**2016**

# Electoral College

## Information for Maine

Prepared by the Office of the Secretary of State

Presidential Electors are the people who actually elect the President of the United States. When voters go to the polls on Election Day, they cast a vote for who they would like to see as president. This is called the “popular vote”. The popular vote is used to choose “electors” – these are the people who are nominated to cast votes for President and Vice President of the United States. The Electoral College occurs when electors in each state meet to cast their respective “electoral votes” for President and Vice President. In other words, voters choose the electors, and the electors choose the President.

Each state gets votes in the Electoral College. The number of votes allotted to each state is determined by adding up all the members of the United States Congress who are elected from that state. For example, Maine has two U.S. Senators and two U.S. Representatives, for a total of four members of Congress. Because Maine has four members of Congress, the state also gets four Electoral College votes.

Political parties and nonparty candidates choose their own electors in Maine. Political parties choose their electors at a state convention. Nonparty candidates name their electors when they submit the signatures they must collect to get on the ballot. Each party or candidate must name four electors, which is the most a candidate could win here. In each group of four electors, one must be from the First Congressional District, one must be from the Second Congressional District and two must be chosen at-large. The names of all the electors are submitted to the Secretary of State.

After the popular vote is cast November 8, 2016, the electors will meet on the first Monday after the 2nd Wednesday in December to cast their votes for President. The candidate who wins the most popular votes in the First Congressional District wins one elector. The candidate with the most popular votes in the Second Congressional District wins one elector. The candidate who wins the most votes statewide wins the two at-large electors. This is different from most states, where the candidate who wins the most votes statewide wins all the electors in that state. In Maine, it is possible for candidates to split the electoral votes.

In Maine, the presidential electors who are chosen as a result of the November 8, General Election will meet December 19, 2016, in the chamber of the Maine House of Representatives. At that time, they will cast their Electoral College votes to elect the next President and Vice President of the United States. Separate ballots are used to cast a vote for the President and Vice President of the United States.

The Electoral College was written into the United State Constitution in 1787 and was designed to balance the states’ and the people’s interests. The Electoral College was established before the emergence of national political parties.