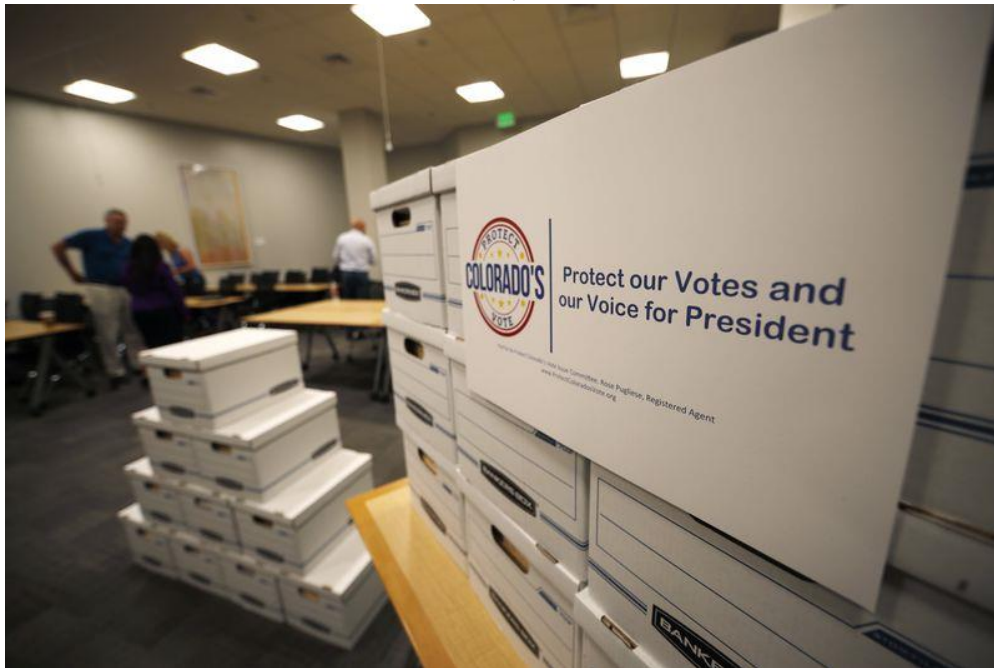


<https://www.courant.com/opinion/op-ed/hc-op-marcus-electoral-college-racism-0823-20200823-gi23vzekxvehfkb4a4ytf33ye-story.html>



## The Electoral College is a last vestige of racism

By **EDWARD L. MARCUS**  
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Most of us have already forgotten that both Al Gore and Hillary Clinton won the national vote for president, Gore by about 500,000 votes and Clinton by around 3 million. How can you get 3 million more votes than your opponent and not win?

The reason is the Electoral College, one of the last vestiges of racism that remains formally enshrined in our federal government.

The creators of our Constitution gave states congressional representation for three-fifths of their enslaved population. That boosted Southern states' voice in Congress, despite the fact that the enslaved were not allowed to vote.

The number of electoral votes allocated each state is the same as the number of seats the state holds in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. With so many enslaved people in Southern states, the result was that the number seats in Congress held by the Southern states was increased — by enslaved people who were not allowed to vote but did give the Southern states an increased voice in federal affairs.

The bottom line, starting from day one of our Constitutional democracy, is that white Southern states had an edge that could, did, and still can affect the outcome of presidential elections.

Long after the abolition of slavery, Southern political leaders fought to maintain the Electoral College and dump the only truly Democratic way of voting, which obviously is majority vote takes all.

After Reconstruction, the white “redeemer” governments that took control of the South embraced a new strategy. Since African Americans now fully counted for representation, and thus the Electoral College, representation for them increased again, despite the fact that African Americans were disenfranchised and stopped from voting by hook, by trick and by force.

The Fifteenth Amendment provides the right to vote and that a vote shall not be denied “on a count of race, color or previous condition of servitude.”

Sounds great, but tell that to the people that were lynched and harassed by the Ku Klux Klan, and tell it to all the civil rights leaders and protesters who were beaten up and tossed in jail.

The hard truth of the matter is that the Electoral College was created as bait for the Southern states to originally join the union, and no one thought about it when the Civil War ended — except for the “political slavers” down south, who have used it to their advantage right up until today.

In 1969, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly voted to abolish the Electoral College and it then went to the Senate, where it got held by the judiciary committee chaired by James Eastland of Mississippi, a true man of the South.

Birch Bayh, Jr. of Indiana got it out of committee, and it was then subject to a filibuster led by Sens. Sam Ervin of North Carolina and Strom Thurmond of South Carolina. The vote failed to close the debate with 75% of the Southern Senators in favor of continuing the filibuster.

Sen. James Allen of Alabama said as part of the debate “The Electoral College is one of the South’s few remaining political safeguards. Let’s keep it.”

Until I did some research, I really had not thought out that the Electoral College is steeped in racism and should be, without a doubt, tossed out in favor of the popular vote. The time is ripe for this to happen. Last time it had a shot was in 1970. Fifty years have gone by. It’s time to try again, especially with the problem of racism so prominent in the public arena.

If we can throw out monuments, we certainly can convince the public that this really is a big deal and needs to be fixed. Our Congressional delegation is

always searching for a cause. Here is one that will be a slam dunk in public approval once the public understands the background of the Electoral College and why and how it was created.

Let's hope the Congressional delegation picks this up as a cause going into 2021.

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