

## The Electoral College of these United States

The call to abolish the Electoral College could only succeed if a new country were created. States with smaller populations will never give up their power. Why should they? They are simply continuing the nature of the country as it was founded in the 1780s. The Declaration in 1776 entitled “The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America” had announced that there were “thirteen free and independent states.” A state, the document says, has “full power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and do all other Acts and Things which independent States may of right do.” These thirteen states formed a federation to fight the British; after the war the federation of independent states continued under the Articles of Confederation.

The Convention in 1787 tried to create “a more perfect union” of these thirteen states. The states had no wish to give up their independence, that is, cease to be states. They created a new federal government with more power but, as the tenth amendment stated, with only the power that the states would grant to “the United States.” The Convention could not agree on a name for this entity. They capitalized “united” and dropped “thirteen” from the Declaration’s title resulting in “United States of America.” That thirteen states could make up one state was illogical. An accurate description would have been “a federation of states in America.”

The slave states were the most intent on restricting power to the federal government. But all the smaller states insisted on being states. Until the slaughter which is called by some people “the war between the states,” the term United States took a plural verb, a recognition that a union of states was at best a work in progress. After the war, there was an attempt to create a national government, but the amendments were too timid for the need. To this day what holds the country together is the idea and ideal of “America” and relentless insistence that the country already is this ideal place of America where there is equality and justice for all.

How did the country succeed as well as it did if it was not a nation-state but a collection of states held together by belief in the idea America? It was rich in land (after it had been taken from the indigenous people) and a federal Constitution that allowed people to work out their problems locally. That has involved violence but the violence could largely be directed outward so that “America” could celebrate military victories. It attracted millions of people who believed that it was a place where one could get a new start in life. For most white people (including

populations that were eventually accepted as white, for example, the Irish) the story was one of success.

The tenuous union of states has several times been in danger of breaking apart. The forces of disunion are especially strong in 2020. A federation of thirteen states was difficult to hold together; a union of fifty states may be impossible. The European Union is having trouble managing fewer than thirty. The problem is not that the country is too big; it is that there is no national union with a national government. U.S. Senators are intent on doing good for their state They profess belief in America but they do not show much interest in the good of the United States.

The hope for the country would be that, as the population becomes a nonwhite majority, citizens would be loyal to their immediate locality and to the country. The reconstruction (or construction) of a national government that was aborted in the 1870s might recommence. As most nonwhite people know, this country is not America but it is capable of embodying ideals of freedom, equality and justice. The electoral college would eventually be voted out by the people; the Senate would need to be reconstituted as a national body. It is probably too late to give a name to this country so “United States” in America would have to do.

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