of those who participate in such research at this university. No investigations or information gathering of any kind are allowed to take place until the Protection of Human Subjects Review Board has approved the research protocol. In my case, this review would not be that extensive or in depth, as I was only planning on surveying my subjects, not experimenting or having them do anything that would alter their physical and mental state. The application I filled out required me to give a summary of my research question, my chosen method of study, who would be studied and how, and how I would have the subjects give consent and keep their information confidential. Once this part was completed and submitted, I then waited to hear back from the Chair of the IRB, who requested that I further explain how I would recruit my subjects, how many I would survey, that I opt out of doing paper surveys, and to finalize my consent and confidentiality sections of the survey.

When I emailed the IRB Chair back about how I wanted to survey the entire undergraduate/faculty body through one mass email, she wrote back explaining how

Human Resources would not allow an undergraduate student to do this, but that I could check with the University about other options. My original goal of surveying the entire undergraduate student body as well as all faculty through launching a mass email of my survey link was a definite stretch. I had anticipated this to be difficult to achieve and was prepared to figure out other options. After consulting with my thesis advisor as well as another professor who is skilled in both Qualtrics and distributing surveys, we decided that my best bet would be to contact the heads of each college on campus about if they could each send a mass email to the students within their colleges. However, this still was deemed problematic, so I decided to condense my method of contact even further. My new plan, with approval from my thesis advisor and the advice of Brian Doore, Director of the Office of Assessment, was to personally email the professors of all large enrollment courses on campus (defined as enrollments of 100 students or more), to see if they would be willing to send their students a link to my survey with a request to participate. In addition, I would go to each of these classes after receiving approval from the professors and give a detailed, five minute “pitch” about my research to the class and why I would like them to take my survey, making it more personable than just sending out an email. I made sure to have an equal amount of lower level and upper level courses listed, so I could target all academic levels. However, none of this could begin until the IRB gave their approval.

I proceeded to make the necessary changes to my IRB application and sent it back for a second review, this time with a fully written out participation email, the updated plan for how I would reach as many undergraduates and faculty as possible, and the detailed consent and confidentiality statements. Midway into September, I heard back

from the IRB again, and they requested that I send them a write up of the verbal “pitch” I was planning to give to each of the large enrollment classes I visited. As far as faculty, which was a far smaller group of participants and thus easier to reach, I contacted the University Faculty Senate President, Professor Mike Scott, about how best I could reach all the faculty members. After reading my survey, summary of my research plan, and my participation statement, he agreed to personally distribute my survey to all University of Maine faculty through a mass email containing my link once I received approval from the IRB. I would know when someone had completed my survey by looking at the report section on Qualtrics. Each time it was filled out, I would see that person’s answers displayed in the reports section. However, none of this could be carried out until I received approval from the IRB.

I informed the IRB that I had revised my recruitment email to be short and to the point, stating what my study was about, why I needed my subjects to take my survey, and that their responses would be anonymous and confidential. This would be the first thing my subjects would read before even considering taking my survey, so I knew I had to be specific regarding what I wanted them to do. At the beginning of my actual survey would be a paragraph regarding consent, which described what my participants would be asked to do, how it was completely voluntary, and how their data would be used to help me collect and analyze the thoughts and feelings of the University of Maine community regarding the use of the Electoral College in modern America as a means of electing the President of the United States. I also included a statement regarding how by simply taking the survey, this would serve as their consent agreement. At the bottom of that paragraph, I gave my email, my thesis advisor’s email, and the contact information for

the IRB assistant. The IRB requested that I be thorough and direct with this part, as consent and confidentiality are the most important parts of any study involving human subjects, even for something as minor as a survey. At the end of September, the IRB Chair emailed me back stating that my study had been granted final approval and that I could begin my research. All of these aforementioned materials are available in my appendix section.

In early October I was officially ready to launch my survey. With the questions revised and the informed consent in place, what I had to start doing was individually contact the professors of each large enrollment course to inquire if they would allow me to pitch my study during one of their classes in addition to emailing their students the link to my survey with the participation statement I drafted. To know specifically which classes were considered to be large enrollment, my thesis advisor sent me a link to the university's course catalog. Next, I went through this catalog and picked out the courses with an enrollment number of 100 students or more. Seeing that only lower level and general education courses had such high numbers of students, I decided to look for courses with 60 students or more in order to add more variety and make my list long enough so that even if a handful of professors were unable to assist me, I still would have a sufficient number of classes to reach out to. I found reaching out to the Honors classes to be the most accessible. As the students and faculty within this college are very knowledgeable about what the Honors Thesis is and what it entails, they did not need me to come in to their various seminars and lectures to pitch my survey. Instead, the Honors Associates were able to send out a mass email to all Honors students and faculty

regarding my research and survey. In the meantime, I individually contacted the professors of the forty or so classes that I expected to participate.

While this was happening, I had reached out to the University Faculty Senate President, Professor Mike Scott, about how my study received approval from the IRB and that my survey was ready to be sent out to the university faculty. I emailed him my participation statement along with the survey link, and he informed me when he had launched it to all faculty members. Reaching the faculty of the University of Maine was quite manageable, as there are much fewer people to reach out to. Now, my main priority was gathering data from the undergraduate student sample. I typed a detailed, informative email to each professor from my lengthy course list regarding what my survey was, what I hoped to gain from the study as a whole, and a request to have my survey link sent out to their students along with permission for me to pitch my survey to their class in person. In two weeks time, I had heard back from 90% of the professors I emailed, which was very good as that meant I had a large group of potential survey subjects. Some of them did not think my pitch was necessary and agreed to just send their students my survey link over blackboard.

The professors who did want me to speak to their class had emailed me their availability. I wrote down each specific day and time that the professors could have me come in to their class, and I made a schedule for myself. This part took about 3 weeks, as there were many scheduling conflicts, but eventually I had reached enough classes to attain a satisfactory number of potential respondents. I admit it was intimidating at first, having to go into large lecture halls comprised of hundred of students who I had never seem before, and talk about my research knowing that I likely would not hold every

single student's attention, but after the third or fourth time doing this, it felt like second nature and I felt more confident and at ease. In a way, this experience helped to improve my public speaking skills and gave me excellent practice addressing large groups of people. I found that a majority of the people in each of the classes I spoke to seemed genuinely engaged, as well as the professors. This particularly applied to my fellow Honors students and faculty, as they are aware of how much work goes into the Honors thesis.

Once I had finished informing various classes about my thesis, it was then time to track how many submissions my survey got per day. This part took a little over a month, as variables such as how soon each professor sent my survey out to their students, how quickly the students took it, and how many students each day submitted their surveys all contributed to when I knew I had enough data to analyze. As far as faculty, their submissions came in much faster, as they were a smaller, more easily reachable group. I did not have to personally lecture to the faculty, rather, the president of the Faculty Senate was able to send out my survey to each faculty member through his email system.

I had anticipated reaching 500 or more participants, but in the end I had reached 409. This was very close to my goal and I was satisfied with the number and variety of survey submissions. I had a large enough sample to compare and contrast the various results. With the actual research portion completed, it was then time to start writing the thesis and analyzing the data. Aside from the other sections, the data analysis was likely the largest, most detailed part of the entire thesis. I knew from the very beginning that I would need to analyze large amounts of data due to how I went about gathering my

research via a survey, so I needed to figure out the most efficient, accessible way to do so.

Before I began the data analysis, I met with one of my thesis committee members who has a strong knowledge about how to work with online data, and discussed my options. He recommended that I use SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to analyze my survey results, as this would display all the data in percent form as well as list exactly how many respondents chose each answer. It also would allow me to look at the frequencies of responses, the total number of respondents per question, and whether each relationship was statistically significant or not. I ran this by my thesis advisor who agreed that SPSS would be the most efficient tool to analyze my research with. After a day of learning how to use the software, I then went ahead and ran my data through it, making forty-five crosstabs and Chi-Square Tests.

First, I selected the dependent variables, which ended up being five. These were the survey questions that all specifically pertained to the Electoral College whose value greatly depended on the answers to the remaining survey questions. The independent variables that I selected, which ended up being nine, were the ones that seemed most likely to affect the five dependent variables the most out of all the other survey questions. When I ran both these independent and dependent variables through SPSS and made my tables, it was then time to analyze each crosstab and Chi-Square Test to see if there were any specific relationships that would impact my initial research question. I broke this down into outcomes that were statistically significant and statistically non-significant that both directly correlated to my research question, which I will further expand upon in the data analysis section of this thesis.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS

For the data analysis section of my thesis, I decided to begin by selecting both my independent and dependent variables to run in SPSS to make both crosstabs and Chi-Square tests. After looking over my survey of 20 questions, I ended up choosing nine independent variables and five dependent variables. This was daunting, as I feel that all my questions are of equal importance and value, but I had to select the ones that correlated the most with my overall research question: “What are the thoughts and opinions of University of Maine faculty and undergraduate students regarding the Electoral College system?” For my dependent variables, I chose all the questions that specifically pertained to the Electoral College, which were as follows: How much do you currently know about the Electoral College? Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of American voters? Do you believe that the Electoral College is a tool our government uses to hide/cover up important candidate information? How strongly do you care about the impact of the Electoral College on the governance of our country? If the Electoral College was to be replaced with an alternative voting system, what would you like it to be?

The independent variables I chose were from survey questions that I hypothesized as having an impact on the dependent variables after being run through SPSS. They were as follows: What year in school are you? What gender do you identify as? What is your primary area of studying or teaching? What age group are you in? What is your political



affiliation? How important are politics to you? How do you feel about the current U.S. political climate? Financially, how do you identify? Did you vote in this past presidential election and if so, who did you vote for?

What I did next, which was the bulk of this analysis, was run all this data through SPSS and create crosstabs and Chi-Square tests. The crosstabs were to allow me to see exact percentages and numbers for each data section I ran, and the Chi-Square tests were to allow me to see which relationships were statistically significant or not. I planned on organizing the data analysis based on two sections, one on outcomes that I hypothesized as being statistically significant but ended up not being statistically significant, and the other section on outcomes that ended up having a statistically significant impact on the dependent variables. On the Chi-Square Test for each of the crosstabs I ran, I looked at the Pearson Chi-Square Test in particular to identify statistically significant and non-significant data. Overall, as I will expand upon in this data analysis, most of my data ended up being just what I had expected, though there were some outcomes that were totally different than what I had predicted. I have also included what my initial hypotheses were for each of the data results that I analyzed and whether or not the actual outcomes satisfied them or not.

### 1.1 Statistically Non-significant Data Outcomes

After I ran all the selected independent and dependent variables through SPSS, there were nine relationships that were statistically non-significant that contradicted my initial hypotheses for them. The first was the relationship for “What year in school are you/If the Electoral College was to be replaced with an alternative voting system, what would you like it to be? (Crosstab 4.1)” The Pearson Chi-Square test showed that this

data is not statistically significant with a p-value of .469. When I analyzed the crosstab for this, I found that out of all the selections available for this question, the most common selection by all categories, faculty included, was the choice about having a direct popular vote with a second round of direct voting between the top two finishers if neither candidate receives at least half of the votes the first round. The answer percentages ranged between 35-48%. The only participant category that had a drastically lower percentage for this choice was the 3<sup>rd</sup> years (35%), where over half had selected the choice for having a candidate ranking system (51%). The least chosen answer was to have a system that awards all Electoral College votes to the winner of the national popular vote (0-5%). This surprised me as my initial hypothesis anticipated that the choice to keep the Electoral College in place as is to be the least popular selection. Overall, this shows that a majority of the respondents I surveyed would much rather see a direct popular vote replace the Electoral College.

**What year in school are you/If the Electoral College was to be replaced with an alternative voting system, what should it be? (Crosstab) 4.1**

		What Year Are You 4th/5th					Total	
		1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00 (faculty)		
If the Electoral College was to be replaced with an alternative voting system, what should it be?	A direct popular vote, which includes a second round of direct voting between the top two finishers if no candidate receives at least half of the votes the first round.	Count	51	25	15	21	54	166
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	48.1%	42.4%	34.9%	44.7%	44.6%	44.1%
	A candidate ranking system where voters rank each candidate instead of just voting for one. Such a system would reveal a winner based on which candidate was ranked highest after lower-finishing candidates were eliminated from consideration.	Count	28	17	22	16	44	127
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	26.4%	28.8%	51.2%	34.0%	36.4%	33.8%
	A system that awards all Electoral College votes to the winner of the national popular vote.	Count	5	4	0	1	5	15
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	4.7%	6.8%	0.0%	2.1%	4.1%	4.0%
	Keep the Electoral College in place, but change it so that the top 3 finishers in the popular vote nationwide are required to be considered in the Electoral College.	Count	4	3	2	4	4	17
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	3.8%	5.1%	4.7%	8.5%	3.3%	4.5%
	Keep the Electoral College in place as it is.	Count	18	10	4	5	14	51
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	17.0%	16.9%	9.3%	10.6%	11.6%	13.6%
Total		Count	106	59	43	47	121	376
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**p-value: .469**

The relationship for “What is your primary area of studying or teaching/How much do you currently know about the Electoral College? (Crosstab 4.2)” is not statistically significant with a p-value of .222. For this particular question, the choice that had the most responses was “some information.” Every college listed chose this one the most, except for the College of Engineering which was tied exactly between this choice and the choice of “a great deal of information” at 47%. However, the only category that

had the most selections for “a great deal of information” was Honors Faculty (67%). The other faculty category selected “some information” the most (75%), just as the colleges had. No faculty responded to any other choices, while very few members from each of the colleges responded to the remaining choices, ranging from “little/barely any information” to “no information”. Overall, this shows that regardless of a student’s major, they all at least know something about the Electoral College. A reason why drastically more Honors faculty (67%) selected “a great deal of information” than other faculty (25%) could possibly be because many of these faculty members study politics or are political science professors. Another aspect, which went against my initial hypothesis, was how members of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences chose “some information” the most (48%) rather than “a great deal of information” (40%). Being the category that includes students who study political science, I had anticipated that at least 80% would have selected “a great deal of information” rather than the 40% who did.

## What is your primary area of studying or teaching/How much do you currently know about the Electoral College? (Crosstab) 4.2

If you are a University of Maine undergraduate student, what is your primary area of study? For faculty, what is your primary area of teaching?

			College of Education and Human Development	College of Engineering	College of Liberal Arts and Sciences	College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture	Maine Business School	Honors (Faculty Only)	Cooperative Extension (Faculty Only)	Total
How much do you currently know about the Electoral College?	A great deal of information	Count	7	14	43	41	10	2	1	118
		% within If you are a University of Maine undergraduate student, what is your primary area of study? For faculty, what is your primary area of teaching?	24.1%	46.7%	39.4%	26.3%	43.5%	66.7%	25.0%	33.3%
	Some information	Count	16	14	52	93	11	1	3	190
		% within If you are a University of Maine undergraduate student, what is your primary area of study? For faculty, what is your primary area of teaching?	55.2%	46.7%	47.7%	59.6%	47.8%	33.3%	75.0%	53.7%
Little/barely any information		Count	4	2	9	21	2	0	0	38
		% within If you are a University of Maine undergraduate student, what is your primary area of study? For faculty, what is your primary area of teaching?	13.8%	6.7%	8.3%	13.5%	8.7%	0.0%	0.0%	10.7%
No information		Count	2	0	5	1	0	0	0	8
		% within If you are a University of Maine undergraduate student, what is your primary area of study? For faculty, what is your primary area of teaching?	6.9%	0.0%	4.6%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%
Total		Count	29	30	109	156	23	3	4	354
		% within If you are a University of Maine undergraduate student, what is your primary area of study? For faculty, what is your primary area of teaching?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

p-value: .222

The relationship for “What is your primary area of studying or teaching/Do you believe that the Electoral College is a tool our government uses to hide/cover up important candidate information? (Crosstab 4.3),” is not statistically significant with a p-value of .745. There were two choices that had a mix of the most responses, “probably yes” and “might or might not.” The categories that chose “probably yes” the most were the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (28%) and the College of NSFA (30%). All other remaining categories chose “might or might not” the most. One aspect of this data that went against my initial hypothesis is how neither faculty category chose “definitely yes,” while a small percent of the college categories had. The reasoning for this is likely because faculty have more experience voting and witnessing elections. They also, for the most part, have studied the political system more than students have, thus ruling out such hypothetical theories.

**What is your primary area of studying or teaching/Do you believe that the Electoral College is a tool our government uses to hide/cover up important candidate information? (Crosstab) 4.3**

		If you are a University of Maine undergraduate student, what is your primary area of study? For faculty, what is your primary area of teaching?								
			College of Education and Human Development	College of Engineering	College of Liberal Arts and Sciences	College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture	Maine Business School	Honors (Faculty Only)	Cooperative Extension (Faculty Only)	Total
Do you believe that the Electoral College is a tool our government uses to hide/cover up important candidate information?	Definitely yes	Count	1	2	9	14	3	0	0	29
		% within If you are a University of Maine undergraduate student, what is your primary area of study? For faculty, what is your primary area of teaching?	3.4%	6.7%	8.3%	9.0%	13.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.2%
	Probably yes	Count	8	4	31	47	4	0	1	95
		% within If you are a University of Maine undergraduate student, what is your primary area of study? For faculty, what is your primary area of teaching?	27.6%	13.3%	28.4%	30.3%	17.4%	0.0%	25.0%	26.9%
	Might or might not	Count	10	8	27	44	8	1	2	100
		% within If you are a University of Maine undergraduate student, what is your primary area of study? For faculty, what is your primary area of teaching?	34.5%	26.7%	24.8%	28.4%	34.8%	33.3%	50.0%	28.3%
	Probably not	Count	5	8	25	36	3	1	1	79
		% within If you are a University of Maine undergraduate student, what is your primary area of study? For faculty, what is your primary area of teaching?	17.2%	26.7%	22.9%	23.2%	13.0%	33.3%	25.0%	22.4%
	Definitely not	Count	5	8	17	14	5	1	0	50
		% within If you are a University of Maine undergraduate student, what is your primary area of study? For faculty, what is your primary area of teaching?	17.2%	26.7%	15.6%	9.0%	21.7%	33.3%	0.0%	14.2%
Total	Count	29	30	109	155	23	3	4	353	
	% within If you are a University of Maine undergraduate student, what is your primary area of study? For faculty, what is your primary area of teaching?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

**p-value: .745**

The relationship for “What is your primary area of studying or teaching/If the Electoral College was to be replaced with an alternative voting system, what would you like it to be? (Crosstab 4.4)” is statistically non-significant with a p-value of .169. Overall, the top two most chosen selections were a direct popular vote and a candidate ranking system. One hundred percent of the Honors College faculty category chose the direct popular vote option, while only 25% of the other faculty category had. The College of Education and Human Development mostly chose a candidate ranking system, while the remaining three colleges mostly chose a direct popular vote. My original hypothesis anticipated the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to mainly choose a direct popular vote, as this is the choice that many of my political science classmates have openly talked about wanting throughout my classes. Another part of this data that stood out was how 25% of other faculty, 30% of the Maine Business School, and 27% of the College of Engineering chose to keep the Electoral College in place as it is. I expected very low percentages for this choice, as I rarely ever hear of anyone being completely in favor of the use of the Electoral College, so this definitely stood out to me. The reason behind these high percentages for keeping the Electoral College as is could likely be because these three categories might not know enough about the Electoral College to really have an opinion against it, or that they were either in favor of Trump winning the 2016 election or in favor of certain elements of the Electoral College.



## What is your primary area of studying or teaching/If the Electoral College was to be replaced with an alternative voting system, what should it be? (Crosstab) 4.4

If you are a University of Maine undergraduate student, what is your primary area of study?  
For faculty, what is your primary area of teaching?

			College of Education and Human Development	College of Engineering	College of Liberal Arts and Sciences	College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture	Maine Business School	Honors (Faculty Only)	Cooperative Extension (Faculty Only)	Total
If the Electoral College was to be replaced with an alternative voting system, what should it be?	A direct popular vote, which includes a second round of direct voting between the top two finishers if no candidate receives at least half of the votes the first round.	Count	8	8	48	78	9	3	1	155
	% within If you are a University of Maine undergraduate student, what is your primary area of study? For faculty, what is your primary area of teaching?		27.6%	26.7%	44.4%	50.0%	39.1%	100.0%	25.0%	43.9%
A candidate ranking system where voters rank each candidate instead of just voting for one. Such a system would reveal a winner based on which candidate was ranked highest after lower-finishers candidates were eliminated from consideration.		Count	14	11	39	49	5	0	2	120
	% within If you are a University of Maine undergraduate student, what is your primary area of study? For faculty, what is your primary area of teaching?		48.3%	36.7%	36.1%	31.4%	21.7%	0.0%	50.0%	34.0%
A system that awards all Electoral College votes to the winner of the national popular vote.		Count	2	1	5	4	1	0	0	13
	% within If you are a University of Maine undergraduate student, what is your primary area of study? For faculty, what is your primary area of teaching?		6.9%	3.3%	4.6%	2.6%	4.3%	0.0%	0.0%	3.7%
Keep the Electoral College in place, but change it so that the top 3 finishers in the popular vote nationwide are required to be considered in the Electoral College.		Count	3	2	2	9	1	0	0	17
	% within If you are a University of Maine undergraduate student, what is your primary area of study? For faculty, what is your primary area of teaching?		10.3%	6.7%	1.9%	5.8%	4.3%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%
Keep the Electoral College in place as it is.		Count	2	8	14	16	7	0	1	48
	% within If you are a University of Maine undergraduate student, what is your primary area of study? For faculty, what is your primary area of teaching?		6.9%	26.7%	13.0%	10.3%	30.4%	0.0%	25.0%	13.6%
Total		Count	29	30	108	156	23	3	4	353
	% within If you are a University of Maine undergraduate student, what is your primary area of study? For faculty, what is your primary area of teaching?		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

p-value: .169

The relationship for “Financially, how do you identify/How much do you currently know about the Electoral College? (Crosstab 4.5)” is not statistically significant with a p-value of .136. The most respondents who answered this question were from the moderate income category (259). For all data pertaining to one’s personal financial situation, respondents were expected to self-identify. All three categories selected “some information” the most and “no information” the least. Zero percent of high income respondents selected “no information,” while low income respondents had the most selections for this choice at 3.8%.. This aspect in particular satisfies my initial hypothesis. What this data shows is that being from a background that lacks income and many educational opportunities, the low income respondents can attribute their lack of knowledge to either being from families who lack education, or from their own educational setbacks before coming to the University of Maine. On the other hand, those from high income backgrounds are likely from families who have pursued higher education or have themselves attended private/specialized schools before college, thus attributing to their current level of knowledge.

**Financially, how do you identify/How much do you currently know about the Electoral College? (Crosstab) 4.5**

		Financially, how do you identify?				
		Low Income	Moderate Income	High Income	Total	
How much do you currently know about the Electoral College?	A great deal of information	Count	18	95	19	132
		% within Financially, how do you identify?	23.1%	36.7%	45.2%	34.8%
	Some information	Count	46	131	21	198
		% within Financially, how do you identify?	59.0%	50.6%	50.0%	52.2%
	Little/barely any information	Count	11	28	2	41
		% within Financially, how do you identify?	14.1%	10.8%	4.8%	10.8%
	No information	Count	3	5	0	8
		% within Financially, how do you identify?	3.8%	1.9%	0.0%	2.1%
	Total	Count	78	259	42	379
		% within Financially, how do you identify?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**p-value: .136**

The relationship for “Financially, how do you identify/ Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of American voters? (Crosstab 4.6)” is not statistically significant with a p-value of .491. More high income respondents selected “definitely not (40%)” than from the other two categories, such as the low income category that had 19% of respondents select this. Overall, more low/moderate income respondents believe that the Electoral College at least somewhat accurately represents the American people than high income respondents do. This is what my initial hypothesis predicted, since due to how high income respondents claim to know more about the Electoral college than low/moderate income respondents, they have a

better understanding on how it works and how it effects American politics, thus leading them to being more on the doubtful side since they have seen and experienced how negatively it has impacted the political climate of America.

**Financially, how do you identify/ Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of American voters? (Crosstab) 4.6**

		Financially, how do you identify?				Total
		Low Income	Moderate Income	High Income		
Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of American voters?	Definitely yes	Count	4	14	2	20
		% within Financially, how do you identify?	5.1%	5.4%	4.8%	5.3%
	Somewhat yes	Count	16	51	7	74
		% within Financially, how do you identify?	20.5%	19.8%	16.7%	19.6%
	Not Sure/neutral	Count	13	29	4	46
		% within Financially, how do you identify?	16.7%	11.3%	9.5%	12.2%
	Somewhat not	Count	30	95	12	137
		% within Financially, how do you identify?	38.5%	37.0%	28.6%	36.3%
	Definitely not	Count	15	68	17	100
		% within Financially, how do you identify?	19.2%	26.5%	40.5%	26.5%
	Total	Count	78	257	42	377
		% within Financially, how do you identify?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**p-value: .491**

The relationship for “Financially, how do you identify/If the Electoral College was to be replaced with an alternative voting system, what would you like it to be?”

(Crosstab 4.7)” was not statistically significant with a p-value of .116. One unexpected outcome is how more low income respondents than moderate/high income respondents selected to keep the Electoral College in place as it is (18%). Low income respondents selected the direct popular vote option the least out of the three categories (36%). This is opposite from what I originally hypothesized, as low income Americans tend to have a general negative opinion on the Electoral College, which is why I assumed they would be the most likely category to want it changed. On the other hand, the direct popular vote choice was the most popular choice for both moderate and high income respondents. I also had anticipated that high income respondents would have chosen to keep the Electoral College more than the other choices, though instead they mostly opted for the choices that would replace it.

**Financially, how do you identify/If the Electoral College was to be replaced with an alternative voting system, what should it be? (Crosstab) 4.7**

		Financially, how do you identify?				Total
		Low Income	Moderate Income	High Income		
If the Electoral College was to be replaced with an alternative voting system, what should it be?	A direct popular vote, which includes a second round of direct voting between the top two finishers if no candidate receives at least half of the votes the first round. (For instance, if one candidate receives 30% and the other receives 40%, there would h	Count	28	119	18	165
		% within Financially, how do you identify?	35.9%	46.3%	42.9%	43.8%
	A candidate ranking system where voters rank each candidate instead of just voting for one. Such a system would reveal a winner based on which candidate was ranked highest after lower-finishing candidates were eliminated from consideration. (This system i	Count	31	86	12	129
		% within Financially, how do you identify?	39.7%	33.5%	28.6%	34.2%
	A system that awards all Electoral College votes to the winner of the national popular vote.	Count	1	9	5	15
		% within Financially, how do you identify?	1.3%	3.5%	11.9%	4.0%
	Keep the Electoral College in place, but change it so that the top 3 finishers in the popular vote nationwide are required to be considered in the Electoral College.	Count	4	12	1	17
		% within Financially, how do you identify?	5.1%	4.7%	2.4%	4.5%
	Keep the Electoral College in place as it is.	Count	14	31	6	51
		% within Financially, how do you identify?	17.9%	12.1%	14.3%	13.5%
Total	Count	78	257	42	377	
	% within Financially, how do you identify?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

**p-value: .116**

The relationship for “Did you vote in this past presidential election/How much do you currently know about the Electoral College? (Crosstab 4.8)” is not statistically significant with a p-value of .060, but very close. The most selected choice for a majority of categories was “some information.” However, the only category that did not select this the most were those who voted for a third candidate (40%). They instead mostly chose “a great deal of information (49%).” Another noticeable aspect about this data is that 0% of those who did not vote but were eligible selected “no information.” This is likely because they are the most skeptical of the Electoral College and political system altogether. Making a conscious choice not to vote is largely due to not agreeing with the electoral process. These respondents in a way are boycotting the American voting system. They have to know enough about the system to make this anti-vote choice, which they clearly do as over half selected either “some information (50%)” or “a great deal of information (14%).” The most interesting part of this data is how both Clinton and Trump voters were practically tied for all the categories, showing that regardless if respondents are Clinton or Trump supporters, this does not necessarily serve as an indicator for how much knowledge about the Electoral College system either group claims to have. Originally, I hypothesized that Trump voters would know more about the Electoral College than Clinton voters, as Trump voters tend to agree more with the voting system thus why they would seem to know more about it. However, seeing that both groups of voters have similar knowledge regarding the Electoral College is an unexpected outcome.

**Did you vote in this past presidential election/How much do you currently know about the Electoral College? (Crosstab) 4.8**

		Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?						
			Yes-voted for Hillary Clinton	Yes-voted for Donald Trump	Yes-voted for a candidate other than Clinton or Trump	No-did not vote, but was eligible	No-did not vote, was not eligible	Total
How much do you currently know about the Electoral College?	A great deal of information	Count	79	10	17	2	25	133
		% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	37.6%	37.0%	48.6%	14.3%	26.6%	35.0%
	Some information	Count	109	14	14	7	54	198
		% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	51.9%	51.9%	40.0%	50.0%	57.4%	52.1%
	Little/barely any information	Count	20	2	3	5	11	41
		% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	9.5%	7.4%	8.6%	35.7%	11.7%	10.8%
No information	Count	2	1	1	0	4	8	
	% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	1.0%	3.7%	2.9%	0.0%	4.3%	2.1%	
Total	Count	210	27	35	14	94	380	
	% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

**p-value: .060**

1.2 Statistically Significant Data Outcomes

After I ran all the selected independent and dependent variables through SPSS, I then analyzed the relationships that had a statistically significant impact on the dependent variables. There were twenty-two of these, beginning with the relationship for “What year in school are you/Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the



decisions and opinions of American voters? (Crosstab 4.9)” which, according to the Pearson Chi-Square test, is statistically significant with a p-value of .017. Out of all the selections available for this question, the most common selection by each respondent category was “somewhat not.”(30-43%) Though for 2<sup>nd</sup> year students, it was tied between “somewhat not” and “somewhat yes,” both at 33.9%. The significant difference is that more students than faculty feel that the Electoral College accurately represents the American people. This is likely because students do not have as much knowledge and voting experience to really understand just how the Electoral College affects the outcome of presidential elections.

**What year in school are you/Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of American voters? (Crosstab) 4.9**

		What Year Are You						
		4th/5th						
			1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00 (faculty)	Total
Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of American voters?	Definitely yes	Count	7	1	1	5	6	20
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	6.6%	1.7%	2.3%	10.6%	5.0%	5.3%
	Somewhat yes	Count	17	20	7	6	24	74
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	16.0%	33.9%	16.3%	12.8%	19.8%	19.7%
	Not Sure/neutral	Count	16	7	6	8	9	46
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	15.1%	11.9%	14.0%	17.0%	7.4%	12.2%
	Somewhat not	Count	45	20	19	17	36	137
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	42.5%	33.9%	44.2%	36.2%	29.8%	36.4%
	Definitely not	Count	21	11	10	11	46	99
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	19.8%	18.6%	23.3%	23.4%	38.0%	26.3%
	Total	Count	106	59	43	47	121	376
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**p-value: .017**

The relationship for “What year in school are you/Do you believe that the Electoral College is a tool our government uses to hide/cover up important candidate information? (Crosstab 4.10)” is statistically significant with a p-value of .000. Out of all the selections available for this question, the most common selection of each respondent category was “might/might not”(30-36%) followed by “probably yes”(21-37%) as a very close second, differing by just a few percentage points. For all the categories but faculty, this choice had the most respondent selections, ranging from 30-36%. Faculty had a drastically low percentage for this choice (16.5%). The most commonly chosen answer for faculty was “probably not”(35.5%), which, in comparison to students, was drastically higher, for the percentage of students who chose this answer ranged between 15-21%. What this shows overall is that most faculty are less skeptical of the Electoral College being a manipulated government tool while most students are on the fence about whether or not it is, which is what I initially hypothesized.

**What year in school are you/Do you believe that the Electoral College is a tool our government uses to hide/cover up important candidate information? (Crosstab) 4.10**

			What Year Are You					Total
			1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00 (faculty)	
Do you believe that the Electoral College is a tool our government uses to hide/cover up important candidate information? For instance, rigging elections, purposefully hurting/favoring certain candidates, concealing political corruption, etc.	Definitely yes	Count	9	4	4	5	6	28
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	8.4%	6.9%	9.3%	10.6%	5.0%	7.4%
	Probably yes	Count	37	16	16	10	16	95
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	34.6%	27.6%	37.2%	21.3%	13.2%	25.3%
	Might or might not	Count	35	21	13	17	20	106
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	32.7%	36.2%	30.2%	36.2%	16.5%	28.2%
	Probably not	Count	16	12	7	10	43	88
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	15.0%	20.7%	16.3%	21.3%	35.5%	23.4%
	Definitely not	Count	10	5	3	5	36	59
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	9.3%	8.6%	7.0%	10.6%	29.8%	15.7%
	Total	Count	107	58	43	47	121	376
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**p-value: .000**

The relationship for “What year in school are you/How strongly do you care about the impact of the Electoral College on the governance of our country? (Crosstab 4.11)” is statistically significant with a p-value of .000. Out of all the choices available

for this question, the most common selection of each respondent category was almost split between “very much/somewhat care,” totaling at 50% for “very much” and 37% for “somewhat.” A majority of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students answered “very much care (43% and 63%),” while 1<sup>st</sup> and 4/5<sup>th</sup> years who selected this choice ranged between 30-40%. A majority of 1<sup>st</sup> and 4/5<sup>th</sup> years answered “somewhat care (50% and 53%),” while 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years who selected this choice ranged between 30-35%. A large majority of faculty answered “very much care (70%),” while only 23% of them answered “somewhat care”, which was almost a 25% gap in comparison to how the students answered between these two choices. The largest percentage of students who selected “very much care” were 3<sup>rd</sup> years at 63%. Most students in this group are in their early 20s, which means they likely have voted in at least one presidential election. This would likely explain why they care so much about the impact of the Electoral College on our government, as they now are active participants. However, I had originally hypothesized 4/5 years to have the highest percentage of participants select “very much care,” as they are the oldest students with the most academic and real life experience regarding the Electoral College, but the majority of them had answered somewhat care (53%).” The least commonly chosen answer in total was “don’t care at all”, where the only participants who answered this were 1<sup>st</sup> years (2%). This is a likely speculation due to how they are mainly 17/18 year olds with little to no experience voting. Many were not 18 when the most recent presidential election occurred, so it makes sense as to why they claim they do not care, as they have yet to become involved or really study the American voting system.

**What year in school are you/How strongly do you care about the impact of the Electoral College on the governance of our country? (Crosstab) 4.11**

			What Year Are You					Total
			1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00 (faculty)	
How strongly do you care about the impact the Electoral College has on the governance of our country?	Very much care	Count	34	25	27	17	85	188
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	31.8%	43.1%	62.8%	36.2%	69.7%	49.9%
	Somewhat care	Count	54	20	13	25	28	140
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	50.5%	34.5%	30.2%	53.2%	23.0%	37.1%
	Neutral	Count	15	12	2	3	8	40
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	14.0%	20.7%	4.7%	6.4%	6.6%	10.6%
	Somewhat don't care	Count	2	1	1	2	1	7
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	1.9%	1.7%	2.3%	4.3%	0.8%	1.9%
	Don't care at all	Count	2	0	0	0	0	2
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
	Total	Count	107	58	43	47	122	377
		% within What Year Are You - 4th/5th	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**p-value: .000**

The relationship for “What gender do you identify as/How much do you currently know about the Electoral College? (Crosstab 4.12)” is statistically significant with a p-

value of .000. When looking at this data, I first noticed that the most males (students and faculty alike), selected that they know “a great deal of information (53%),” while only 23% of females selected this choice. The most females (students and faculty alike), selected that they “know some information (60%).” This shows that males generally feel more confident in their level of knowledge of the Electoral College, while females not so much. Those who identify as gender fluid, which were few (3), only selected “some information.” Those who identify as something other, which was only one participant, selected “little/barely any information.” No males selected “no information” while 3.5% of females selected this. This shows that in general, males seem to be the most confident in their knowledge of the Electoral College, which agrees with my initial hypothesis. The reasoning behind this is that politics and government affairs are still predominantly male fields. As a female political science student, I can attest to this as most of my classes have been made up of a majority of males, though of course this is starting to change as more and more women are becoming politically involved in the United States.

**What gender do you identify as/How much do you currently know about the Electoral College? (Crosstab) 4.12**

			What gender do you identify as?				
			Male	Female	Gender Fluid	Other	Total
How much do you currently know about the Electoral College?	A great deal of information	Count	79	52	0	0	131
		% within What gender do you identify as?	53.4%	23.0%	0.0%	0.0%	34.7%
	Some information	Count	59	136	3	0	198
		% within What gender do you identify as?	39.9%	60.2%	100.0%	0.0%	52.4%
	Little/barely any information	Count	10	30	0	1	41
		% within What gender do you identify as?	6.8%	13.3%	0.0%	100.0%	10.8%
	No information	Count	0	8	0	0	8
		% within What gender do you identify as?	0.0%	3.5%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%
Total	Count	148	226	3	1	378	
	% within What gender do you identify as?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

**p-value: .000**

The relationship for “What gender do you identify as/Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of U.S. voters? (Crosstab 4.13)” is statistically significant with a p-value of .010. The most males and females both selected “somewhat not” for this question. This response was almost equally split, with 31% males and 39% females. The second most popular response for both genders was “definitely not,” where 28% of males and 26% of females selected this as their answer. One aspect of this data that stood out to me was the large amount of males who selected “somewhat yes (26%)” whereas only 16% of females selected this as their answer, though this was what I had initially hypothesized for this data. What this shows is that again, more males seem to have confidence in our voting system than

females do, which could be tied to the fact that politics and government affairs are still largely male fields.

**What gender do you identify as/Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of U.S. voters? (Crosstab) 4.13**

		What gender do you identify as?					
			Male	Female	Gender Fluid	Other	Total
Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of American voters?	Definitely yes	Count	13	7	0	0	20
		% within What gender do you identify as?	8.8%	3.1%	0.0%	0.0%	5.3%
	Somewhat yes	Count	38	36	0	0	74
		% within What gender do you identify as?	25.9%	16.0%	0.0%	0.0%	19.7%
	Not Sure/neutral	Count	9	37	0	0	46
		% within What gender do you identify as?	6.1%	16.4%	0.0%	0.0%	12.2%
	Somewhat not	Count	46	87	3	1	137
		% within What gender do you identify as?	31.3%	38.7%	100.0%	100.0%	36.4%
	Definitely not	Count	41	58	0	0	99
		% within What gender do you identify as?	27.9%	25.8%	0.0%	0.0%	26.3%
	Total	Count	147	225	3	1	376
		% within What gender do you identify as?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**p-value: .010**

The relationship for “What gender do you identify as/ Do you believe that the Electoral College is a tool our government uses to hide/cover up important candidate information? (Crosstab 4.14)” is statistically significant with a p-value of .000. For this particular question, there was not one choice that had both the most male and female responses. Instead, the most males selected “probably not (36.5%)” and the most females selected “might/might not (37%)” followed closely by “probably yes (31%).” Overall,



males sided primarily with “probably/definitely not,” and females sided with “probably yes/might or might not.” This shows that males have more trust in the use of the Electoral College and are less likely to believe such theories surrounding it, whereas females and gender fluid/other have less trust in the use of the Electoral College and are more likely to believe such theories surrounding it, which is what I had initially hypothesized. A reason behind this could be how this past presidential election went. Hillary Clinton, the first woman to run for president and make it to the final debate round, lost the election due to having less Electoral College votes than her running mate, Donald Trump. Predominantly women voters supported Hillary, and when she lost there was a large outrage among both of these groups of people. It would not be surprising if they believe that the Electoral College is really a tool used by the government to rig elections, as their candidate of choice lost to someone who they all considered to be unqualified.

**What gender do you identify as/ Do you believe that the Electoral College is a tool our government uses to hide/cover up important candidate information? (Crosstab) 4.14**

		What gender do you identify as?					
			Male	Female	Gender Fluid	Other	Total
Do you believe that the Electoral College is a tool our government uses to hide/cover up important candidate information? For instance, rigging elections, purposefully hurting/favoring certain candidates, concealing political corruption, etc.	Definitely yes	Count	12	17	0	0	29
		% within What gender do you identify as?	8.1%	7.6%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%
	Probably yes	Count	24	69	2	1	96
		% within What gender do you identify as?	16.2%	30.7%	66.7%	100.0%	25.5%
	Might or might not	Count	22	83	1	0	106
		% within What gender do you identify as?	14.9%	36.9%	33.3%	0.0%	28.1%
	Probably not	Count	54	33	0	0	87
		% within What gender do you identify as?	36.5%	14.7%	0.0%	0.0%	23.1%
	Definitely not	Count	36	23	0	0	59
		% within What gender do you identify as?	24.3%	10.2%	0.0%	0.0%	15.6%
	Total	Count	148	225	3	1	377
		% within What gender do you identify as?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**p-value: .000**

The relationship for “What age group are you in/How much do you currently know about the Electoral College? (Crosstab 4.15)” is statistically significant with a p-value of .001. Out of all the age group categories, the one that had the most responses to this question was 18-24 (250). This is likely due to how this is the age group that contains practically all of the students, who received this survey through email/ via Blackboard. Out of all the choices for this question, the top two that had a mix of the most responses were “a great deal of information” and “some information.” The 18-24-year-olds (57%)

and the 65+ group (65%) mostly chose “some information,” while all the other age group categories chose “a great deal of information.” No group chose “no information” except for the 18-24-year olds, though this was only 3% of them. What this shows is that in general, 18-24-year olds have the least amount of knowledge about the Electoral College, as they have the least amount of experience voting and tracking each election. The overall data for this question was very much what I initially hypothesized, with the older groups having more knowledge about the Electoral College than the younger groups. The age group with the most knowledge about the Electoral College was the 45-64-year-olds. This makes sense since this group has lived through and voted in many elections, thus accumulating knowledge over the years of how this voting system works. However, I find it odd that the 65+ group leaned more towards the “some information” choice, as they are the eldest and should have the most political and voting experience out of all.

**What age group are you in/How much do you currently know about the Electoral College? (Crosstab) 4.15**

			What age group are you in?						
			18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
How much do you currently know about the Electoral College?	A great deal of information	Count	65	13	14	8	27	6	133
		% within What age group are you in?	25.9%	44.8%	56.0%	61.5%	60.0%	35.3%	35.0%
	Some information	Count	143	13	10	5	16	11	198
		% within What age group are you in?	57.0%	44.8%	40.0%	38.5%	35.6%	64.7%	52.1%
	Little/barely any information	Count	35	3	1	0	2	0	41
		% within What age group are you in?	13.9%	10.3%	4.0%	0.0%	4.4%	0.0%	10.8%
	No information	Count	8	0	0	0	0	0	8
		% within What age group are you in?	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%
	Total	Count	251	29	25	13	45	17	380
		% within What age group are you in?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**p-value: .001**

The relationship for “What age group are you in/How strongly do you care about the impact of the Electoral College on the governance of our country? (Crosstab 4.16)” is statistically significant with a p-value of .040. Overall, the selection that had the most responses from a majority of each age group category was “very much care,” which satisfies my initial hypothesis. What I found interesting was how the 18-24-year-old age group was the only one that had less than half select this choice (40%). My theory behind this is because they are so new to the realm of American politics and the voting system that they do not know enough about it to really care. However, this particular group selected “somewhat care” the most (44%). Also, a large number of people from this age group have not even voted yet, which has prevented them from really witnessing first-

hand the impact the Electoral College has on elections. Many of them may not even know what the Electoral College is, which could be another reason why so few selected “very much care” in respect to the other age group categories. Overall, at least half of each of the remaining age groups chose “very much care,” drastically more than all the other choices. What this shows is that in general, regardless of age, the responders all care a somewhat large amount about the impact of the Electoral College on the governance of America.

**What age group are you in/How strongly do you care about the impact of the Electoral College on the governance of our country? (Crosstab) 4.16**

			What age group are you in?						
			18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
How strongly do you care about the impact the Electoral College has on the governance of our country?	Very much care	Count	100	21	18	8	31	12	190
		% within What age group are you in?	40.0 %	72.4 %	72.0 %	61.5 %	68.9 %	70.6 %	50.1 %
	Somewhat care	Count	110	7	5	4	10	4	140
		% within What age group are you in?	44.0 %	24.1 %	20.0 %	30.8 %	22.2 %	23.5 %	36.9 %
	Neutral	Count	32	1	2	1	3	1	40
		% within What age group are you in?	12.8 %	3.4 %	8.0 %	7.7 %	6.7 %	5.9 %	10.6 %
	Somewhat don't care	Count	6	0	0	0	1	0	7
		% within What age group are you in?	2.4 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	2.2 %	0.0 %	1.8 %
	Don't care at all	Count	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
		% within What age group are you in?	0.8 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.5 %
	Total	Count	250	29	25	13	45	17	379
		% within What age group are you in?	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %

**p-value: .040**

The relationship for “What is your political affiliation/Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of U.S. voters? (Crosstab 4.17)” is statistically significant with a p-value of .000. For this question, more Democrat-leaning and Independent respondents selected “somewhat not” and “definitely not,” while drastically more Republican-leaning respondents selected “somewhat yes” and “definitely yes.” Absolutely no one from the Republican with Conservative views category selected “somewhat not” or “definitely not.” This particular outcome satisfies my initial hypothesis. However, those from the Democrat with Conservative views category selected both choices of “somewhat not” or “definitely not” equally (22%), with “somewhat yes” as their top choice (33%). What I can infer from this data is that the Democratic/Independent respondents generally do not believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of American voters while the Republican respondents generally do. Those who identify as politically “other” align with how the Democrats responded to this question, mostly selecting “somewhat not (33%)” and “definitely not (36%).” I expected the data to turn out this way, as Democrats/liberals tend to be more against the Electoral College than Republicans/conservatives, likely because they do not agree with the lack of a direct popular vote, and “less direct power to the people” because of this.

**What is your political affiliation/Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of U.S. voters? (Crosstab) 4.17**

What is your political affiliation?

			Democrat with Liberal views	Democrat with Moderate views	Democrat with Conservative Views	Independent	Republican with Liberal views	Republican with Moderate Views	Republican with Conservative views	Other	Total
Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of American voters?	Definitely yes	Count	1	1	1	2	2	4	8	1	20
		% within What is your political affiliation?	0.8%	1.4%	11.1%	2.5%	14.3%	12.9%	57.1%	3.0%	5.3%
	Somewhat yes	Count	16	10	3	16	4	17	4	4	74
		% within What is your political affiliation?	12.7%	13.9%	33.3%	20.3%	28.6%	54.8%	28.6%	12.1%	19.6%
	Not Sure/neutral	Count	8	9	1	12	3	4	2	5	44
		% within What is your political affiliation?	6.3%	12.5%	11.1%	15.2%	21.4%	12.9%	14.3%	15.2%	11.6%
	Somewhat not	Count	49	34	2	35	2	5	0	11	138
		% within What is your political affiliation?	38.9%	47.2%	22.2%	44.3%	14.3%	16.1%	0.0%	33.3%	36.5%
	Definitely not	Count	52	18	2	14	3	1	0	12	102
		% within What is your political affiliation?	41.3%	25.0%	22.2%	17.7%	21.4%	3.2%	0.0%	36.4%	27.0%
	Total	Count	126	72	9	79	14	31	14	33	378
		% within What is your political affiliation?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**p-value: .000**

The relationship for “What is your political affiliation/Do you believe that the Electoral College is a tool our government uses to hide/cover up important candidate information? (Crosstab 4.18)” is statistically significant with a p-value of .011. For this question, more Democrat-leaning responders selected “probably yes” while more Republican-leaning responders selected “might/might not” and “probably not.” The Republican with Conservative views category in particular had over half of its responders select “definitely not (60%).” This is likely due to this particular group’s trust and support of the American voting system, as they generally want what is best for the overall

functioning of this country more than anything, and thus they see the Electoral College as a legitimate voting system, not as a manipulative government tool. Independent and “other” responders both mostly chose “might/might not,” which could be due to how neither group can side with one political party, which may prevent them from making a final decision about whether to believe that the Electoral College is an honest system or not as this argument is posed by the Democrats and Republicans. Overall, regardless of political affiliation, the two most selected choices of all categories were “might or might not” and “probably not.” As I had initially hypothesized, more Democrats, excluding Democrats with Conservative views who mostly chose “probably not,” believe that the Electoral College might be a manipulative government tool while more Republicans believe that it is a legitimate voting system.



**What is your political affiliation/Do you believe that the Electoral College is a tool our government uses to hide/cover up important candidate information? (Crosstab) 4.18**

		What is your political affiliation?									
			Democrat with Liberal views	Democrat with Moderate views	Democrat with Conservative Views	Independent	Republican with Liberal views	Republican with Moderate Views	Republican with Conservative views	Other	Total
Do you believe that the Electoral College is a tool our government uses to hide/cover up important candidate information? For instance, rigging elections, purposefully hurting/favoring certain candidates, concealing political corruption, etc.	Definitely yes	Count	9	8	0	9	0	1	0	2	29
		% within What is your political affiliation?	7.2%	11.3%	0.0%	11.3%	0.0%	3.2%	0.0%	6.1%	7.7%
	Probably yes	Count	40	21	2	17	2	8	1	5	96
		% within What is your political affiliation?	32.0%	29.6%	22.2%	21.3%	14.3%	25.8%	6.7%	15.2%	25.4%
	Might or might not	Count	29	18	2	28	5	5	4	14	105
		% within What is your political affiliation?	23.2%	25.4%	22.2%	35.0%	35.7%	16.1%	26.7%	42.4%	27.8%
	Probably not	Count	30	17	3	16	5	10	1	7	89
		% within What is your political affiliation?	24.0%	23.9%	33.3%	20.0%	35.7%	32.3%	6.7%	21.2%	23.5%
	Definitely not	Count	17	7	2	10	2	7	9	5	59
		% within What is your political affiliation?	13.6%	9.9%	22.2%	12.5%	14.3%	22.6%	60.0%	15.2%	15.6%
	Total	Count	125	71	9	80	14	31	15	33	378
		% within What is your political affiliation?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**p-value: .011**

The relationship for “What is your political affiliation/How strongly do you care about the impact of the Electoral College on the governance of our country? (Crosstab 4.19)” is statistically significant with a p-value of .006. Overall, a majority of all categories selected “very much care,” while only the Republicans with either liberal or conservative views along with “others” selected “somewhat care” the most. Very few percentages of the categories selected the remaining three choices, ranging from neutral to “don’t care at all.” In general, more Democrat-leaning and Independent respondents

selected “very much care (54-63%)” while more Republican-leaning and “other” respondents selected “somewhat care (40-52%),” which also satisfies my initial hypothesis. What this means is that Democrats are more concerned about the impact the Electoral College has on the governance of our country than the Republicans are, likely because of the Democrats’ general disapproval and mistrust of the Electoral College, especially after the 2016 presidential election. The Republicans as a whole approve of the Electoral College and trust it, which is why they are generally less concerned about its impact.

**What is your political affiliation/How strongly do you care about the impact of the Electoral College on the governance of our country? (Crosstab) 4.19**

		What is your political affiliation?										
			Democrat with Liberal views	Democrat with Moderate views	Democrat with Conservative Views	Independent	Republican with Liberal views	Republican with Moderate Views	Republican with Conservative views	Other	Total	
How strongly do you care about the impact the Electoral College has on the governance of our country?	Very much care	Count	80	38	4	43	5	5	6	10	191	
		% within What is your political affiliation?	63.5%	53.5%	44.4%	53.8%	35.7%	16.1%	40.0%	30.3%	50.4%	
	Somewhat care	Count	40	28	4	23	6	16	6	17	140	
		% within What is your political affiliation?	31.7%	39.4%	44.4%	28.7%	42.9%	51.6%	40.0%	51.5%	36.9%	
	Neutral	Count	5	5	1	11	2	7	3	5	39	
		% within What is your political affiliation?	4.0%	7.0%	11.1%	13.8%	14.3%	22.6%	20.0%	15.2%	10.3%	
	Somewhat don't care	Count	1	0	0	2	1	2	0	1	7	
		% within What is your political affiliation?	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	7.1%	6.5%	0.0%	3.0%	1.8%	
	Don't care at all	Count	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	
		% within What is your political affiliation?	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	
	Total	Count	126	71	9	80	14	31	15	33	379	
		% within What is your political affiliation?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

**p-value: .006**

The relationship for “How important are politics to you/How much do you currently know about the Electoral College? (Crosstab 4.20)” is statistically significant with a p-value of .000. The majority of responders who answered this question fall under the categories of Very Important (118) and Important (127). The fact that the number of respondents who fall under these two categories outweigh the number of respondents who fall under the categories ranging from Somewhat Important (16) to Very Unimportant (3) shows that overall, a majority of respondents do feel that politics are an important factor in their lives. The distribution of respondents per category shows just

how much each respondent claims to know about the Electoral College system. For instance, for this particular question, the majority of respondents who selected “a great deal of information” and “some information” primarily fall under the Very Important to neutral categories. The respondents who selected the choices “little/barely any information” and “no information” primarily fall under the Somewhat Unimportant to Very Unimportant categories. Overall, I can infer from this data that those who feel that politics are important know more about the Electoral College than those who do not feel that politics are important, which also satisfies my initial hypothesis. This is likely because politics interest them, increasing their drive to study the political system of our country, thus is why they know the amount of information that they do.

**How important are politics to you/How much do you currently know about the Electoral College? (Crosstab) 4.20**

		How important are politics to you?								
			Very Important	Important	Some-what Important	Neither Important or Unimportant	Some-what Unimportant	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Total
How much do you currently know about the Electoral College?	A great deal of information	Count	74	41	11	2	1	3	1	133
		% within How important are politics to you?	62.7%	32.3%	12.6%	9.1%	6.3%	33.3%	33.3%	34.8%
	Some information	Count	43	74	62	12	8	1	0	200
		% within How important are politics to you?	36.4%	58.3%	71.3%	54.5%	50.0%	11.1%	0.0%	52.4%
	Little/barely any information	Count	1	12	10	6	7	3	2	41
		% within How important are politics to you?	0.8%	9.4%	11.5%	27.3%	43.8%	33.3%	66.7%	10.7%
	No information	Count	0	0	4	2	0	2	0	8
		% within How important are politics to you?	0.0%	0.0%	4.6%	9.1%	0.0%	22.2%	0.0%	2.1%
	Total	Count	118	127	87	22	16	9	3	382
		% within How important are politics to you?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**p-value: .000**

The relationship for “How important are politics to you/Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of U.S. voters? (Crosstab 4.21)” is statistically significant with a p-value of .002. For this question, all the categories except for Very Important selected “somewhat not” the most. Those in the Very Important category selected “definitely not (37%)” the most. A very small percentage from almost all categories selected “somewhat yes” and “definitely yes.” However, the Very Unimportant category had 33% of its respondents select “definitely yes,” while the rest of them selected “somewhat not (67%)” This is a particularly odd separation of responses, as 33% from Very Unimportant feel that the Electoral College definitely represents the people while the remaining 67% do not. The fact that this comes from the Very Unimportant category is more baffling, as I had originally hypothesized that they would have selected “not sure/neutral” the most as they are the group that is likely to know the least about politics. Those from the neutral category selected the “not sure/neutral” option the most (36%), as I had expected. As a whole, the only category that answered differently than I predicted was Very Unimportant. Other than that, I can infer from this data that those who feel that politics are important generally believe that the Electoral College does not accurately represent the people, while those who do not see politics as that important generally believe that the Electoral College does accurately represent the people.

**How important are politics to you/Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of U.S. voters (Crosstab) 4.21**

		How important are politics to you?								Total
		Very Important	Important	Some-what Important	Neither Important or Unimportant	Some-what Unimportant	Unimportant	Very Unimportant		
Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of American voters?	Definitely yes	Count	9	8	1	0	1	0	1	20
		% within How important are politics to you?	7.7%	6.3%	1.1%	0.0%	6.3%	0.0%	33.3%	5.3%
	Somewhat yes	Count	20	23	21	6	2	2	0	74
		% within How important are politics to you?	17.1%	18.3%	24.1%	27.3%	12.5%	22.2%	0.0%	19.5%
	Not Sure/neutral	Count	5	13	13	8	4	3	0	46
		% within How important are politics to you?	4.3%	10.3%	14.9%	36.4%	25.0%	33.3%	0.0%	12.1%
	Somewhat not	Count	40	49	34	5	5	3	2	138
		% within How important are politics to you?	34.2%	38.9%	39.1%	22.7%	31.3%	33.3%	66.7%	36.3%
	Definitely not	Count	43	33	18	3	4	1	0	102
		% within How important are politics to you?	36.8%	26.2%	20.7%	13.6%	25.0%	11.1%	0.0%	26.8%
	Total	Count	117	126	87	22	16	9	3	380
		% within How important are politics to you?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**p-value: .002**

The relationship for “How important are politics to you/Do you believe that the Electoral College is a tool our government uses to hide/cover up important candidate information? (Crosstab 4.22)” is statistically significant with a p-value of .004. First off, more respondents fell under the Very Important to Somewhat Important categories (330) than the Somewhat Unimportant to Very Unimportant categories (28). Overall, the top two choices of all categories was “might/might not” and “probably not.” About 10%

more respondents from the Important categories chose “probably not” than those from the Unimportant categories. Those from the Unimportant categories mainly chose “might or might not” and “probably yes.” However, more Important category respondents chose “definitely not” than Unimportant respondents. For instance, 23% of Very Important selected “definitely not” while no one from Somewhat Unimportant/Unimportant selected this. However, 33% from Very Unimportant chose “definitely not,” which was more than Very Important. What I can take away from this data is that those who feel that politics are at least somewhat important in their lives also have a general trust in the use of the Electoral College than those who feel that politics are not that important, which is what I originally hypothesized. However, a reason why those who feel politics are very unimportant answered that they, too, trust the Electoral College, could be because they simply do not know enough about it or the political system in general to be able to make an educated decision. To them, the Electoral College is like a foreign language that they have no grasp of, therefore, they have no reason to have any negative views of it. This also shows that in general, the University of Maine not only deems politics as important, but has a somewhat comfortable trust in the use of the Electoral College.

**How important are politics to you/Do you believe that the Electoral College is a tool our government uses to hide/cover up important candidate information? (Crosstab) 4.22**

			How important are politics to you?							
			Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Neither Important or Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Total
Do you believe that the Electoral College is a tool our government uses to hide/cover up important candidate information? For instance, rigging elections, purposefully hurting/favoring certain candidates, concealing political corruption, etc.	Definitely yes	Count	13	11	3	1	1	0	0	29
		% within How important are politics to you?	11.1%	8.7%	3.5%	4.5%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	7.6%
	Probably yes	Count	24	33	30	4	2	3	1	97
		% within How important are politics to you?	20.5%	26.0%	34.9%	18.2%	12.5%	33.3%	33.3%	25.5%
	Might or might not	Count	21	32	28	10	9	6	0	106
		% within How important are politics to you?	17.9%	25.2%	32.6%	45.5%	56.3%	66.7%	0.0%	27.9%
	Probably not	Count	32	28	18	6	4	0	1	89
		% within How important are politics to you?	27.4%	22.0%	20.9%	27.3%	25.0%	0.0%	33.3%	23.4%
	Definitely not	Count	27	23	7	1	0	0	1	59
		% within How important are politics to you?	23.1%	18.1%	8.1%	4.5%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	15.5%
	Total	Count	117	127	86	22	16	9	3	380
		% within How important are politics to you?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**p-value: .004**

The relationship for “How important are politics to you/How strongly do you care about the impact of the Electoral College on the governance of our country? (Crosstab 4.23)” is statistically significant with a p-value of .000. At a glance, those from the Very Important (72%) and Important (53%) categories selected “very much care” more than any other category. On the other end of the spectrum, those from the Very Unimportant



category mostly selected neutral (67%) followed by “somewhat don’t care (33%).” What did stand out to me was how most respondents from Somewhat Unimportant and Unimportant selected “somewhat care” rather than the “don’t care” choices. What I can infer from this data is that in general, those who feel that politics are important to them also care very much about the impact the Electoral College has on America, while those who do not feel that politics are that important either somewhat care or are neutral on the topic, which satisfies my hypothesis. This is likely due to their lack of information. Generally, the less one cares about/studies politics, the less they care about its effects, whereas the more one cares about/studies politics, the more they care about its effects. As a whole, the University of Maine feels that politics are important and care at least somewhat about how the Electoral College impacts the country.

**How important are politics to you/How strongly do you care about the impact of the Electoral College on the governance of our country? (Crosstab) 4.23**

		How important are politics to you?							Total	
		Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Neither or Important or Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Unimportant	Very Unimportant		
How strongly do you care about the impact the Electoral College has on the governance of our country?	Very much care	Count	85	68	30	2	5	1	0	191
		% within How important are politics to you?	72.0%	53.5%	34.9%	9.1%	31.3%	11.1%	0.0%	50.1%
	Somewhat care	Count	31	43	43	13	7	4	0	141
		% within How important are politics to you?	26.3%	33.9%	50.0%	59.1%	43.8%	44.4%	0.0%	37.0%
	Neutral	Count	2	14	13	5	1	3	2	40
		% within How important are politics to you?	1.7%	11.0%	15.1%	22.7%	6.3%	33.3%	66.7%	10.5%
	Somewhat don't care	Count	0	2	0	2	2	0	1	7
		% within How important are politics to you?	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	9.1%	12.5%	0.0%	33.3%	1.8%
	Don't care at all	Count	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
		% within How important are politics to you?	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	11.1%	0.0%	0.5%
	Total	Count	118	127	86	22	16	9	3	381
		% within How important are politics to you?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**p-value: .000**

The relationship for “How do you feel about the current U.S. political climate/How much do you currently know about the Electoral College? (Crosstab 4.24)” is statistically significant with a p-value of .001. The data results show that most

respondents fall under the highly concerned category (286) and only 12 respondents in total fall under the somewhat/highly satisfied categories. All categories except those who are highly satisfied with the current U.S. political climate selected that they know “some information” about the Electoral College the most. One hundred percent of those in the highly satisfied category chose “a great deal of information.” Almost no one from each category chose “no information.” I anticipated there to be at least 30 or so respondents within the satisfied categories, not a mere 12, so I was surprised to see the drastic difference between the concerned and satisfied groups. This particular aspect of the data goes against my original hypothesis. Between the results of the 2016 election and all the corruption that is currently taking place in American politics, more people are concerned now than ever, and because of this concern, most blame it at the source: the election process. They see the Electoral College as one of the reasons why our country is choosing “improper” leaders, and most of these voters want it reformed/abolished. It makes sense that those who are very politically concerned know more about the Electoral College than those who are politically satisfied, as the concerned are always staying up to date on elections and the voting process while those who are satisfied do not feel the need to closely monitor each election. Overall, the data show that the University of Maine is generally highly concerned with the current U.S. political climate and at least know some information about the Electoral College.

**How do you feel about the current U.S. political climate/How much do you currently know about the Electoral College? (Crosstab) 4.24**

		How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?					Total	
		I am highly concerned with the current political climate in the US	I am somewhat concerned with the current political climate in the US	I am neither concerned nor satisfied with the current political climate in the US	I am somewhat satisfied with the current political climate in the US	I am highly satisfied with the current political climate in the US		
How much do you currently know about the Electoral College?	A great deal of information	Count	108	17	4	2	2	133
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	37.8%	25.0%	25.0%	20.0%	100.0%	34.8%
	Some information	Count	152	33	7	8	0	200
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	53.1%	48.5%	43.8%	80.0%	0.0%	52.4%
	Little/barely any information	Count	22	16	3	0	0	41
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	7.7%	23.5%	18.8%	0.0%	0.0%	10.7%
	No information	Count	4	2	2	0	0	8
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	1.4%	2.9%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%
	Total	Count	286	68	16	10	2	382
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**p-value: .001**

The relationship for “How do you feel about the current U.S. political climate/Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of U.S. voters? (Crosstab 4.25)” is statistically significant with a p-value of .000. Again, most respondents fall under the highly concerned category (285) and few fall under the satisfied categories (11). Those in the highly satisfied category all selected the same choice, though this time it was “definitely yes.” This makes sense since they are also the category that feels the most confident in the Electoral College. However, exactly half of the somewhat satisfied category selected “somewhat yes,” showing a drastic difference in choices between two similar categories. On the other end, those who are concerned with the current political climate mostly selected “somewhat not” and “definitely not.” This is what I had originally hypothesized, as those who are politically concerned also generally do not feel that the Electoral College accurately represents the American people. As a whole, the University of Maine is highly politically concerned and do not confidently feel that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of Americans.

**How do you feel about the current U.S. political climate/Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of U.S. voters? (Crosstab) 4.25**

		How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?						Total
		I am highly concerned with the current political climate in the US	I am somewhat concerned with the current political climate in the US	I am neither concerned nor satisfied with the current political climate in the US	I am somewhat satisfied with the current political climate in the US	I am highly satisfied with the current political climate in the US		
Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of American voters?	Definitely yes	Count	5	7	3	4	1	20
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	1.8%	10.3%	18.8%	40.0%	100.0%	5.3%
	Somewhat yes	Count	43	22	4	5	0	74
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	15.1%	32.4%	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%	19.5%
	Not Sure/neutral	Count	25	14	6	1	0	46
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	8.8%	20.6%	37.5%	10.0%	0.0%	12.1%
	Somewhat not	Count	115	21	2	0	0	138
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	40.4%	30.9%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	36.3%
	Definitely not	Count	97	4	1	0	0	102
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	34.0%	5.9%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	26.8%
Total	Count	285	68	16	10	1	380	
	% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

**p-value: .000**

The relationship for “How do you feel about the current U.S. political climate/Do you believe that the Electoral College is a tool our government uses to hide/cover up important candidate information? (Crosstab 4.26)” is statistically significant with a p-value of .000. Most categories selected “might or might not,” showing that the level of political concern/lack of concern is keeping respondents from making a firm decision regarding their trust of the Electoral College. They cannot say for sure either way if they believe it is a trustworthy or dishonest system. However, the second most selected choice among all categories, excluding those highly satisfied, was “probably yes.” Regarding the highly satisfied category, these respondents only selected “definitely not,” not only keeping the trend of all selecting one choice, but also showing their sincere trust of the Electoral College. In general, the data shows that all respondents for the most part are either neutral or somewhat positive that the Electoral College is a dishonest government tool, which is what I initially hypothesized.

**How do you feel about the current U.S. political climate/Do you believe that the Electoral College is a tool our government uses to hide/cover up important candidate information? (Crosstab) 4.26**

		How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?					Total	
			I am highly concerned with the current political climate in the US	I am somewhat concerned with the current political climate in the US	I am neither concerned nor satisfied with the current political climate in the US	I am somewhat satisfied with the current political climate in the US	I am highly satisfied with the current political climate in the US	
Do you believe that the Electoral College is a tool our government uses to hide/cover up important candidate information? For instance, rigging elections, purposefully hurting/favoring certain candidates, concealing political corruption, etc.	Definitely yes	Count	27	2	0	0	0	29
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	9.5%	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.6%
	Probably yes	Count	74	17	5	1	0	97
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	26.1%	25.0%	31.3%	10.0%	0.0%	25.5%
	Might or might not	Count	78	22	6	0	0	106
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	27.5%	32.4%	37.5%	0.0%	0.0%	27.9%
	Probably not	Count	67	20	1	1	0	89
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	23.6%	29.4%	6.3%	10.0%	0.0%	23.4%
	Definitely not	Count	38	7	4	8	2	59
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	13.4%	10.3%	25.0%	80.0%	100.0%	15.5%
	Total	Count	284	68	16	10	2	380
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**p-value: .000**

The relationship for “How do you feel about the current U.S. political climate/How strongly do you care about the impact of the Electoral College on the



governance of our country? (Crosstab 4.27)” is statistically significant with a p-value of .000. Again, the highly satisfied category all selected the same choice, this time being “very much care,” which satisfies my initial hypothesis. The remaining categories mostly selected “very much care” and “somewhat care.” Those who are in the highly concerned category selected “very much care” the most (59%) out of all the other categories. The overall data shows a surprising result, which is that both those who are highly concerned and highly satisfied care greatly about the impact of the Electoral College on America. They just may care about different aspects of it. For instance, those who are concerned care about how it could negatively affect the outcome of an election, while those who are satisfied care about it remaining as a vital part of our voting system. In general, the University of Maine is highly concerned about the current U.S. political climate and care at least somewhat about the impact of the Electoral College on the governance of the country.

**How do you feel about the current U.S. political climate/How strongly do you care about the impact of the Electoral College on the governance of our country? (Crosstab) 4.27**

		How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?						
			I am highly concerned with the current political climate in the US	I am somewhat concerned with the current political climate in the US	I am neither concerned nor satisfied with the current political climate in the US	I am somewhat satisfied with the current political climate in the US	I am highly satisfied with the current political climate in the US	Total
How strongly do you care about the impact the Electoral College has on the governance of our country?	Very much care	Count	167	16	2	4	2	191
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	58.6%	23.5%	12.5%	40.0%	100.0%	50.1%
	Somewhat care	Count	96	36	5	4	0	141
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	33.7%	52.9%	31.3%	40.0%	0.0%	37.0%
	Neutral	Count	20	12	7	1	0	40
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	7.0%	17.6%	43.8%	10.0%	0.0%	10.5%
	Somewhat don't care	Count	2	3	1	1	0	7
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	0.7%	4.4%	6.3%	10.0%	0.0%	1.8%
	Don't care at all	Count	0	1	1	0	0	2
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	0.0%	1.5%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
	Total	Count	285	68	16	10	2	381
		% within How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**p-value: .000**

The relationship for “Did you vote in this past presidential election/Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of American voters? (Crosstab 4.28)” is statistically significant with a p-value of .000. There was a huge gap between the number of respondents who voted for Clinton (209) and the number of respondents who voted for Trump (27). There were 107 respondents who did not vote, with 93 who were not eligible and 14 who simply did not want to. The most significant aspect of this data is the large percentage gap between Clinton and Trump voters for most of the choices. For instance, 1% of Clinton voters and 33% of Trump voters selected “definitely yes,” while 36% of Clinton voters and 4% of Trump voters selected “definitely not.” This is what I had originally hypothesized, as more Clinton voters generally distrust the Electoral College and more Trump voters generally trust it. After all, Trump won because of the Electoral votes he received.

**Did you vote in this past presidential election/Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of American voters? (Crosstab) 4.28**

			Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?					
			Yes-voted for Hillary Clinton	Yes-voted for Donald Trump	Yes-voted for a candidate other than Clinton or Trump	No-did not vote, but was eligible	No-did not vote, was not eligible	Total
Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of American voters?	Definitely yes	Count	2	9	4	0	5	20
		% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	1.0%	33.3%	11.4%	0.0%	5.4%	5.3%
	Somewhat yes	Count	33	10	9	3	18	73
		% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	15.8%	37.0%	25.7%	21.4%	19.4%	19.3%
	Not Sure/neutral	Count	20	3	5	4	14	46
		% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	9.6%	11.1%	14.3%	28.6%	15.1%	12.2%
	Somewhat not	Count	79	4	10	5	39	137
		% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	37.8%	14.8%	28.6%	35.7%	41.9%	36.2%
	Definitely not	Count	75	1	7	2	17	102
		% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	35.9%	3.7%	20.0%	14.3%	18.3%	27.0%
	Total	Count	209	27	35	14	93	378
		% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**p-value: .000**

The relationship for “Did you vote in this past presidential election/How strongly do you care about the impact the Electoral College has on the governance of our country? (Crosstab 4.29)” is statistically significant with a p-value of .000. The most significant aspect of this data is how no category except for those who are not eligible voters (2%)

selected “don’t care at all.” Also, a majority of Clinton voters selected “very much care (64%)” while a majority of Trump voters selected “somewhat care (41%).” This is surprising and goes against my initial hypothesis as I assumed that both groups of voters would care the most about the impact of the Electoral College on our country. Those who vote for president in general should care strongly about the impact of their votes regardless of who they support. One reason why 64% of Clinton supporters and only 37% of Trump supporters selected “very much care” could be because since the election worked out in the favor of Trump, his supporters do not feel the need to closely monitor the voting system, while Clinton supporters do since their chosen candidate lost due to her lack of Electoral votes.

**Did you vote in this past presidential election/How strongly do you care about the impact the Electoral College has on the governance of our country? (Crosstab) 4.29**

		Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?						
			Yes-voted for Hillary Clinton	Yes-voted for Donald Trump	Yes-voted for a candidate other than Clinton or Trump	No-did not vote, but was eligible	No-did not vote, was not eligible	Total
How strongly do you care about the impact the Electoral College has on the governance of our country?	Very much care	Count	133	10	14	4	30	191
		% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	63.6%	37.0%	40.0%	28.6%	31.9%	50.4%
	Some-what care	Count	61	11	14	5	48	139
		% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	29.2%	40.7%	40.0%	35.7%	51.1%	36.7%
	Neutral	Count	13	5	5	5	12	40
		% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	6.2%	18.5%	14.3%	35.7%	12.8%	10.6%
	Some-what don't care	Count	2	1	2	0	2	7
		% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	1.0%	3.7%	5.7%	0.0%	2.1%	1.8%
	Don't care at all	Count	0	0	0	0	2	2
		% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%	0.5%
	Total	Count	209	27	35	14	94	379
		% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**p-value: .000**

The relationship for “Did you vote in the past presidential election/If the Electoral College was to be replaced with an alternative voting system, what would you like it to be? (Crosstab 4.30)” is statistically significant with a p-value of .000. The most significant aspect of this data is how only 4% of Clinton voters and 63% of Trump voters selected to keep the Electoral College in place as is. I originally assumed that there indeed would be more Trump voters who chose this, though I did not anticipate for the percentage gap to be this big. Also, the difference between those who did not vote because they were not eligible versus those who were eligible is intriguing, as most who were eligible either want a direct popular vote (50%) or to keep the Electoral College in place as is (21%), which is a drastic choice difference. Those who were not eligible mostly chose between a direct popular vote (47%) and a candidate ranking system (30%). What I can infer from this data, which matched my initial hypothesis, is that Trump voters predominately support the Electoral College while Clinton voters would rather see a direct popular vote take the place. Also, that eligible voters are more in favor of the Electoral College than those who are not eligible.

**Did you vote in the past presidential election/If the Electoral College was to be replaced with an alternative voting system, what should it be? (Crosstab) 4.30**

		Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?						Total
		Yes-voted for Hillary Clinton	Yes-voted for Donald Trump	Yes-voted for a candidate other than Clinton or Trump	No-did not vote, but was eligible	No-did not vote, was not eligible		
If the Electoral College was to be replaced with an alternative voting system, what should it be?	A direct popular vote, which includes a second round of direct voting between the top two finishers if no candidate receives at least half of the votes the first round.	Count	99	7	10	7	44	167
		% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	47.4%	25.9%	28.6%	50.0%	47.3%	44.2%
	A candidate ranking system where voters rank each candidate instead of just voting for one. Such a system would reveal a winner based on which candidate was ranked highest after lower-finishing candidates were eliminated from consideration	Count	84	3	13	1	28	129
		% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	40.2%	11.1%	37.1%	7.1%	30.1%	34.1%
	A system that awards all Electoral College votes to the winner of the national popular vote.	Count	10	0	1	1	3	15
		% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	4.8%	0.0%	2.9%	7.1%	3.2%	4.0%
	Keep the Electoral College in place, but change it so that the top 3 finishers in the popular vote nationwide are required to be considered in the Electoral College.	Count	6	0	4	2	5	17
		% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	2.9%	0.0%	11.4%	14.3%	5.4%	4.5%
	Keep the Electoral College in place as it is.	Count	10	17	7	3	13	50
		% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	4.8%	63.0%	20.0%	21.4%	14.0%	13.2%
	Total	Count	209	27	35	14	93	378
		% within Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**p-value: .000**



### 1.3 Conclusion

The data analysis that I ran proved that in general, the University of Maine undergraduates and faculty (at least those who took my survey) are for the most part on the Democratic/liberal-leaning end of the political spectrum, voted for Hillary Clinton in 2016 or did not vote at all, and are in favor of reforming/abolishing the Electoral College. Before doing this data analysis, I had anticipated there being more balanced outcomes, as this campus has so many people from all different social, economic, and political backgrounds to name a few. For instance, I originally anticipated that a majority of low income participants would not believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the American people and that a majority of high income participants would. When I went through and analyzed this data, it turned out that more low income participants than high income participants actually believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the American people, not the other way around as I had personally predicted. This is important because it proves that one can be from either a low or moderate/high income background and not have such factors influence their political beliefs.

Regarding replacing the Electoral College, most low income respondents selected to keep it in place while more moderate and high income respondents opted for the choice of replacing it with a direct popular vote. A reason why this could be is because many low income Americans either are less educated than moderate/high income Americans or come from less-educated families. In the case of my survey, low income college students, while they are enrolled in higher education, may lack many prior educational opportunities (private school, extra classes, etc) or are from uneducated families. This finding is important because it shows just how vital an education is to

one's political knowledge and concern. It also shows how the amount of wealth one has can largely affect how far one can go educationally. The more education one has, the more encouraged they will be to study aspects such as American government and politics.

Another noticeable aspect about this data is that both Clinton and Trump voters claim to know a similar amount of information about the Electoral College. This finding is important because it shows that regardless if respondents are Clinton or Trump supporters, this does not necessarily serve as an indicator for how much knowledge about the Electoral College system either group has. Political affiliation, according to my data, has seldom effect on the amount of information one has on the Electoral College. Gender wise, more male respondents claim to feel more confident in their knowledge of the Electoral College as well as trust it more than female respondents. A reason for this is likely due to how politics and government are still predominately male fields, and women still struggle to enter this realm. Also, since Hillary Clinton lost the election, this made many women feel almost betrayed by their government as she only lost due to her lack of Electoral votes, only adding to their negative views on the voting system as a whole. This finding is important because it shows that there is still a gender gap when it comes to political involvement. Women are still struggling to find where they fit in in American government. As far as how strongly voters care about the impact of the Electoral College, Trump voters who took my survey claim not to care as much as Clinton supporters, which was not what I expected since both groups of voters answered similarly regarding how much they know about this system. This finding is important because it shows that respondents who are Trump supporters, for the most part, feel comfortable with the Electoral College and thus do not care as much about its effect on America since they

find it trustworthy. When asked about replacing the Electoral College, Trump voter respondents predominately support the Electoral College while Clinton voter respondents would rather see a direct popular vote take the place.

Overall, as I mentioned throughout this section of my thesis, while there are many outcomes of this data analysis that align with what I initially expected, there are also a large amount of outcomes that differ greatly from what I originally hypothesized. In the following concluding section, I will further discuss my research results and the measures that I believe should be put in place to improve the level of political knowledge among Americans.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This entire research journey has really enlightened me about just how the University of Maine undergraduate and faculty bodies view the Electoral College and American politics in general. Most results were what I had originally anticipated, though there were aspects that were surprising and unexpected as well.

The major discoveries I made after analyzing my collected data are that first off, most undergraduates answered my survey, as there are hundreds more of them than faculty who participated. This is a large reason why there were such large categories of non-voters and neutral answers about the political system. The undergraduates were also largely first and second year students, since I targeted many general education large lectures when gathering survey participants. These students have never voted before and/or know very little, if anything, about the Electoral College. Even many from upper level courses do not seem to have as much knowledge, as they mainly selected either neutral or “somewhat” for most of their answers. This shows me that the student body at the University of Maine as a whole is generally uninformed/unsure about this system, which is worrisome to me as they are (myself included) the generation who will run this country within the next twenty years. The faculty, on the other hand, claim to know either a great deal or at least some information regarding the Electoral College system, which makes sense as they have been around longer and have been voting/following politics for many years.

Another discovery I made is that most undergraduates do not even care that much about how the Electoral College impacts American politics. This ties back to how so few

of them voted. However, almost all of them claimed to be Hillary Clinton supporters, but I am not sure if they even know why they support her as they do not seem to possess the amount of political knowledge necessary to make an informed decision about who to vote for. My theory behind why this is is because they may overhear their family's political discussions and decide to follow their parents' ideologies, or that they tune in too much to media sources to get their political information, which is not the most reliable source, as they do not know where such information initially came from or how much it was edited before going public. For instance, certain media sources can make a candidate look honest or dishonest depending on its political stance. A Democratic media source will not go out of its way to make Donald Trump look good, just as a conservative media source will in no way praise Hillary Clinton. To an uninformed young adult, the media is their primary, most accessible source for information. An example of this is how one can go on Facebook and click on numerous political articles within seconds, not caring so much where this alleged information came from but more so on how convenient it was for them to access. The issue with media sources, especially regarding politics, is that most of it will be from biased, opinion-based outlets. A student, or anyone for that matter, could believe pretty much anything they see or read online and take it as fact, rather than actually doing their own in depth research. We live in a society where everyone, especially young people, wants everything immediately, so any political information they can gather within minutes is suitable enough for them.

As for faculty, they had a good mix of voters/non voters, Clinton versus Trump supporters, Republicans and Democrats, etc. This is because, as I have mentioned, they are older and have been voting longer. They have seen many electoral outcomes over a

large period of their lives, and because of this they have become well informed about how this system works. Overall, what I can infer from this entire study is that the longer one is involved politically (voting, researching, personal experience), or the more education one has, the more one knows about how the American political system functions, especially a system as complex as the Electoral College.

Going forward, I believe that there should be courses required as early as Middle/High school for students to take that gives them an overview of specifically how the American voting system operates, what the Electoral College actually is, and how this all affects the outcome of presidential elections. These courses would be accessible in public and private schools to students of all financial backgrounds and demographics, which would increase the number of young people who feel confident in their knowledge of the voting system. I personally did not know much about the Electoral College and the voting system until I was old enough to actually vote. Even at the University of Maine, the only way for students to really comprehend this system is if they take political courses or join student political groups. However, that only reaches a slim demographic of students. To combat this lack of campus wide knowledge, which is very present as I have discovered through my data, there should be a general education requirement that is all about the American voting system. Students need to know how their voting system works so that not only will they be motivated to actually go and vote, but they will know just how fortunate they are to live in a country where their voices are actually heard.

Is the Electoral College without flaw? No. Should it be reformed to suit the needs of progressive, 21<sup>st</sup> century America? According to my data, yes. The most popular replacement for this system, according to the data, is a direct popular voting system

which includes a second round of direct voting between the top two finishers if no candidate receives at least half of the votes the first round. This basically satisfies both ends of the opinion spectrum regarding the use of the Electoral College. Basically, it allows for the Electoral College to function as it does, but only to allow a direct popular vote round if no candidates receive at least half of the votes in the first round. It is a compromise that not only keeps the Electoral College in place, satisfying its supporters, but also caters to those who believe that a direct popular vote should be in place, too. However, it may be many years before we see any changes made nationally, as to change a system as dated and powerful as the Electoral College would require lengthy debates, amendments, and public polls. Even still, it is worth the try. Though no matter what one's stance is on this system, it can be agreed that more attention should be focused on informing the public about how it works and its purpose. The more people know about the Electoral College, the more educated their opinions on it will be, which will change how many view this system. If more University of Maine participants knew more about the Electoral College, there would have been far fewer respondents who chose neutral/unsure for most of their answers and more who chose pro/con answers.

Basically, one cannot really know where they stand on this issue unless they actually know what it is and how it works. It all starts in the schools. Seeing so many unsure/neutral answers in my data is quite alarming and it concerns me about how the future of our political system will be. If there are so many unsure/neutral people here at the University of Maine, I can only imagine how many people all across the country would have answered this same way. Overall, my research proved that while there are a large number of uninformed respondents, there are also those handfuls who do know a

wealth of knowledge regarding the Electoral College and thus have real, informed opinions on it. There just needs to be more people in America who make the conscious effort to research and educate themselves on the functioning of American politics. This is a country that as a whole believes that the United States is “built by the people, for the people,” so it is really up to the people whether or not they want to improve and participate in our political system.



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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

**APPLICATION COVER PAGE**

*KEEP THIS PAGE AS ONE PAGE – DO NOT CHANGE MARGINS/FONTS!!!!!!!!!!*

*PLEASE SUBMIT THIS PAGE AS WORD DOCUMENT*  
**APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH WITH HUMAN SUBJECTS** Protection of Human Subjects Review Board, 400 Corbett Hall

**(Type inside gray areas) PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Maria Maffucci**  
**CO-INVESTIGATOR: CO-INVESTIGATOR: FACULTY SPONSOR:**

**EMAIL: maria.maffucci@maine.edu EMAIL: EMAIL: EMAIL:**  
**mark.brewer@umit.maine.edu**

**Professor Mark Brewer The Electoral College: A System “For the People”**  
**Reviewed By the People**

**(Required if PI is a student): TITLE OF PROJECT: START**  
**DATE: Political Science, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences FUNDING**  
**AGENCY (if any):**

**STATUS OF PI: FACULTY/STAFF/GRADUATE/UNDERGRADUATE 1. If**  
**PI is a student, is this research to be performed:**

**Yes for an honors thesis/senior thesis/capstone? for a doctoral dissertation?**

**other (specify)**

**PI DEPARTMENT: Department of**

**U (F,S,G,U)**

**for a master's thesis? for a course project?**

**September 17, 2017 9/28/2017**

\_\_\_\_\_

**2. Does this application modify a previously approved project? (Y/N) N. If yes,**  
**please give assigned number (if known) of previously approved**

**project:**

**3. Is an expedited review requested? (Y/N) Y**

**Submitting the application indicates the principal investigator's agreement to abide by the responsibilities outlined**

**in Section I.E. of the Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Human Subjects.**

**Faculty Sponsors are responsible for oversight of research conducted by their students. The Faculty Sponsor ensures that he/she has read the application and that the conduct of such research will be in accordance with the University of Maine's Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research. REMINDER: if the principal investigator is an undergraduate student, the Faculty Sponsor MUST submit the application to the IRB.**

**Email this cover page and complete application to UMRIC@maine.edu**

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\* **FOR IRB USE ONLY Application #**  
**2017-08-13 Review (F/E): E Expedited Category: ACTION TAKEN:**

**X Judged Exempt; category 2 Modifications required? Yes Accepted (date) 9/28/2017 Approved as submitted. Date of next review: by Degree of Risk:**

**Approved pending modifications. Date of next review: by Modifications accepted (date): Not approved (see attached statement) Judged not research with human subjects**

**Degree of Risk:**

**FINAL APPROVAL TO BEGIN**

**9/28/2017 Date**

**01/2017**

## APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted by Maria Maffucci, an undergraduate Honors student in the Department of Political Science at the University of Maine. Her faculty sponsor is Professor Mark Brewer, who lectures in the Department of Political Science as well as in the Honors College. The purpose of this research is to collect and analyze the thoughts and feelings of the University of Maine community regarding the use of the Electoral College in modern America as a means of electing the President of the United States. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate and a faculty member/undergraduate student at the University of Maine. No signature is need, as completing the survey indicates consent.

### **What Will You Be Asked to Do?**

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to take a survey (link at the bottom of this form). It may take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

### **Risks**

- Except for your time and inconvenience, there are no risks to you from participating in this study.

### **Benefits**

- While this study will have no direct benefit to you, this research may help us learn more about the general views that various categories of Americans have regarding the Electoral College.

### **Confidentiality**

To ensure that the participant information and data remain private, I have designed this survey to be anonymous and have set it up so that I am the sole viewer of all submitted materials. No participant's personal information (full name, address, phone number) is requested at anytime before, during, or after the survey. I, along with my faculty sponsor, will be the only ones viewing the results as this survey was created through my personal University of Maine Qualtrics account; therefore I have control of who can view the data. All data that is recorded will be done so via my Qualtrics account. This electronic data will be stored on a password-protected computer and downloaded as soon as I launch my survey to the public. It will all be destroyed as soon as my thesis is completed around April/May 2018.

**Voluntary**

Participation is voluntary. If you choose to take part in this study, please follow the link at the bottom of this form. Return/submission of the survey implies consent to participate. Participants can skip questions or stop at any time.

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at [maria.maffucci@maine.edu](mailto:maria.maffucci@maine.edu). You may also reach the faculty advisor, Professor Mark Brewer, on this study at [mark.brewer@umit.maine.edu](mailto:mark.brewer@umit.maine.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Gayle Jones, Assistant to the University of Maine's Protection of Human Subjects Review Board, at 581-1498 (or e-mail [gayle.jones@umit.maine.edu](mailto:gayle.jones@umit.maine.edu)).

**Link to survey:**

[https://umaine.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_6LOaMYCUj5CYJpP](https://umaine.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6LOaMYCUj5CYJpP)

# Honors Thesis Survey

## Background Information

Q1 What is your position at the University of Maine?

- First Year Student (1)
  - Second Year Student (2)
  - Third Year Student (3)
  - Fourth Year Student (4)
  - Fifth Year or above student (5)
  - Faculty Member (6)
-



Q2 Where are you from?

- Maine (1)
  - Other State-Northeastern U.S. (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania) (2)
  - Other State-Midwestern U.S. (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota) (3)
  - Other State-Southern U.S. (Delaware, Washington D.C., Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas) (4)
  - Other State-Western U.S. (Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming, Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington) (5)
  - International (non-U.S.) (6)
- 

Q3 How would you describe your ethnicity?

- Non-Hispanic White, or Caucasian (1)
  - Hispanic/Latino (2)
  - Black or African American (3)
  - Native American or American Indian (4)
  - Middle Eastern (5)
  - Asian/Pacific Islander (6)
  - Other (if not listed) (7)
-

Q4 If you are a University of Maine undergraduate student, what is your primary area of study? For faculty, what is your primary area of teaching?

- College of Education and Human Development (1)
  - College of Engineering (2)
  - College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (3)
  - College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture (4)
  - Maine Business School (5)
  - Honors (Faculty Only) (6)
- 

Q5 Are you a student/teacher in the Honors College?

- Yes (1)
  - No (2)
- 

Q6 What age group are you in?

- 18-24 (1)
  - 25-34 (2)
  - 35-44 (3)
  - 45-54 (4)
  - 55-64 (5)
  - 65+ (6)
-

Q7 What gender do you identify as?

- Male (1)
  - Female (2)
  - Gender Fluid (3)
  - Gender Binary (4)
  - Other (5)
- 

Q8 Financially, how do you identify?

- Low Income (1)
  - Moderate Income (2)
  - High Income (3)
- 

Q9 What is your living situation?

- Living on Your Own/Alone on campus (1)
  - Living on Your Own/Alone off campus (2)
  - Living with one or more roommates on campus (3)
  - Living with one or more roommates off campus (4)
  - Living with Parents/Family/Guardians (commuter) (5)
-

Q10 Are you currently employed?

- Yes, Full Time (1)
- Yes, Part Time (2)
- No (3)

**End of Block**

---

## **Political Knowledge**

Q11 What is your political affiliation?

- Democrat with Liberal views (1)
  - Democrat with Moderate views (2)
  - Democrat with Conservative Views (3)
  - Independent (4)
  - Republican with Liberal views (5)
  - Republican with Moderate Views (6)
  - Republican with Conservative views (7)
  - Other (8)
-

Q12 Does your political affiliation match that of your parents?

- Yes, matches that of all parents (1)
  - Yes, matches that of some parents (2)
  - No, does not match any parents (3)
- 

Q13 How important are politics to you?

- Very Important (1)
  - Important (2)
  - Somewhat Important (3)
  - Neither Important or Unimportant (4)
  - Somewhat Unimportant (5)
  - Unimportant (6)
  - Very Unimportant (7)
- 

Q14 Did you vote in this past presidential election? If so, who did you vote for?

- Yes-voted for Hillary Clinton (1)
  - Yes-voted for Donald Trump (2)
  - Yes-voted for a candidate other than Clinton or Trump (3)
  - No-did not vote, but was eligible (4)
  - No-did not vote, was not eligible (5)
-

Q15 How do you feel about the current political climate in the United States? Does it concern you or are you satisfied with it?

- I am highly concerned with the current political climate in the US (1)
- I am somewhat concerned with the current political climate in the US (2)
- I am neither concerned nor satisfied with the current political climate in the US (3)
- I am somewhat satisfied with the current political climate in the US (4)
- I am highly satisfied with the current political climate in the US (5)

**End of Block**

---

## **The Electoral College**

Q16 How much do you currently know about the Electoral College?

- A great deal of information (1)
- Some information (2)
- Little/barely any information (3)
- No information (4)

---

Q17 Do you believe that the Electoral College accurately represents the decisions and opinions of American voters?

- Definitely yes (1)
  - Somewhat yes (2)
  - Not Sure/neutral (3)
  - Somewhat not (4)
  - Definitely not (5)
- 

Q18 Do you believe that the Electoral College is a tool our government uses to hide/cover up important candidate information? For instance, rigging elections, purposefully hurting/favoring certain candidates, concealing political corruption, etc.

- Definitely yes (1)
- Probably yes (2)
- Might or might not (3)
- Probably not (4)
- Definitely not (5)

---

Q19 How strongly do you care about the impact the Electoral College has on the governance of our country?

- Very much care (1)
  - Somewhat care (2)
  - Neutral (3)
  - Somewhat don't care (4)
  - Don't care at all (5)
- 

Q20 If the Electoral College was to be replaced with an alternative voting system, what would you like it to be? (Choose the answer that best corresponds with your opinion, as this question could have countless individual answers)

- A direct popular vote, which includes a second round of direct voting between the top two finishers if no candidate receives at least half of the votes the first round. (For instance, if one candidate receives 30% and the other receives 40%, there would have to be a re-vote with just the top two candidates). (1)
- A candidate ranking system where voters rank each candidate instead of just voting for one. Such a system would reveal a winner based on which candidate was ranked highest after lower-finishing candidates were eliminated from consideration. (This system is known as ranked choice voting). (2)
- A system that awards all Electoral College votes to the winner of the national popular vote. (3)
- Keep the Electoral College in place, but change it so that the top 3 finishers in the popular vote nationwide are required to be considered in the Electoral College. (4)
- Keep the Electoral College in place as it is. (5)



## APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAIL/POSTING

Hello University of Maine faculty and students, my name is Maria Maffucci and I am a current senior Political Science and Honors student working on my undergraduate thesis. The purpose of my research is to collect and analyze the thoughts and feelings of the University of Maine community regarding the use of the Electoral College in modern America as a means of electing the President of the United States. I will do this through the distribution of an online survey. Participants must be a faculty member or undergraduate student at the University of Maine as well as at least 18 years old.

If you choose to participate in my study, please fill out my survey. A link to it can be found at the bottom of the attached consent form. All responses are anonymous and private and will only be viewed by my faculty sponsor, Professor Mark Brewer and myself. Only I possess this Qualtrics account's login information so all results will be confidential.

Though this be just a survey, every response is vital in coming to a conclusion about where one large group of people stands on the issue surrounding the Electoral College. My goal after I gather a sufficient number of responses is to analyze the types of people who favor/reject this voting system. I will then have a general idea of how most other Americans who possess the same characteristics as those in my group feel about the Electoral College. Please be honest in your responses, as this data is very crucial to the outcome of my study. This survey will take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete.

Thank you!

(This same write-up will also serve as my Internet Posting)

## APPENDIX E: IN-CLASS PITCH

Hello everyone. My name is Maria Maffucci and I am a fourth year Political Science Student working on my undergraduate honors thesis. My research topic is gathering the various opinions of UMaine undergraduate students and faculty regarding the Electoral College. My goal is to end up with a considerable amount of data which will allow me to analyze many different views while also noting if there are any links between certain ideas and certain demographic characteristics.

Your instructor for this class will send out an email to all of you with the link to this survey. It will only take between 10-15 minutes, and all answers and information will only be viewed by myself and my faculty sponsor. I am using Qualtrics software for the survey, which automatically notifies me when someone has responded. There will be a consent form attached to the email being sent out though no signature is needed. Taking the survey will count as your signature.

I know that you are all very busy college students, I understand that each of you has a heavy workload and not much time to spare. However, this survey can be taken at anytime within the next month or so. Taking this survey would greatly help my research and allow me to get the data I need to write my thesis. I know taking surveys isn't the most enjoyable task, but in doing so you are helping me get one step closer to finishing my undergraduate degree. Thank you for your time and consideration.

## AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Maria Juliette Maffucci was born on May 31, 1996, in Boston, Massachusetts. She grew up in Revere, Massachusetts where she attended public school. During her high school days is when Maria started to develop a sincere passion for politics and government. She ran for student council her junior year and became the Student Representative to the School Board her senior year.

In August 2014, Maria started her undergraduate career at the University of Maine in Orono, Maine, where she studied both Marketing and Political Science. She was also enrolled in the Honors College, which really shaped her world views and is where she made most of her lifelong friends. Campus is where Maria really thrived, taking on various leadership roles within many on-campus organizations, such as Student Government, the American Marketing Association, the 2018 Class Council, as well as joining the sorority, Delta Zeta. It is within these extracurricular groups that Maria really figured out her passions, which lay within the realm of public relations and government. In the summer of 2016, Maria was fortunate enough to be selected as one of twelve students to take a week-long summer course in Washington D.C. with Dr. Richard Powell. This is when she firmly knew that she eventually wanted to live and work in the nation's capitol, a dream that she has been pursuing ever since.

In May 2018, Maria graduated from the University of Maine with a Bachelor's of Arts. She will be beginning her job as a Claim Associate at the insurance company, MEMIC, in Portland, Maine, this summer. Maria plans on attending graduate school in a few years in Washington D.C., where she anticipates to enroll in a public policy and government relations program.