

# The Electoral College

America's hardest college



# I.) Primaries/Caucuses

- The “Filter” Election



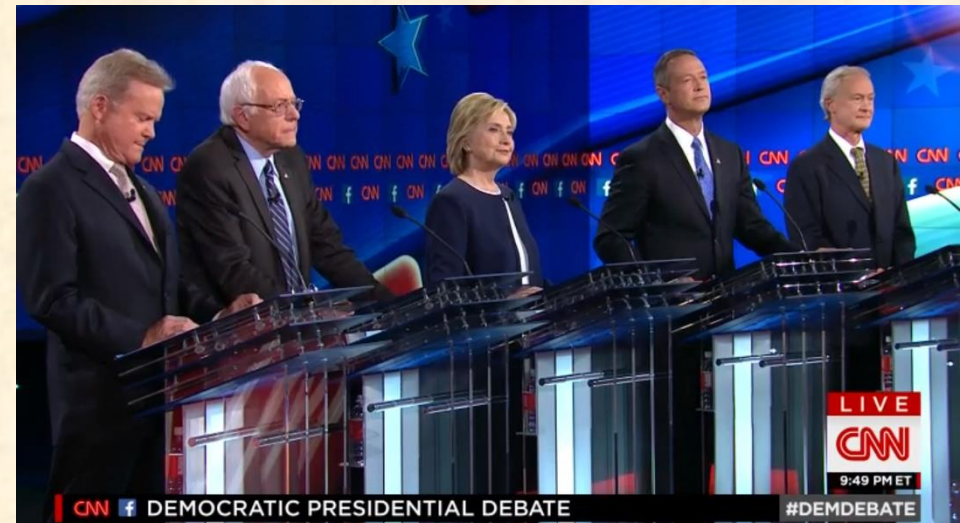
- Seen as more democratic where old party bosses in “smoke filled rooms” selected the candidates



## B. Primaries

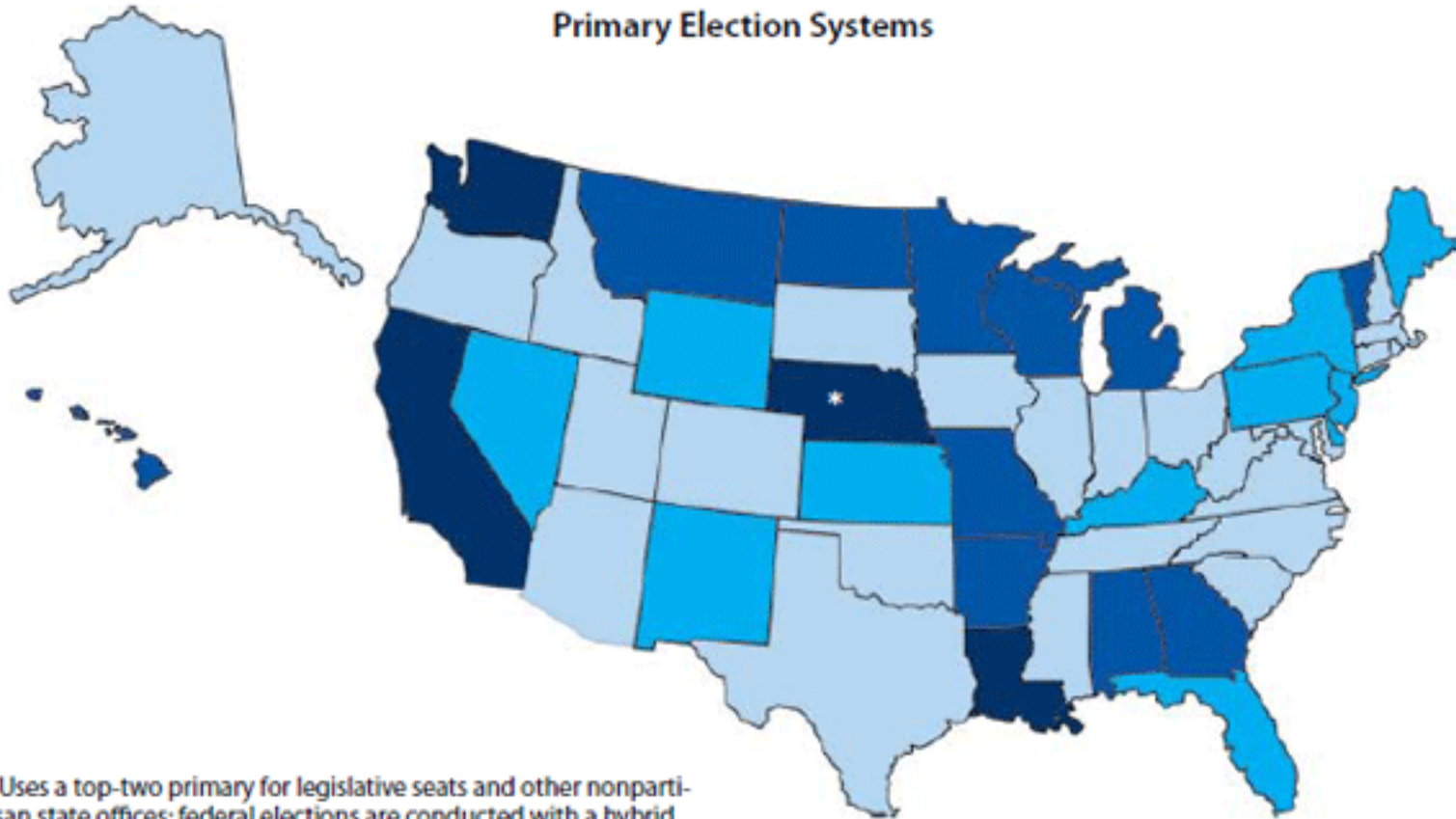
1. Elections held in each state usually by members of the party to vote for the candidate to represent their party in the general elections
2. \* really choosing delegates to send to vote for the candidates that the primary voters of the party selected

DEMOCRATIC	6
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES	
HILLARY CLINTON	Democratic 8
JOE BIDEN	Democratic 9
BARACK OBAMA	Democratic 10
BILL RICHARDSON	Democratic 11
DENNIS KUCINICH	Democratic 12
MIKE GRAVEL	Democratic 13
JOHN EDWARDS	Democratic 14
CHRIS DODD	Democratic 15



- Open Primaries- party affiliated and non-affiliated voters can participate
- Closed Primaries- only party members can vote

Primary Election Systems



\* Uses a top-two primary for legislative seats and other nonpartisan state offices; federal elections are conducted with a hybrid.

- Closed: In general, voters must first be registered party members of the applicable party to vote in its closed primary.
- Open: In general, regardless of their party affiliation, voters can decide which party's primary to participate in.

- Hybrid: Rules may vary about whether unaffiliated voters can participate in a party's primary and whether voters can "cross over" to another party's primary.
- Top Two: A common ballot lists all candidates on one ballot. The top two vote getters, regardless of party, go on to the general election.

## C. Caucus

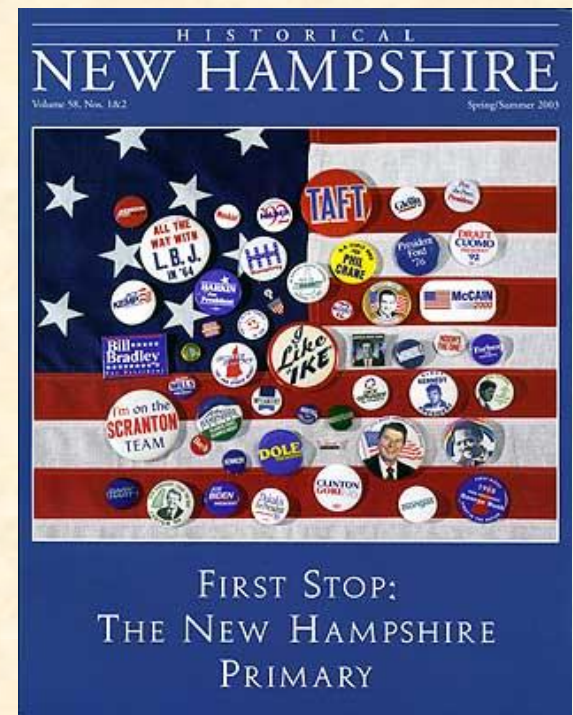
- Town meetings held within a state where party members discuss and debate candidates and vote for delegates (who represent a candidate) to send to the national convention.



## D. Important Aspects

### 1. Ames Straw Poll

- (Republican only) – held in Aug. preceding the election year

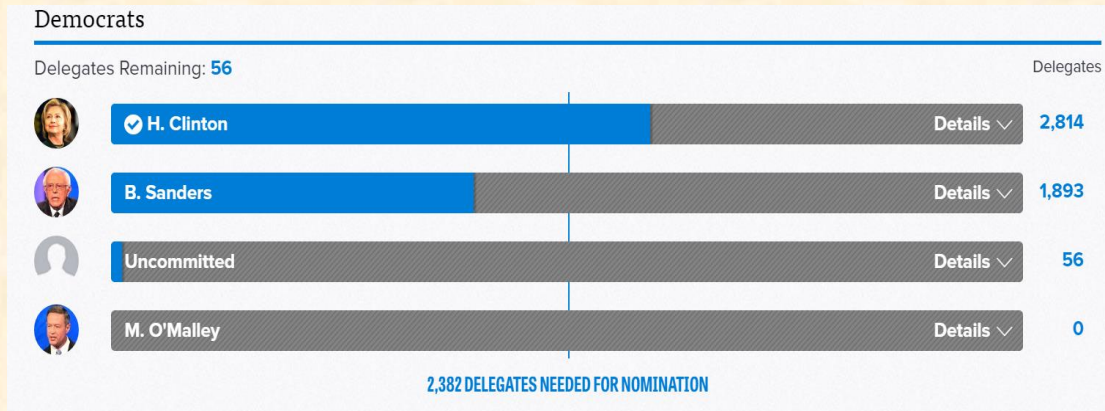


### 2. Iowa Caucus and New Hampshire Primary

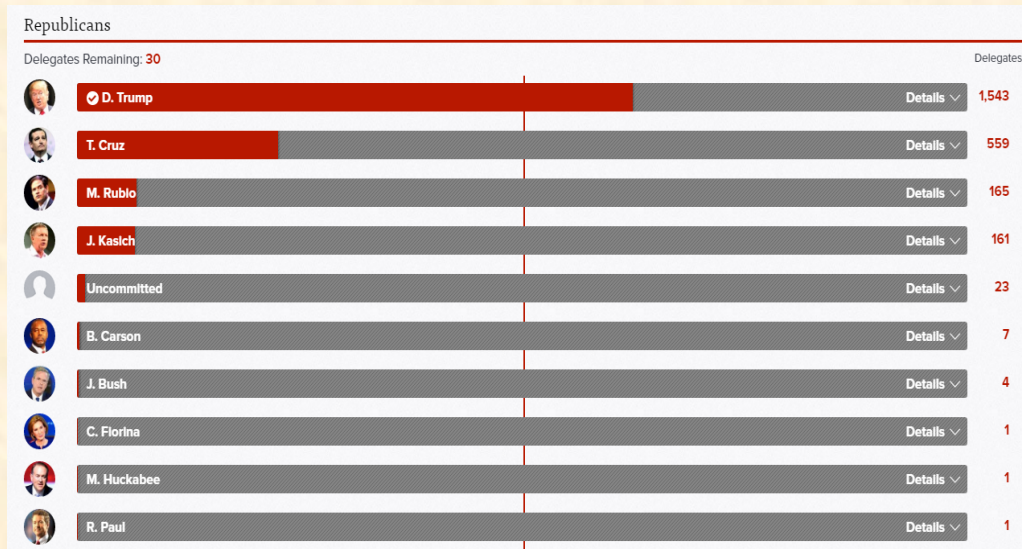
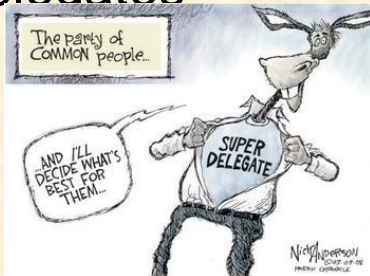
- a. not worth many delegates (~1%)
- b. 1st primary/caucus of the election cycle = media grabber
- c. predictor (NH primary winner is 26% more likely to win nomination; 2<sup>nd</sup> place winner has a 17% gain) vs. (Iowa caucus winner goes on to win the party nomination around 50% of the time)

### 3. Delegate Count

- Democrats- 4,764 total  
(794 are [superdelegates](#))  
CA- 546 deleg (475 are pledged)
  - Proportional
- Republicans- 2,474 total  
(up to 3 per state; 2012- 126 super delegates)
  - Most states are winner take-all
  - CA- 172 (most are district won)



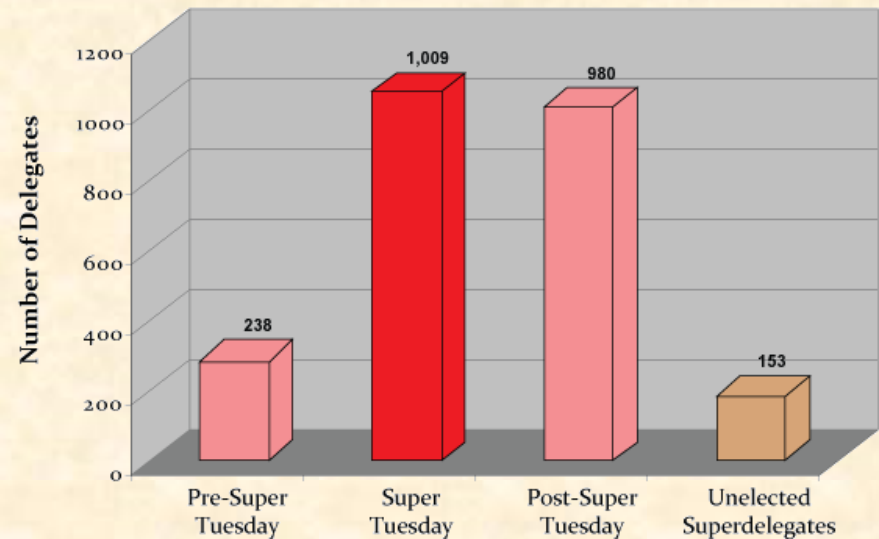
### 4. Super Delegate- -unpledged non-elected delegates



# 4. Super Tuesday



2008 Republican Presidential Delegate Breakdown

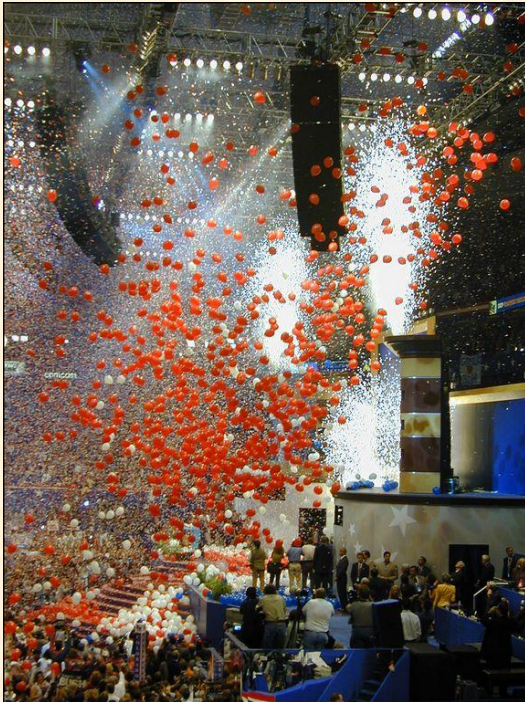




## II.) National Conventions



- The “Shin-Dig” usually held in June/July during a presidential year election



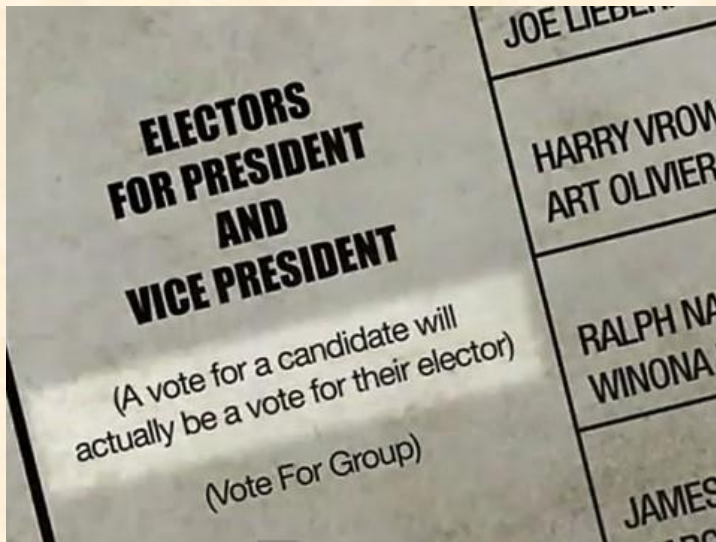
- 5 Purposes

1. Official announce presidential candidate
2. Officially announce VP candidate
3. Mending fences and promote unity
4. Revise Party platform
5. Gain media attention



# III.) What is the Electoral College?

- A.) The group of people who elect the president



Electors in Colorado casting their vote.

## B.) Reason for the E.C.

1.) didn't trust the popular vote

2.) never a direct democracy-

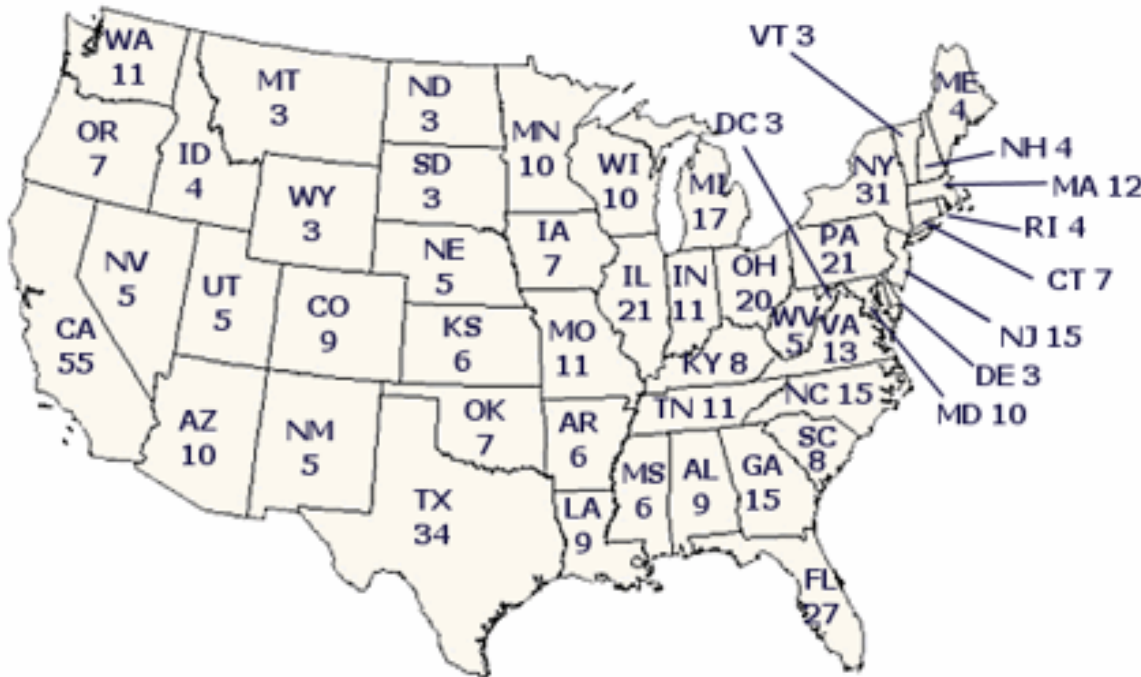
3.) States Rights

4.) history/tradition

# IV.) How does it work?

## A.) electoral votes

1.) how many are there? **538**



2.) where do they come from?

100 senators + 435 representatives + 3 D.C. = 538

3.) how does a candidate win votes?

a.) winner take-all system

(\*except Maine Nebraska=dist. plan)

4.) “going over the top”



5.) who are electors?

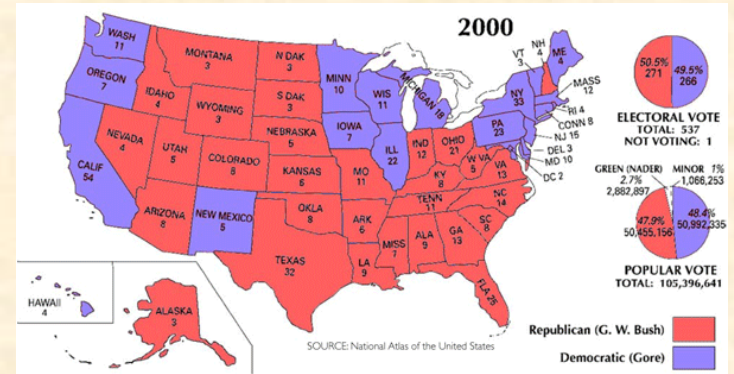
anybody- mainly those loyal to candidate and party.

Usually given as a reward



# V.) What are the flaws in the Electoral College?

A.) popular vote winner loses



B.) Some peoples' votes are worth more than others  
-all states guaranteed 3 E.C. votes that shouldn't

C.) doesn't make candidates care about small states (and some larger) –winner take all

## D.) “faithless” electors

- electors aren't legally bound to vote the person is pledged to vote for

## E.) “tie breakers”

- vote goes to the House where each state gets one vote (some are larger than others= fairness?)

## F.) 3<sup>rd</sup> parties don't have a chance



# VI.) What are the reforms? (Electoral College Scaffle)

- Assign options
  1. Electoral College
  2. Direct Popular
  3. District Plan
  4. Proportional Plan
  5. National Bonus
  6. [National Popular Vote](#)

