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| |  | | --- | | The United States of America should dispense with the Electoral College. At present, the president and vice president are selected in a process that does not give equal weight to all voters. Apart from Maine and Nebraska, states select electoral votes based upon a winner-take-all system. Because states have disproportionate populations, the weight of votes is worth more in some states than in others, particularly in swing states (in which no candidate is clearly favored). The campaign process then marginalizes large states that are considered “safe” (such as California for the Democrats or Texas for the Republicans), with candidates focusing instead on swing states, privileging some citizens’ votes over others. Additionally, the winner of the electoral vote will not always necessarily win the popular vote. This is fundamentally undemocratic and unfair, and it must be stopped.  Write a response in which you discuss what questions would need to be answered in order to decide whether the recommendation and the argument on which it is based are reasonable. Be sure to explain how the answers to these questions would help to evaluate the recommendation. | |

The argument reaches the conclusion that the United States of America should dispense with its electoral college. This conclusion is based on the premise that the current voting system does not give equal weight to all voters, and that the candidates tend to only focus on swing states, since 'safe' states would not need more convincing. The author also states that the electoral vote winner does not always win the popular vote, and such a case would be undemocratic and unfair. However, in reaching these conclusions, the author fails to answer three important questions that would either make or break the validity of their recommendation.

First, are the 'weights' of votes assigned to different states not proportional to their true population? The argument fails to present any information or evidence about how these weights are calculated. It is possible that the number of electoral votes allocated to a state is proportional to the fraction of the country's population that resides in that state. If this were the case, then the popular vote and electoral vote would differ only in a few cases, not enough to warrant a full shift. Only if the answer to this question is 'no', can the author solidify their claims.

Second, even if the answer to the previous question is 'no', does the Electoral College have no possibility of improvement? In other words, rather than shifting to a different system, can the Electoral College be improved or tweaked to address the issues stated by the author? In the current framing of the argument, the author calls for a full overhaul of the system, and does not suggest any other one. Even if it is assumed that there is a better system, the author fails to consider the potential for the Electoral College to be modified. It may be the case that the electoral vote allocations become obsolete over time due to changing populations, but this could be alleviated by updating the assigned votes at a higher frequency. Perhaps, the US electoral votes could be based on a Census, or be modified based on the trends of previous population counts.

Finally, would shifting to a different system cause significantly lesser issues than the electoral college? The author assumes that switching to a new mode of elections would be better, but does not account for if it would produce accurate results. Consider what would happen if, say, a miscount occurred in Florida. In the case of electoral votes, the results would be, in a way, easier to calculate and verify due to its distributed nature among the states. If Florida's error occurred in a situation where one candidate has already achieved the electoral vote, then there would be less stress on Florida's result, and its vote-counters. It may be possible that this is different in a pure popular vote system, and that the thin margin that the top candidates differ by, is less than the votes a state is left to count. If the author were to clarify that a new system would avoid this sort of issue, and hence were to answer the aforementioned question, then they could strengthen their argument. Otherwise, the argument would stand unpersuasive.

In conclusion, the argument, as it stands now, is considerably flawed due to its failure to answer the three questions discussed above. The author should gather evidence and consult comprehensive studies on electoral systems to substantiate their claims and conclusions. The answers to these questions could improve the argument, or make its conclusions unwarranted, but in its current state, the argument is unsubstantiated.