

# The Republicans Do Not Have an Advantage in the Electoral College Because of “Small” States

There have been continuing calls to re-examine or change the Electoral College, based on Hillary Clinton’s loss in the 2016 Presidential election, despite her having won the popular vote. The primary criticism of the Electoral College being that it unfairly allocates a disproportionate amount of power in Presidential elections to smaller states. This criticism is objectively true and is most pronounced in the 12 smallest states which are allocated either 3 or 4 electoral votes, tripling or doubling the respective voting power they would have in a system where electoral votes were allocated based on only on House districts. However, with respect to Clinton’s 2016 loss, or any recent Presidential election results, no actual partisan advantage was gained due to leveraged power allocated to the “small” states. So although the criticism of the Electoral College is fair, as a practical matter it has not been relevant to recent elections. However, considering the District of Columbia as a “small state”, as it is also allocated three electoral votes, then the Democratic party would have a small, but clear advantage among the smaller elements of the Electoral College. More interesting than the Electoral College tie in the small states, are the popular vote totals there. In both 2016 and 2020, the Republican’s held a decisive popular vote advantage in the small states, but were awarded the same number of electoral votes as the Democrats. Even the huge partisan advantage in DC (the most partisan of any Electoral College member) was not enough to capture the popular vote in the small states and DC, however in 2020 the Democrats eroded the Republican advantage and took the overall popular vote from the full group. It is interesting to see the broad and substantial unpopularity of Hillary Clinton in the relatively broad set of small states. Moving beyond the “small” states to the “medium” sized ones (12 states with a number of EC votes between 5 and 7), then a much more decisive partisan advantage results and this time for the Republican party. Although the medium sized states are not as advantaged by the Electoral College as the small states, they still punch above their weight (relative advantage) compared to larger ones. So, it would be accurate to say the Electoral College gives Republican’s an advantage in medium sized states, but it doesn’t sound as unfair.

Republican Popular Vote Advantage in Small States

	2020		2016	
	Vote	%	Vote	%
	Advantage	Advantage	Advantage	Advantage
Small States	+117074	1.9%	+350911	6.8%
+ D.C.	+298737	88.9%	+270107	91.4%
Overall	181663	2.7%	-80804	1.5%

## “Small” States

	D.C.	Delaware	Hawaii	Vermont	Rhode Island	New Hampshire	Maine	Maine 2nd	Alaska	Idaho	Montana	N Dakota	S Dakota	Wyoming	
EC Votes	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	1	3	4	3	3	3	3	
2020	Biden	Biden	Biden	Biden	Biden	Biden	Biden	Trump	Trump	Trump	Trump	Trump	Trump	Trump	
2016	H Clinton	H Clinton	H Clinton	H Clinton	H Clinton	H Clinton	H Clinton	Trump	Trump	Trump	Trump	Trump	Trump	Trump	
2012	Obama	Obama	Obama	Obama	Obama	Obama	Obama	Obama	Romney	Romney	Romney	Romney	Romney	Romney	
2008	Obama	Obama	Obama	Obama	Obama	Obama	Obama	Obama	McCain	McCain	McCain	McCain	McCain	McCain	
2004	Kerry	Kerry	Kerry	Kerry	Kerry	Kerry	Kerry	Kerry	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush	
2000	Gore	Gore	Gore	Gore	Gore	HW Bush	Gore	Gore	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush	
DC Advantage								Total	Total						
	3							20	20						

## “Medium” States

	Connecticut	Oregon	New Mexico	Nevada	Nebraska 2nd	Nebraska	Iowa	Arkansas	Kansas	Mississippi	Oklahoma	Utah	West Virginia
EC Votes	7	7	5	6	1	4	6	6	6	6	7	6	5
2020	Biden	Biden	Biden	Biden	Biden	Trump	Trump	Trump	Trump	Trump	Trump	Trump	Trump
2016	H Clinton	H Clinton	H Clinton	H Clinton	Trump	Trump	Trump	Trump	Trump	Trump	Trump	Trump	Trump
2012	Obama	Obama	Obama	Obama	Romney	Romney	Obama	Romney	Romney	Romney	Romney	Romney	Romney
2008	Obama	Obama	Obama	Obama	Obama	McCain	Obama	McCain	McCain	McCain	McCain	McCain	McCain
2004	Kerry	Kerry	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush
2000	Gore	Gore	Gore	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush	Gore	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush	HW Bush
Total				Total									
26				46									