A Bug in Democracy:
Real and Mythical Risks of the Electoral College

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Problems posed by the modern Electoral College

1. Popular-vote/electoral-vote mismatches
2. Failure to build broad-based coalitions
3. Susceptibility to interference
4. Disempowerment of voters in partisan-leaning states

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Two Gilded Ages: Unreliable Elections

- Racial divisions
- Technological disruption
- Increasing inequality
- Deep partisanship
The popular vote winner has lost one in three close elections

Five failures, including the first time the popular vote was ever tallied in 1824. Even when the popular vote margin is up to 10%, a 1 in 7 chance of a loss.
Getting a plurality already requires nationwide votes

![Graph showing fraction of Clinton and Trump votes vs. number of states](image)

- **Clinton**
- **Trump**

Keys:
- Rhode Island
- Texas
- Fla.
- NY
- Calif.
Reducing the decision to a few states opens up vulnerability to hacking

How many votes would it have taken to flip . . .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electoral College</th>
<th>National Popular Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>2016 (Trump v. Clinton)</td>
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<tr>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>2004 (Bush v. Kerry)</td>
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<tr>
<td>600</td>
<td>2000 (Bush v. Gore)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>1976 (Carter v. Ford)</td>
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<tr>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>1968 (Nixon v. Humphrey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>1960 (Kennedy v. Nixon)</td>
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Facebook said in its initial statement that about 25% of the ads purchased by Russians during the election "were geographically targeted"
The major candidates ignore all but a few states. 68% of post-convention events occurred in six states representing only 23% of the total population. Source: nationalpopularvote.com
Ignored citizens do not participate
Geographically concentrated communities are disempowered
National Popular Vote: Benefits

• Increased turnout in all states
• Voters and communities know that all are weighted equally
• No voters, states, regions, interests are ignored
• Equal participation creates trust in the system and outcome

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